

freely, but seem unable to cure. The first thing the Torontonians have got to do is to throw away the notion that the abattoir is a place for the slaughtering of cattle by private butchers, as a means of slackening the stranglehold of the abattoir packers upon the most supply of this province.

Little Progress With U.F.O. The next thing to dispose of is the notion that the crisis can be met by merely turning over the abattoir to the U. F. O. The reasons for that are two: The U. F. O. is a party of property Commissioners. They have had some negotiation with the U. F. O., but did not make much progress—an experience which others have had.

Mr. Chisholm, reflecting the intellect of his employees, the city council, could not go far enough back into the abattoir problem. He wanted the farmers to send the cattle to the municipal stock yards in preference to the Union Stock Yards. The farmers didn't do it. There was a demand for the municipal yards, and supply followed demand, as it always does.

Apparently neither party realized that, if the high cost of meat was to be reduced, farmer and consumer must get together at some point before the stock yards came in. The farmers together long after the animals were slaughtered. It is not enough for the city to talk about going into the deal of meat business, but to supply the private retail butcher with carcasses, as the packer now does. For the farmer to discuss the possibility of running an abattoir in the undated future is not enough, even if he does it in connection with exports. The key thing to do is to make the meat consumers, without impoverishing the producers, as they were impoverished when they got five cents a pound for a carcass of pork, and when turkeys were retailed in this city at ten cents a pound and geese at seven cents.

Farmers Have Talked Co-operation. The U. F. O. people have talked much about co-operation and in The Farmers' Sun about co-operation furnishing the true economic connection between the producer and the consumer of his produce. In the woman's section of The Sun, for instance, you would read of the small price received for eggs and the small price paid for a few score miles of Toronto and the atrocious prices charged by the middlemen in Toronto.

It has been said, is not a farmer, it has been said, is not a farmer, it has been said, is not a farmer. The middleman is the offender. The opportunity of proving the value of co-operation between the farmer and the provincial government is right at hand. We shall soon see which of these separated brethren has sufficient imagination, common sense and courage to take the first advantage of it, and prove that rural, municipal and provincial steamship and common sense are one and the same thing.

The example comes from Saskatchewan, where the principle of local co-operation, in which the provincial government has worked great marvels, and has shown incidentally that the farmers are just as efficient in running big business as the provincial government.

When the prairie farmer came to sell his wheat he was at the mercy of the monopolist elevator owner who had to take whatever the grain company's buyer offered him. There was no competition, but collusion between the wheat buyer and the elevator owner.

Government Financed 85 Per Cent. The farmer was sure he was being robbed—and he was. He organized, at first as a sort of first-class kicking brigade. But kicking a kicking brigade, at first did not get the kickers very much farther ahead than discussing geese Toronto aldermen. It was seen that some kind of government action was needed to take the grain business which the elevator owners could not destroy. Public elevators were demanded. At one time it was supposed that only one public ownership could succeed. But a more excellent way was found.

Legislation was passed under which the Saskatchewan co-operative elevator system was established. The basic principle of the system's finance was that the government would find 85 per cent of the money that was required to build an elevator at a shipping point, if the farmers thereabouts put up 15 per cent. The elevator would be run by a provincial board of directors, elected like any other directors, by shareholders. Already the organized farmers had shown that they could run a big organization of their own, and that they were a power—THE power—behind the government.

The result? When the writer was last in Saskatchewan he visited the big, finely-equipped farmers' building in Regina, and learned that during the last season the co-operative elevator system had handled over forty million bushels of grain through three hundred elevators; that the price received for wheat everywhere was on an average five cents a bushel more than was paid for the old monopolist system; and that the banks had finally given up trying to dictate the financial business of the company, and that there was now no further need of government financing of new elevators.

Three-fold Alliance Necessary. In Toronto—and when you say Toronto you mean Ontario, for whatever good thing is proved here, must, of course, be applied to the remainder of the province—in Toronto there must be a direct application of price control by an alliance between the city, the U. F. O. and the provincial government. That the U. F. O. stock must find the way to the public abattoir goes without saying. But the U. F. O. will see that it must travel farther with the consumer. It must do in meat what it does in potatoes. You can buy a bag of potatoes from the U. F. O. co-operative store, but you can't buy a side of pork. The U. F. O. must go not only into the abattoir, but into the retail meat trade, and it must have the resource, the nerve and the adventure which the private meat merchant who risks his whole resources on a corner shop in a suburb.

The U. F. O. Co-operative Company began in a small way. So can the revolution in the meat business. But, in order to get the maximum of efficiency in management and the maximum support in public demand for commodities there must be a partnership between the U. F. O. and the consumer, the consumer being represented by the city.

There are proposals for the city to put up fifty thousand dollars so as to sell carcasses to the private butchers. The city should be asked to put up its business into a limited liability company, following the example of the Saskatchewan government. There would be a partnership between the city and the U. F. O. a board of directors being chosen with the same care that the har-

bor commissioners or the Hydro Commissioners are chosen. Make Pork Chop the Symbol. The venture must be thoroughly businesslike, without petty interference. Whatever packers like the Davies Company now do, the new corporation must undertake—not too ambitiously at first. Let there be as much efficiency as there is at the harbor board or at the General Hospital, and there will be no question about the successful growth of the business and a just balance between the price of live meat paid to the producer and the price of dead meat paid by the consumer.

But where does the province come in? The Toronto position is really the position of the province. The provincial government has the supreme interest in developing satisfactory economic conditions for all its constituents. It comes into power without being tied to the absurd old ideas of the limits of public business.

Already the province has electric light for hundreds of thousands of citizens. The price of meat is a most intimate concern to everybody. There is no question about the fundamental similarity of interest as between rural, urban and provincial requirements. Let the government frankly recognize that it must touch in the most practical way, experiments that are calculated to render more direct public service, because they affect intimately the most domestic services. An entente cordiale can be reached with a pork chop with a pig chop as its daily symbol.

For a small financial interest in the province, the ownership of the abattoir, its greatest tangible asset, the province will have a member on the board of directors, and so be in a position to know from the beginning everything that is to be learned through a great and businesslike experiment in reducing the high cost of living while maintaining the prosperity of the basic producer from the soil. H. A.

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