

FARM AND DAIRY

AND RURAL HOME
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The Rural Publishing Company, Ltd
PETERBORO TORONTO

"Read not to contradict and to confute, nor to believe and take for granted, but to weigh and consider."—Bacon.

Oleomargarine

THE high price of butter is causing an agitation in some quarters for the free admission into Canada of oleomargarine. Whether the raising of the embargo on this butter substitute would ultimately be in the interests of the consumer is questionable. Most of them cherish a well founded preference for the real article, and the trouble is that oleo manufacturers have a weakness for masquerading their product under the name of butter. In the United States the authorities are having no end of trouble with this class of offenders, several of whom are now taking a forced interest in the good roads movement by engaging, with board, clothing and lodging provided, in breaking stones for the furtherance of that worthy enterprise. Scarcely an issue of a dairy paper from across the line comes to hand that does not contain some reference to the unlawful substitution of oleo for butter in that country.

If margarine is such a boon to the oppressed consumers, why do they persist in paying as much for butter, quality considered, in countries where oleo may be freely exposed for sale as they pay in Canada. If it is as good as butter, why can it not be sold on its merits in open and free competition with, instead of under the name of, butter. One of the results of the free admission of oleo into Canada would be a fine crop of prosecutions under the pure food law.

Fluctuations in Labor Income

THE output of no other industry varies so widely as that of agriculture, either in quantity or price. Yet the cost of production per acre, though increasing, is fairly constant. Fluctuations in the value of crops produced are therefore almost directly reflected in the farmers' labor income. This point was well brought out by an investigation carried on in a Nebraska county. In 1914, when yields and

prices were comparatively low, the labor income on 60 representative farms was only \$30. In 1915, when yields and prices were higher, the same farms returned an average labor income of \$1,206.

Investigations such as this show up the danger of estimating the profits of farming by the returns produced under a combination of favorable circumstances. Big yields and high prices for a year or two may cause the farmer's bank account to bulge most satisfactorily, but the advantage is more than likely to be soon offset by the meagreness of a lean year. The average annual return for a number of years cannot be gauged by that of any one of them. This also explains why one type of farming is about as profitable as another. It is not hard to find instances where an acre of garden truck yielded a profit of \$1,000 or more in a year. In the long run, however, truck farming is no more profitable than hay farming.

Why Don't They Stay?

SINCE the rush of settlement to the West more than 345,000 homestead patents have been granted. The number of farmers in the area covered by these patents is now about 200,000. This number includes not only those who are settled on land which was originally homesteaded, but also who have taken up their residence on railway and company lands. In making out a case for the present homestead law as an effective agency in establishing men on the land, it could not be claimed that more than fifty per cent. of the homesteaders have become farmers. Evidently, while everything possible was being done by means of roscate promises and offers of free land to attract people to farming, very effective influences were at work to drive them from it.

What is the use of lavishly expending energy and public funds in inducing men to go out on the land when we have failed so signally in inducing them to stay there. A better course would be to find out what influences are at work driving them off the land, and to endeavor to correct those influences. It is safe to say that the majority of the homesteaders who have failed to become farmers could give a fairly reasonable excuse for their failure. Population flows in the direction of least resistance. The reason why so many homesteaders have not become permanently settled on the soil is that the difficulties which they now ahead in endeavoring to thus establish themselves were greater than those ahead in pursuing other courses. Those difficulties are not natural, but artificial. Just as long as agriculture is taxed to the subsistence line for the support of other and less important industries, so long will agriculture continue to be relatively decadent.

Breeding Not a Gamble

IT has become publicly known that the cow which holds the biggest short period milk records in the world has been taken from her home on the banks of the St. Lawrence to the stables of Stevens Bros. Co., New York, to be bred to the high priced sire, King of the Pontiacs. Many breeders, on hearing this, doubtless remarked, "Oh, well, it's a rich man's gamble," meaning, among other things, that the selection of the best sires available for mating with their cows is something that may be indulged in by those who can afford it, but is not a matter of vital importance to the rank and file of breeders.

One of the things that is hindering the general progress of the dairy industry in Canada is the lack of appreciation of the value of good sires. Many Canadian breeders do not give this subject the thought and close investigation it should receive at their hands. Too many of them are using the sire that is nearest home, or most easily procurable, and are extenuating their action by making much of the fact that the animal used is

a pure bred. It is not for the wealthiest or most prominent breeders alone to study family relationships and ancestry, but rather for everyone who has to deal with animals bearing the title of "pure bred." Prices or service fees largely resolve themselves into matters of secondary importance when a breeder is reasonably assured that the crossing of his female with a certain sire should produce an animal of greater merit than either parent. It should be remembered that for the payment of the service fee, the breeder secures not only the service of the sire, but also an infusion of his blood lines, and that these exert a great influence upon the offspring.

Before the owner of May Echo Sylvia decided to breed her to King of the Pontiacs, all these things were no doubt taken into consideration, and there is not so much of a gamble about this mating as might superficially appear.

Eternal Vigilance and Weeds

THE Manitoba Weeds Commission reports that perennial sow thistle is now the most threatening weed in that province. In some municipalities where its presence was unsuspected, large numbers of incipient plots have been discovered this season. In this, Manitoba is but repeating the experience of other parts of Canada where many of the most serious weed pests have crept in insidiously and become firmly established before their presence was noticed.

Eternal vigilance is the price of freedom from the weed pest. Has any unfamiliar plant made its appearance this season in the fields or along the fence rows? If so, it would be the part of wisdom to have it identified as soon as possible. An innocent-looking plant may prove to be a weed peril of the first magnitude.

Unemployment a Social Disease

IN discussing the question of unemployment as a social disease, The Square Deal has this to say: "That the jobless man's condition is due rather to social than to individual causes is proved by the state of the working classes in England during the present war. The going of large numbers of regularly employed men to the front, together with the enforced expenditure of capital in ways not only demanding skilled labor, but more unskilled work than in peace times has had the effect of creating new jobs. England's army of tramps and workless men has accordingly dwindled away to very small proportions. Now if it be true, as comfortable folks have proclaimed for years, that there is no need for unemployment and that the jobless man has only himself to blame, how shall we account for the changed condition of England labor?"

How indeed? And the same question may appropriately be asked regarding unemployment in Canada. In the boom years when all kinds of construction work was under way, nearly everybody was kept busy in spite of the crush of labor. But just as soon as the boom collapsed, processions of unemployed with banners bearing inscriptions cursing charity and demanding work appeared on our city streets. Now an artificial prosperity has again provided jobs for them and instead of parading they are busily at work. As in England, so in Canada the vast majority are willing to work when they can get it.

There were thirty-four chartered banks in Canada ten years ago. If the Royal Bank absorbs the Quebec there will only be twenty-one. The merger idea is being overdone. Soon a very small group of bank Presidents and Managers will control the capital of the entire Dominion. That constitutes a very real national danger.—Globe.

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