

WEEKLY ONTARIO

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W. H. Morton, Business Manager. J. O. Hardy, Editor-in-Chief.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 1920

PRICES NOT HIGH ENOUGH

In the past few weeks we have heard many complaints about the prices charged for their products by farmers on Belleville market. Eggs have been selling as high as 90 cents a dozen, butter 70 cents a pound, potatoes \$4 a bag, chickens \$2 to \$4 a pair and turkeys \$5 to \$10 each.

The honest farmer is represented as a cold-calculating bargainer, a bristled profiteer, a man who doesn't know how to ask enough and who wickedly takes advantage of post-war conditions to exact his famine toll.

Compared with other days, that we well remember, the farmer of this new era is considerable of a charger. A long time ago, when the writer of this article was a youth with hay-seeds in his hair and wearing trousers neatly tucked into long top-boots, he used to visit Belleville market regularly, offering for sale the fancy products from his father's farm in Huntingdon. He has actually sold a ninety-pound bag of choice quality, Beauty of Hebron potatoes, grown in loamy soil, for the magnificent sum of twenty cents. His load of fifteen bags brought him in three dollars. The writer has actually sold twelve dozen eggs for a total of 96 cents or 4 cents less than he recently paid a grocer on West Bridge Street for a single dozen.

We might draw some other illuminating comparisons to demonstrate that there has been an upward trend in prices for the products of the farm but those mentioned are sufficient for purposes of illustration and they have the merit of being drawn from actual experience.

In the days of our youth, farming was a philanthropy. In 1920, farming is a business. That is the difference.

In the days of our youth the farmer led a truly independent life. It mattered little to him whether towns existed or not. He reared his own sheep, from which was gathered the wool that was spun into yarn and woven into the substantial flannel-cloth, or home-spun flannel, right in the farmer's own household. Sugar was manufactured on the premises from the maple sap and there was an abundance of wild fruit to be had for the gathering.

The wants of the farmer were simple. The piano and the covered buggy were later acquisitions.

There was, however, a genuine neighborliness, an intermingling and a social life such as has been largely lost, we fear, with the evolution of the touring-car. The latter causes the farmers family to seek their pleasures far afield and to forget the neighbors or stir up unneighborly rivalry in the race to possess the biggest and most expensive automobile. But that is another story of which more will be given another time.

We wish merely to point out that the farmer of our youth was a philanthropist. He cared but slightly for money and handled precious little of it. The budget for a year, with father, mother, and all the family of boys and girls working to increase the family store, ran from \$300 to \$500 on the average hundred-acre farm.

But the farmer of those days was richer in his contentment, his homely social joys, the neighborly goodwill, the independence, the honesty and sincerity of his life, than is the restless plutocrat of 1920, rushing over the country with his imposing McLaughlin Six. And that also is another story.

His wants were simple and money, therefore, a secondary consideration. Nearly every year he had a surplus of eggs, potatoes, butter, chickens, geese, pork, beef, hay, cordwood and other evidences of his industry. This surplus he turned over to the people living in the towns, practically as a gift, ninety pounds of high quality potatoes for 20 cents and a whole dozen of eggs for 8 cents never represented a business transaction. It was philanthropy.

But the farmer who annexes four dollars

for ninety pounds of potatoes and sells ordinary hens' eggs for ten cents apiece as has actually been done on St. Lawrence market, Toronto, the present winter, has acquired the rudiments of a business education. The farmer of the eighties would have looked at you in blank wonderment if you had asked him if he had estimated "cost of production," "overhead," "depreciation," and "salary for himself, his wife, his sons and daughters." The only salaried person was the hired man who earned \$15 a month through the summer and was turned out to forage for himself in the winter.

The farmer of 1920 is learning the lessons of business. He is still a long way off from knowing anything about high finance. But he has begun to study the elementary problem of the cost of production.

We have heard many complaints about the prices charged on Belleville market. As stated above, potatoes are twenty times as high and eggs twelve times as high in price as we once sold them for on this same market. Prices are indeed high as compared with those charged by the philanthropists. But in all seriousness we state that prices have not yet gone high enough.

We should say that an increase of about one hundred per cent. over present prices for farm production would be about right. Butter at \$1.40 a pound, eggs at \$1.75 a dozen and potatoes at \$8 a bag would, we think, be about right.

We have heard many complaints about the high prices on Belleville market, but we have not talked with one complainant who has advanced a comprehensive reason for his fault-finding or who has any intelligent suggestion to offer to remedy the conditions of which he complains.

Calling the farmers "graffers" does not remove the cause of the trouble and serves no better purpose than to create ill-feeling between country and city. Because prices for foods produced on the farm are several times higher than they were in the good old days does not prove that prices are too high now.

It can scarcely be proved that the farmer is a combiner. He does not benefit from a protective tariff nor exact toll from his customers 42½ per cent. in excess of what similar goods are sold for in other countries. He sells in open competition with the world at prices that are fixed only by world supply and demand. He often, on the other hand, is compelled to pay prices artificially made dear for what he buys from tariff-fed industries.

We have heard many complaints about the prices charged by farmers on Belleville market but we have not heard one complainant state he was going to buy a farm or intended to work a farm on shares, or to rent a farm, in order that he might pick up some of the easy dollars lying loose around every farm home.

The procession is headed the other way. The farmers are leaving their graft and plutocracy and luxurious surroundings in order that they too may come in to keep company with the shorn lambs already here.

The problem is to find homes for them all. Just now Belleville City Council is looking for half a million dollars with which to provide dwellings for the influx.

In the rural parts of Hastings and Prince Edward Counties there are hundreds of comfortable dwelling-houses without occupants.

Is not the inference plain and obvious? Do people run away from the place where easy money is to be had and where the life is surely? Not according to our experience to they.

Prices for farm products, we gain assert are not nearly high enough. And they will never be high enough until the procession heads in the other direction.

When we see town-dwellers, falling over one another to get out to the country, where fortunes are made for you while you wait, by the homely spud, the gentle cow and the industrious hen, then and then only will we believe that prices have gone high enough.

Our opinion is that it will need another hundred per cent. rise before the pressure goes high enough to produce the right-about turn.

While the writer was at Ottawa last summer attending the National Liberal Convention, he heard many remarkable speeches delivered by the men who are known for their forensic ability, from ocean to ocean. But there was one address that stood out from all the others and burned itself into his memory. That address was delivered by Hon. Duncan Marshall, Minister of Agriculture in the Government of Alberta.

Mr. Marshall got away from the beaten track and didn't have much to say about party politics. He talked about schools and farm topics and high prices and the life of the common people and used many homely illustra-

tions to make his thoughts more luminous.

Among other things he talked of eggs. On his way down to the convention, he had read an article, occupying a column and a half in a Chicago newspaper, on the subject of eggs. The writer of the article referred to the almost prohibitive price of eggs and then went on to tell the thrifty householder how to manufacture several varieties of pastry without the use of eggs. A number of egg substitutes were also enumerated that were "almost as good" in the culinary art as the real hen-fruit.

"But why should the people do without eggs?" asked Mr. Marshall. "And why should it be necessary to look for substitutes?" Did it never occur to the writer of that article that there was another way to overcome egg-scarcity and high prices? Did the writer ever consider the possibility of producing more eggs or why more eggs were not produced?"

And then Mr. Marshall went on to tell why the egg had vanished from our tables and to recount his experience as a boy in attending the public and the high schools of his native province of Ontario where the educational authorities try their best, and usually succeed, in the work of educating the boys and girls, in the rural parts, away from the farm. The text books and the teaching apparently had that very end in view.

He had once visited Belgium and he became interested in the methods adopted in that progressive country to educate children back to the farm. He looked through the reading primer and saw on one page a picture of a horse of the type commonly used on Belgian farms. "This is a horse. It is a good horse," said the legend under the picture. And then the reading lesson went on to enumerate some of the points that constitute a good horse of the agricultural class.

Mr. Marshall found that from the day the rural pupil started to school in Belgium to the day of graduation he was being taught lessons in practical agriculture, made familiar with scientific progress in problems affecting the farm and in general was being inspired with a love for animals, and plants and trees and God's great out-of-doors.

The complaints directed against farmers because of the prices charged on Belleville market are about as senseless and futile as if they were addressed to the man in the moon.

In high prices and food scarcity we are but reaping the consequences of the folly we have sown.

We have been preparing a scourge for our own backs and we now break out in maledictions because we feel the sting of the lash.

We have been at great pains to frame an educational system calculated to inspire the youth of our land with an ambition to enter law, or medicine, or theology or commercial life. But in this Canada of ours, with its great untitled areas and depopulated farm settlements, we issue a clarion call to the people through our schools to rush in to our already overcrowded towns and cities and accentuate the problems of high prices and famine food scarcity.

Not satisfied with the adoption of an educational system as little suited as possible to our needs, in the year 1878 we entered upon that other incredible folly to tax agriculture in order to make Canada top-heavy with cities.

Sir John A. Macdonald, thrown out of office and defeated at the polls in the general election of January, 1874, on account of the Pacific scandal, bethought him, of protectionism as a means to enable him to gratify his lust for power. His insidious appeal, made popular through Sir John's attractive personality and ingenious electioneering methods, was only too successful. Canada entered the net prepared by the Big Interests and has been wallowing there ever since. At the end of forty-two years we are more deeply involved than ever.

Rev. Dr. Scott, pastor of Bridge Street Church, in the course of a masterly address delivered recently at the Y.M.C.A. spoke of the cityward trend of populations in all countries. He attributed the movement to the development of manufacturing and the effect of modern invention.

What Dr. Scott said is perfectly true. And, in proper proportions and under right direction, the movement is not necessarily unsound in its moral or economic effects. It is a natural outgrowth of changed conditions. For instance, the cloth for a suit of clothes can be more expeditiously and advantageously woven in a woollen mill where there is specialised, quick-working machinery and skilled operatives than it could be done on the farm, with the old hand loom with which we were familiar as a boy.

Dr. Scott was, however, referring only in an incidental way to the movement of population and was laying stress upon the problem

thus created in our cities and its ultimate effect on our civilisation. He viewed, with grave concern, the effect of bringing up so large a proportion of our youth in the urban environment and rightly maintained that if our civilisation was not to deteriorate and fail we must surround our boys and young men with most wholesome influences.

In Canada, however, we have not been satisfied with this natural evolution and movement towards the city of rural populations. We have chosen to assist nature. In 1878 we elected to place a heavy tax on agriculture in order that we might subsidize those who reside in towns. Reasonably enough the farmers, in many instances, decided to get out from under the unfair burden imposed by our wise legislators at Ottawa.

Hence follows the logical sequence of seventy-cent butter, ninety-cent eggs and four-dollar potatoes.

A year ago last summer the writer spent part of a short vacation in touring the province of Prince Edward Island, the "Garden of the Gulf." Never had we beheld so fair a scene of rural beauty. A land surface, gently undulating, and divided into farms and fields, each surrounded with its hedge-row. The farm buildings, usually all painted in white, with their background of evergreen, gave variety to the color-scheme and afforded silent testimony of the universal thrift, prosperity and contentment.

Prince Edward Island has never felt the lop-sided stimulus of the National Policy. Outside of the beaten track of commerce, it has gone happily on its way producing its premium potatoes, cheese, butter and eggs. It is the Denmark of Canada. The people worry not at all for big towns and slums and herded foreigners. Its capital city, Charlottetown, is about the same size as Belleville, and, in many respects, like Belleville, a city of comfortable homes, few extremes of wealth or poverty, fine educational facilities and a universal air of refinement and well ordered civilisation.

Having in mind that picture, with its evidence of wholesomeness, elevation of tone, and the even distribution of the comforts and some of the luxuries of life, we have thought how fortunate are the children, brought up in such an environment, as compared with the pitiful delinquents we have seen in Montreal, Toronto, Chicago and New York.

Better nine provinces of Prince Edward Island in the Dominion of Canada than nine provinces with a forsaken and depopulated countryside and with cities where the Boweries, Whitechaps and East Ends throw out their pestilence-breeding anarchy, depravity, disease and death, where wealth accumulates in the hands of a few and where manhood decays.

Exactly so "The jewels confiscated in Russia are to be used in the promotion of strikes in North America, Spain and Mexico." No secret is made about it.

The Montreal Star gives some excellent advice in regard to the attitude we should assume towards the flu epidemic. The Star points out that lack of fresh air and the exercise of common sense in the matter of our general living are two of the greatest allies of the scourge. "An equally good aide of the disease, if not more so, is fear. Let us not become panic-stricken and half the battle is won. Personal cleanliness, simple, wholesome food, warm clothing, cheerful thoughts, absence of worry, plenty of rest and sleep, avoidance of those with the disease. These are the things that will help tremendously to make the flu fly

DO IT NOW.

If you have hard work to do,  
Do it now.  
Today the skies are clear and blue,  
Tomorrow clouds may come in view,  
Yesterday is not for you;  
Do it now.

If you have a song to sing,  
Sing it now.  
Let the notes of gladness ring  
Clear as song of birds in spring;  
Let every day some music bring;  
Sing it now.

If you have kind words to say,  
Say them now.  
Tomorrow may not come your way.  
Do a kindness while you may,  
Loved ones will not always stay;  
Say them now.

If you have a smile to show,  
Show it now.  
Make hearts happy, roses grow,  
Let the friends around you know,  
The love you have before they go;  
Show it now.

—Charles R. Skinner.

OTHER EDITORS' OPINIONS

TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF.

Influenza is contracted in only one way, and that is by coming into personal contact with somebody who has it. It cannot be carried by a third person, on the clothes or in any other fashion. You can't get it second-hand. It can't float across the street to you. But if you shake hands and talk with somebody who has it, the germs are likely to find their way to you before they have been killed by exposure to the air. Unprotected coughing and sneezing is the most dangerous thing that can be met. And this is only dangerous when near at hand. — St. Thomas Journal.

A NARROW POLICY.

The Maritime Farmer, a paper which the Western Grain Growers tried to buy recently says: "At the recent meeting of the Council of Agriculture and the United Farmers, held in Manitoba, it was decided that the Dominion Government be asked to continue sales of wheat, until such time as the markets of the world are again normal."

"We take it, is part of the New National Policy, this particular feature of which has been devised largely for the benefit of the Grain and Manitoba."

"The Maritime Farmer does not pose to criticize the demand, except to absolutely condemn the restrictions which surrounds it."

"A guarantee of the price of wheat was a war measure and as such was accepted loyally by the farmers of the Maritime Provinces. Then when the United States in 1919 decided to guarantee \$2.26 per bushel for wheat, Canada was, through the demands of the Grain Growers, forced to adopt a very similar policy."

"Again, the farmers of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island fell into line and 'paid the piper.'"

"The war is over now and if prices are to be guaranteed for farm products, then in the opinion of the Maritime Farmer, the generosity of the people of Canada should be taxed as well for those farmers who do not grow wheat as for those who do."

"If we are to have an inflated price for wheat — then let us have the same measure of protection extended to the dairy and other products of the Maritime Provinces."

"If this thing is to be perpetuated, in the name of all that is fair and reasonable, insist that the Dominion Government fix a minimum price for our milk, butter, cheese, potatoes, apples, etc., which farmers must produce in the Maritime Provinces."

"The new National Policy, of which so much has been said, invites Maritime Province farmers to continue to pay, fifteen to twenty dollars a barrel for flour, from fifty to seventy dollars a ton for feed, any old price for oats, and at a time when investigations are being conducted with a view to lowering the price of milk, the production of which depends on a supply of milk feeds at open market prices."

"Recently the farmers of Eastern Canada have been compelled to pay increases for flour and feeds, because the Grain Growers, having agreed to accept a fixed price for their wheat, demanded a new arrangement the minute the terms of the original agreement ceased to favor their pockets."

Walter Blythe Set Fire

TEN YEARS IN PRISON.

Had Been Sentenced for the Murder Of his Wife — Ill - health one Reason for his Release.

Walter Blythe, sentenced to eighteen years imprisonment for the murder of his wife, was released from Portsmouth Penitentiary on Thursday last, after serving but ten years of his sentence.

According to Mr. Wm. B. Hor-kin's of the legal firm of Robbette Godfrey and Phelan, executive clemency was exercised owing to good conduct and ill health. He is said to be suffering from gout. It is understood that permission may be granted him to visit his children, who are in England. While incarcerated he was employed as a cabinet maker. The crime for which he was sentenced was the most brutal murder on record in Canada. He was first sentenced to life imprisonment and on a second trial was given eighteen years.

IN

It seems probable on the eve of an outbreak.

By the Regulation as well as influenza, acute primary pneumonia like other cases. It has not been possible to place quarantine.

Medical Officers urged to secure the local organizations a available nursing, relief help. The expert year in these respects was the volunteer.

Precautions similar should be published papers.

To Avoid In

Avoid contact with far as possible. Es crowds indoors, in streets, motion picture or places of public as

Avoid persons "colds", sore throats

Avoid chilling of the ing in rooms of temper

65 degrees or above 7

Sleep, and work in c

Keep your hands out them out of your mou

Avoid expectorating oes, and see that othe

Avoid visiting the s

Eat plain, nourishi

avoid alcoholic stimul

Cover your nose w

kerchief when you m

mouth when you cough

handkerchiefs. Freque

disinfect soiled han

bolting or washing w

water.

Don't worry. Keep y

Wet feet demand "pro

Wet clothes are danger

be removed as soon as

What to do for Influe

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If you get a cold g

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Keep away from ot

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and knives, forks, s

handkerchiefs, soap, w

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Every case of influe

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physician. The patient

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He should be in a w

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There is no specific

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The great danger is

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The complications

are worse than the dis

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the Combined Vaccine

Board is believed to

preventing complicat

pneumonia.

Notes by a Re

A scholar said: "Exc

forces of nature, nothi

Food Prices for a Sudden

New York Warehouses Goods That Must

NEW YORK, Feb. 1

of provisions, pouring i

York from half a do

promise to bring about

future the long-promise

high food prices.

Thousands of tons o

eggs and butter fill t

three ships headed for

search of new markets

trains loaded with v

vegetables, eggs and l

expected to begin pulli

city today.

The city's cold storag

50 per cent. more but

cheese than were held

last year. This supply

of the market expert, m

or take its chances with

increasing food supplie

riving from Europe, fro