

Canada's Standard Flour

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The standard flour is not a black or even a dark flour. So many discrediting stories have been circulated about the war breads of Europe that people appear to have jumped to the conclusion that our standard flour is of the same kind. It is not as white and highly refined as the high grade patent flours, nor is it like the low grade flours; it is all the flour from the wheat left in one grade.

Until January 28th of this year a miller might make several grades of flour from one stream of wheat; high patents like Five Roses, Royal Household and Purity; baker's grades like Glenora, Three Stars and Harvest Queen; and many other grades of flour, even down to what is called "feed flour." Under the new regulations all these grades of flour, high and low, are left unseparated and only one grade—what we call the standard flour—may now be made in Canada.

CONSIDERABLE SAVING OF FLOUR.

Formerly a miller might use as many pounds of wheat as he liked to make a barrel of flour; now he must produce at least 136 pounds of flour from 265 pounds of spring wheat, or 275 pounds of winter wheat. This means that out of every 100 pounds of spring wheat milled, 74 pounds must be converted into flour.

The saving effected by this ruling is considerable and the regulation works for food conservation from different angles. In the first place regarding the saving of wheat, probably a few of the larger flour mills have been making as long an extraction as the food controller's order requires, but such has not been the case in the majority of the mills, and certainly not in many of the smaller ones.

For instance, a correspondent recently reported that he took 1,142 pounds of spring wheat to a mill for grinding and received in return 435 pounds of flour and 685 pounds of feed. If this wheat had been milled according to the food controller's orders, it would have yielded 814 pounds of flour and—allowing 2 pounds of waste per barrel of flour—288 pounds of feed. The customer only received a little over half the amount of flour to which he was entitled, and the shorts and even the bran were loaded with flour. Such milling is wasteful, too wasteful to be allowed under present conditions. One of the objects of the recent order is to correct this condition and thus get more of the flour from the grain.

Furthermore, in all the mills, large and small, a certain amount of the low grade flour was usually sold as feed flour, for cattle use. Again, much of the flour above the feed flour and below the baker's grades was used by the foreign element or exported. We cannot calculate the saving effected in these various ways, but it must be considerable.

SAVING IN TRANSPORTATION ALSO.

All mills, no matter what their capacity, are now permitted to turn out only one grade of flour, and while it is true that the quality of flour that has characterized a mill in the past will still be evident, it is probable that the ruling will result in localizing the use of the flour and saving transportation.

Fear has been expressed regarding the keeping quality of this flour in warm weather, but we may safely assume that there will be no trouble in this respect, especially if the buyers observe the Canada food board's request not to purchase more than a month's supply in advance.

Repeated tests made in our laboratory show clearly that the new standard flour is of good quality. It has a rich, creamy appearance; the bread made from it is slightly darker in color and the texture a very little coarser; the crust is of good full color. In general, the change in the quality of the bread is so slight that it has been delivered by the baker in the usual round of his business, and the customer observed no difference until his attention was called to it.

No order of the food controller or of the Canada food board has been made with a desire to restrict the manufacture and use of Graham and whole wheat flour; rather it is desired to encourage their production. A limited use of the former tends towards conservation and an extended use of the latter, provided too much bran is not left in the flour, also means conservation.

THE QUESTION OF PRICE.

Many people have expressed surprise that the price of the standard flour was not lower than that of the flour formerly used. As a matter of fact, it is less than that of the high patents, and about

the same as that of the baker's grades. But it must be pointed out that the full fixed price of wheat was paid last fall and no arrangement was made for the cost of carrying over wheat supplies until the spring and summer. Someone has to pay the interest on the money invested, loss in storage, etc., and such costs always come back on the consumer. No charge of any kind was made against the wheat for this purpose until January. Awaiting the arrangements of what this charge should be, the miller did not advance the price of flour.

The wheat now costs the miller several cents per

bushel more than it did last fall, and, but for the arranging of the standard flour, the price of flour would have advanced. This has been prevented and our new flour, while not quite so white as the higher grades of flour formerly used in bread making, is in nearly all other respects their equal. The fixing of a standard flour has prevented the expected rise, and that in spite of the carrying over charges on the wheat, increased cost of bags and labor.

In the United States the standard flour is the same length of extraction as our own, and the commercial baker is compelled to use 20 per cent. of the flour or meal of other grains along with it in making bread. We have not the other grains in sufficient supply over and above requirements for feeding livestock, to warrant such a compulsory measure at the present time.

Packers' Profits in U. S.

Armour claims that meat prices are not excessive.

J. Ogden Armour, head of Armour & Co., has prepared for publication a statement in which he defends the meat packers from the recent charges of profiteering, which have so freely been made. Mr. Armour regrets, he says, that office seeking demagogues have been able to stir up bitterness toward men and an industry which is doing its full share in prosecuting the war.

"I realize full well," he continues, "that it is lack of information as to the truth of the matter, which causes the public to tolerate such persecution as has been indulged in during the past several months, and I welcome the opportunity to lay the matter before the public."

War-time prices on foodstuffs are sufficiently burdensome to enable agitators to arouse the public with their charges of graft and profiteering. Meat packers are the especial targets of these defamers. It is not true that there is an undue margin between the price of meat on the hoof and meat on the hook. It is not true that enormous profits are the cause of high prices. It is a falsehood to charge that meat is being hoarded to keep the price up.

The malicious or ill-informed person notes that live hogs sell for 17 cents a pound and that bacon sells as high as 60 cents a pound, and cries out to heaven to witness how the people are being robbed. From live hog at 17 cents to bacon at 60 cents is too big a jump, he says, to be justifiable. "Profiteering," he cries, and the public is prone to believe. But it is a lie.

Sixty-cent bacon from the 17-cent hog does not spell profiteering to the man who investigates. So far as the packer is concerned there is no such thing as 60-cent bacon. The finest grade of bacon turned out by Armour & Co. wholesales at 46½ cents per pound in the current price list. Other grades sell as low as 32 cents per pound. But for the purpose of this discussion let us speak of 50-cent bacon as coming from the 17-cent hog and see if it gives ground for the charge of extortion.

If 50-cent bacon from 17-cent hog indicates profiteering, what conclusion follows the discovery that from that same 17-cent hog comes liver at 6 cents a pound, feet at 7 cents, backbones at 5 cents, sweetbreads at 11 cents, kidneys at 12½ cents, snouts at 12½ cents, brains at 13 cents, tails at 17 cents, melts at 6 cents, knuckles at 11 cents and various other cuts and products which sell, dressed, for less than they cost alive?

Is it profiteering to sell pickled pigs feet at half what they cost standing in the mud of the pigsty? Is it profiteering to sell pig hearts which are ready for the pot at less than half of what they cost when they were busily pumping blood through the hog?

Is it good business to sell seventeen of the thirty-two separate cuts and products on the pork list for less than the price per pound of the living hog?

Whether it be good business or not, the fact remains that a considerable portion of the porker has to be sold for less per pound dressed than it cost per pound alive. More people want hams and bacon than want pigs feet or hearts. But no way has been found to raise hogs that consist only of hams and bacon. They all come to market with hearts and livers, snouts and feet, bristles and entrails, and if we secure enough hams and bacon we have the other portions to dispose of. If we could obtain for sweetbreads and melts and tails and backbones the same price that we secure for hams and bacon, then the price of hams and bacon would be reduced and the other prices raised until all the meat from 17-cent hog would sell at prices which are only slightly above the 17-cent mark and without the wide range of from 5 cents to 50 cents per pound.

In the beef field much the same circumstances exist. People want sirloin steaks, tenderloin and porterhouse. But every time we kill a steer to get sirloins we put a beef heart on the market, too. Likewise do we make it necessary to dispose of chucks, flanks, neck, rounds and the various other cuts that are less in demand but which figure in the poundage of the live animal for all that. Our wholesale price list shows lungs selling at 3 cents a pound, although we pay four or five times that much for them. If consumers were willing to pay a higher price for lungs the price of sirloins could be reduced.

The consuming public has to pay enough for the meat from the whole steer to recompense the farmer for producing that meat and to reimburse the packer for slaughtering, dressing, preparing and distributing. So, if the consumer won't buy the neck meat except at a discount, he will have to pay for the neck when he buys porterhouse or the particular cut that is most in demand. If a steer could be raised that would cut up into only such cuts as are most in demand the matter would be solved. That is, the price of the cuts in question would bear an evident relation to the price of the live animal. But as long as ten people demand fancy cuts while only one is willing to take the less desirable, there is going to be an adjustment of price which will force the particular consumer to help pay for the cuts he will not purchase.

Now, just a word as to profits, in view of the fact that the uninformed sometimes suspect that they are unduly large. Including every branch of our industry in the United States—and some of them are more profitable than are the strictly food lines—we made last year a profit of 3.8 cents when we sold a dollar's worth of goods. On strictly food products of all kinds Armour & Co. earned at the rate of 2.21 cents on the dollar last year. On meat and meat products alone our company earned only 2.07 cents on the dollar. Put in concrete terms, this means that on an amount of fresh beef equal in pounds to the per capita consumption in this country, we earned 80 cents last year. The Government says that the average citizen eat 230 pounds of meat in a year. At the current price of fresh beef in the carcass—the way we sell most of it—230 pounds is worth \$39.10. That is what the retailer paid us for it. Out of that sum 80 cents was our profit. Is that your idea of extortion?

As to why meats are high—a glance at the market reports in any paper tells the story. Meats cannot be cheap when hogs are selling at \$17 per hundred pounds live weight and when steers on the hoof cost from \$13 to \$15 per hundred pounds. Those are the prices paid to the farmers and stock raisers to-day, and who shall say they are not justified in view of the high price of feeds and the increased cost of labor and the other factors which enter into production of meat animals? My knowledge of the stock raisers' problem prevents me from blaming high prices on them.

We have high prices for meat because the world is at war and because there is a greater demand and a smaller comparative supply than was ever the case before. And the wonder is that prices are not higher.

Hoarding meat is another groundless charge often made. Normally, the amount of meat of all kinds in storage or in a process of curing in all the packing plants and at all the storages of the whole country represents less than two weeks supply for the nation. Under war conditions which have made it necessary to enforce meatless days in order to get supplies for shipment abroad, the amount in storage has been augmented considerably but not to an extent that is entirely satisfactory to those upon whom falls the responsibility of meeting demands from abroad.