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HOW 300 FARMERS HAVE DEMONSTRATED THEIR BUSINESS ABILITY

They Not Only Produce Their Own Milk but Sell Much of it Direct to the Consumer in Toronto Through Their Own Organization, The Farmers' Dairy Co., Ltd. A Tale of Difficulties Overcome.

THREE hundred farmers living, for the most part, within 20 miles of Toronto, have demonstrated within the past year that it is possible for farmers to co-operate and sell their produce direct to the consumers. They have done



G. S. Henry, C. J. Oriole, Ont. The farmer who is president of The Farmers' Dairy Co., Ltd. "stick together" has been disproved once more.

A SPLENDID RECORD.

The farmers referred to include most of the leading milk and cream producers living near Toronto. They have formed and are managing "The Farmers' Dairy Company, Limited." Already this company is selling about as much "certified" milk—that is milk low in bacterial content—in Toronto as all of their competitors put together. They have established their own plant in the city to handle their milk and cream. It is well equipped. When there is a surplus of milk it is manufactured into butter. Their milk and cream is delivered by their own rigs daily to all parts of the city. In addition they conduct a restaurant, which is proving decidedly profitable. In fact, they are giving a demonstration of successful co-operation by farmers that has seldom been equalled.

THE OFFICERS.

The officers and directors of the company are: President, G. S. Henry, of Oriole, ex-Warden of York County; L. E. Annis, J.P., of Toronto; J. G. Cornell, Scarborough; A. J. Reynolds, Scarborough Junction; W. C. Grubbe, Thistleton; W. J. Bragg, Bowmanville; J. W. Breakey, Thornhill; R. M. Holthy, Manchester; R. L. Crawford, Emery. All the officers are farmers. Most of them have had more or less experience in their township councils. Some of them have served in the county council. The general manager of the company is P. P. Farmer. Mr. Farmer resigned a position with the Farmers' Institute Branch of the Ontario Government to take charge of the affairs of the company. The success of the company is due in a large measure to the capable management of its affairs given by Mr. Farmer.

HISTORY OF THE MOVEMENT.

The Farmers' Dairy Company was organized because the farmers felt that they were being

unfairly treated by the milk dealers in the city of Toronto. They believed that it was not right that they should be paid for their milk less than half what the milk dealers sold the milk for to the consumers.

The story of how the company came to be organized is a long one. It traces back to the time when Toronto began to develop into a large consuming centre. When Toronto was so small that farmers living near by were able to drive in and furnish to the citizens direct all the milk they required, the producers made a nice profit from the sale of their milk. When, however, the city attained a size that necessitated milk being brought in in large quantities, sometimes by rail, conditions changed. The milk dealer put in his appearance. The dealer bought the milk from those farmers who were unable to deliver their own milk and retailed it to the householders.

Ever since the advent of the milk dealers, there

has been more or less friction between the farmers and the dealers. As Toronto grew and the number of milk producers and milk dealers increased, the difficulties between the dealers and the producers became more and more serious and outbursts of feeling more frequent. Some of the dealers were unscrupulous in their dealings with the farmers. They took advantage of them in every possible way. The farmers realized that they were being defrauded, and protested vigorously. Finally, the dealers formed an association. The producers realized that they must protect their interests. They formed a milk producers' association. Once, and sometimes twice, a year the officers of those associations met in conference over the price of milk. These negotiations often resulted in open friction.

UNFAIR TREATMENT.

For many years the dealers used to furnish the farmers with what were known as eight gallon cans. These cans often contained eight and a half and even nine gallons of milk. The farmers were required to fill these cans, although they were paid on only an eight gallon basis.

Frequently, in the summer months particularly, the dealers, when there was a surplus of milk, would cut the price paid the farmer unduly or return large quantities of milk without proper notice. The cans were often returned to the farmer in a filthy condition.

Attempts on the part of the farmers to co-operate resulted in the dealers buying milk farther back in the country and in their refusing to handle the milk of those farmers living near the city who had been selling to them regularly. The dealers living close together in the city were able to unite their forces more easily than the farmers whose homes were scattered over a large extent of country.

A BITTER FIGHT.

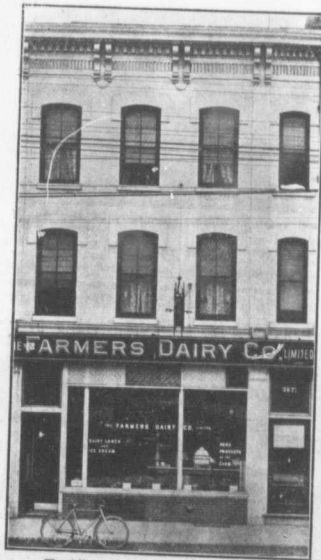
Some four years ago, negotiations between the milk producers and milk dealers over the price of milk resulted in a deadlock. Under the presidency of Mr. Levi Annis and with Mr. A. J. Reynolds, of Scarborough Junction, as secretary, the producers organized thoroughly and refused to sell their milk at the price offered by the dealers. They went on a strike and held back their milk. The dealers were unable to get enough milk from outside points. For several days the citizens of Toronto had to do without milk. Finally, however, the two associations agreed to leave the matter to arbitration. Judge Winchester and Mr. C. C. James, Deputy Minister of Agriculture, were the arbitrators.

LEGAL ACTION THREATENED.

About two years ago, hostilities were renewed. One of the large dairies in Toronto took steps to prosecute the producers on the claim that they were combining in restraint of trade to advance the price of milk. Some of the dealers attempted through coercive methods to make it impossible for a few of the leading officers of the milk producers' association to sell their milk in Toronto.

PRODUCERS' ACT.

Finally the situation became intolerable. A mass meeting of the members of the Milk and Cream Producers' Association was held in Toronto. The advisability of forming a co-



The Offices of The Farmers' Dairy Company

The illustration shows the premises in Toronto that have been leased for a period of years, with the right to purchase at any time, by the farmers composing the Farmers' Dairy Company, Ltd. The restaurant is situated in the front of this building, which is located at 37 Queen Street, West. The milk is delivered to the company at the back of these premises. The butter making plant, cold storage compartment, and the various appliances used by the company are kept in well lighted rooms at the rear. The stables are also situated at the back.