

The Farmer's Advocate

AND HOME MAGAZINE.

THE LEADING AGRICULTURAL JOURNAL IN THE DOMINION.

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aires or immensely wealthy out of this war. If they can secure the help they'll make the best use of it, but inexperienced help is not very satisfactory under present-day farming conditions which call for men who can handle machinery. Farming in 1918 requires trained men. The only reason farmers asked to be safeguarded in the hog proposition was that they had lost out before at the pig game and so had little confidence, and changing to pigs made it necessary to change farm plans so that increasing hogs meant decreasing something else of vital importance. No one can show that farmers as a whole have made, even in 1917, unreasonable profits, and farmers as a class are not complaining. They are ready to do their share as they have done it in the past without any thought of compulsion being necessary. Anyone who would hint that the farmers of Canada have been holding up on production since the war began in order to boost prices doesn't know anything about farming conditions and what has been accomplished.

We are started in 1918. If the Government can take over any considerable acreage of untilled land in the West and bring it under cultivation no doubt the Hon. T. A. Crerar, who knows the West as well as any man can, will take hold of the proposition. We feel sure he will work every plan that seems at all feasible. For the farmers already on the land, we can say that from a long experience in dealing with them and from years of intimate knowledge of farming in all its phases, and knowing what they have done in the past four years, they will again do all that is humanly possible and that they are entitled to a reasonable return for their efforts. Put all on a basis of no more profit than farmers get and there will be fewer millionaires made in Canada in 1918.

Now, to be practical select seed early and clean it well; plan handy devices to help wherever possible, do as much as practicable with power, either engine or horse; use wide implements and machinery; arrange with neighbors to change work, and if any good hired help is available do as you have done, use it to the best advantage. If any compulsion is necessary toward greater production the farmers of Canada now on the land are not responsible for it. There efforts deserve more reasonable and generous consideration and will get it from those who know the situation. Let all organizations get together and evolve the best possible schemes

for helping on production in all lines. If some things are luxuries, let them be "cut out" for the time. Placing every man where his services will be of greatest use to his country, taking all things into consideration, will meet with the approval of all thinking Canadians. Fair play for all will bring best results.

To Increase Production.

BY ALLAN McDIARMID.

It is pretty generally admitted by those who are in a position to size up the situation, that this country, as well as the world in general is approaching a time of food shortage, if not of actual famine. But apparently we are not taking the matter very much to heart, for the money spent on the unnecessary things in life was never so great as at the present time. This carelessness in the spending of money would not be so serious if it was not accompanied by a lack of thought and preparation in another matter. Money is plentiful and while that is the case the majority of people apparently think that everything that money can buy at present must continue to be plentiful as well. That this is not the case anyone can see if they will take a minute to think about it. Money is only a medium of exchange, not a means of existence. It will not take the place of bread in case of a complete crop failure. And so far as war-time economy consists in hoarding up actual dollars and cents it is of very little real value as a preparation for the conditions that are going to face us in the near future. The fact that the spend-thrift squanders his fortune is of little concern to the country at large because of the fact that the money remains in circulation and the financial state of affairs has not been affected. There is as much gold and silver as ever. It has changed hands, that is all.

But in the case of anything in the line of food-products it is a very different matter. Any waste means a shortage in the supply and probable hardship and suffering in a world where production and consumption are on a fairly even balance in normal times. By economizing in the matter of food, by eating no more than we need, and by stopping waste in the cooking of our meals, a good deal can be done to relieve the situation. At any rate a good habit will have been formed. But the most business-like and common-sense way of undertaking to prevent famine in a country is to increase the food-supply. Not in every land can this be done. We know of nations that are cultivating almost every foot of land that hasn't a building on it, and they are making the best possible use of natural and commercial fertilizers as well. But here in Canada the case is different. In the West there are hundreds of thousands of acres waiting for the breaking plow. Can our Government be induced to take the necessary steps towards bringing this land under cultivation and, to the extent of their effort, prevent the disasters that will follow a great shortage of food?

Here is the case in Saskatchewan. Thousands of acres of "School Lands" are lying idle in various parts of the Province. Thousands more are held by speculators. Traction engines are owned by a large percentage of the farmers and these engines are used by their owners but a very small part of the time and in some cases not at all, the breaking on many sections having been all done years ago. Now the question is, why can't these practically idle engines be put to work on this idle land and thousands of acres broken up during the coming summer under Government supervision and control? There is no question but that capable engineers could be had if good wages were offered, and even if it came to conscripting them, no serious objection could be raised under the circumstances.

If the owners of unbroken land could be induced to cultivate their own holdings by a bonus of three or four dollars an acre paid by the Government it might be well to do it. The expense would probably be justified later on, and as for the present, money is no object if the point is gained. Millions have been spent for the manufacture of munitions to destroy our enemies. Let us spend a few more, if necessary, to save the lives of our soldiers and to prevent suffering among those who remain at home. This idea has the support of many Western farmers and it would seem to be practical. What is the use of controlling the price of food and regulating the quantities to be sold if, in the end, there isn't enough of said food to keep the people from starving? Fixing the price of wheat doesn't add one bushel to the visible supply. It simply prevents speculation and the boosting of prices. What we need, and what the Government has not yet undertaken to supply directly, is more wheat. Bacon and beef are necessary, of course, as well as many other things, but the breaking up of our idle land is at present the most practical way in which the Government can help out the situation and the most important in any case.

And now is the time to get ready to do it. Prairie sod that is broken next spring will not grow wheat profitably this year. It may grow oats or flax, but in any case it will be ready for wheat in the spring of 1919, and that may quite possibly be the very time it will be needed to save the situation. Anyway, what is needed is that our Minister of Agriculture take this matter in hand and get capable men to look after the details of the undertaking, and who will see also that the work is pushed along in a methodical and business-like way. Work of a similar nature is being carried on in Great Britain at the present time and as part of the Empire it is of just as vital importance that we increase pro-

duction here as there. We are equally concerned in the outcome of the war.

Should the results of this enterprise warrant it and conditions a few years hence make it advisable, the work could be carried on in other districts where very little land has yet been taken up and Government lands could be farmed by the Government on a scale that would provide for any conceivable emergency. But the first duty of those in authority would seem to be to cultivate the land within reasonable distance of the railroads, where the object in view could be accomplished in the shortest time and with the least risk of failure. And action should not be long delayed.

Nature's Diary.

A. B. KLUGH, M.A.

Canada From Ocean to Ocean. III.

If we turn from the shore and walk inland in the Maritime Provinces in a locality in which primaevial conditions exist we find ourselves in a Spruce-Birch forest. This forest consists almost entirely of White Spruce, Red Spruce and Paper Birch. There are, of course, some places in which a different type of forest exists, such as a hardwood forest, but the Spruce-Birch forest is typical of by far the greater area.

This forest which occurs along the Atlantic coast is different from the coniferous forests further inland in several respects. It is notable for one thing because of the luxuriant carpet of moss which covers its floor. This great development of moss is undoubtedly due to the fact that along the coast the atmosphere is a good deal moister in summer than it is further inland. One notices also the abundance of lichens, both on the trees and on the ground, and one is at once struck with the great numbers of different species of fleshy fungi. Here in this moist, rather dark, forest is an ideal habitat for these fleshy fungi, and they accordingly flourish in great profusion.

Ferns also grow in large numbers in this forest, some species, such as the Beech Fern, the Hay-scented Fern and the Shield Fern being particularly abundant. The Club-mosses are also extremely well represented.

In flowering plants the Spruce-Birch forest is not at all rich, the shade being too dense for the growth of any except shade-enduring species. The Wood Sorel, with its clover-like leaves and delicate pink flowers with the petals lined with deeper pink, is one of the commonest and most characteristic flowering plants. The Star-flower, with its white star-shaped flowers at the end of slender, upright pedicels is common. The Bunchberry is fairly common in the woods, and in little clearings it grows in huge patches which, when the plants are in full flower, resemble snow-banks. The One-flowered Wintergreen, with its single, white, waxy blossom, is quite common in many places and the Twin-flower often spreads its trailing stems over considerable areas.

The Spruce forest is the home of many birds. Of these one of the commonest, and certainly one of the most noticeable during spring and early summer, is the Hermit Thrush. This bird is one of the most beautiful songsters we have in Canada, and a calm evening, the low-sinking sun over the waters, the lapping of the rising tide on the shore and the silvery chant of the Hermit Thrush blend to form a glimpse of nature in the Spruce woods which fringe the mighty Atlantic. The Hermit Thrush breeds from May to July, the nest being placed on the ground and composed of leaves, grass, bark and rootlets. The eggs are three or four in number, and are of a uniform greenish blue.

Another bird characteristic of the Spruce woods is the Slate-colored Junco. In some localities this species remains throughout the winter, but in most it arrives very early in spring. It nests in May and June, the nest being well concealed in a hole in the ground or under an old root, and being composed of grass-stems and lined with hair. The Slate-colored Junco has a great variety of call-notes and a trilling song which quite closely resembles that of the Chipping Sparrow.

The Crow is also a very common bird in these woods, but we can hardly call it characteristic of them, since the Crow is characteristic of all kinds of country clear across the continent. But these Crows of the forests along the sea-coast have a way of mixing up the ferns of the sea-shore and the woods, as they pick up Sea-urchins and Clams and carry them into the woods, so that the nature-student frequently encounters these animals or their remains some distance inland.

The commonest mammals of the Spruce-Birch forest are the Varying Hare and the Red Squirrel.

The forest country of the Maritime Provinces is interspersed with numerous little lakes, and in these we find aquatic life well developed—fresh-water clams, snails, leeches and frogs of many species, including the Bullfrog, and along the muddy shores of many of these lakes there are many very interesting aquatic plants, such as the peculiar Quill-wort, a plant which is an ally of the ferns and looks like a little tuft of grass, the Water Lobelia with its hollow, two-barrelled leaves, and the Arrow-head.

Large tracts are also covered by peat-bogs, areas in which the substratum is mainly Sphagnum Moss among which grows a host of sedges, cotton-grasses, rushes and plants belonging to the Heath Family and the Orchid Family. In some of these bogs Blueberries and Cranberries are abundant. Most of the plants of these peat-bogs are the same as those which occur in similar habitats across the continent, but there is one, the Baked-apple Berry which is characteristic of bogs near the coast. This plant has roundish-kidney-shaped leaves and bears berries which are nearly an inch across and which, when ripe, resemble a baked apple in appearance and taste.

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