

FARMING

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The Farmer and Strikes

Up to the present time the farmer and his calling have been entirely free from the effects of unionism and more particularly that feature of it that manifests itself in "strikes." But after this season this cannot be said to be true. For the past few years good farm help has been getting scarce, and this season many farmers have had considerable difficulty in securing sufficient help to take off the harvest. But this difficulty seems to have reached a climax in the township of Westminster, Middlesex county, where it is reported that the farm laborers on a certain concession line went on a strike, putting their former employers to their wits' end for help. This is the first instance we know of where farm laborers have gone on a strike to better their condition, and doubtless farmers generally trust that it will be the last. The incident, however, indicates the tendency of this age, and points to a difficulty which farmers may have to grapple with sooner or later.

Whether the laborers who went on strike were justified in doing so we are not prepared to state, for the simple reason that we do not know what their grievances were. We will say, however, that generally speaking we do not think the average farm laborer has much cause for going on strike in so far as wages are concerned. The farmer to-day is paying for his hired help as much as he can afford, taking into account the prices for farm products.

In other respects the farm laborer may have some grievances which if removed would be better for both the farmer and his help. One of these is the long and somewhat irregular hours of work on the farm. From daylight till dark, day in and day out, takes all the novelty out of work on the farm and makes it a kind of drudgery and life a wearisome round of toil.

If farmers, except during haying and harvesting, would arrange for the farm work to begin sharp at 7 a.m. and close at 6 p.m. we believe more and better work would be done and everybody would be better satisfied than under the system generally followed, that of working from early morn till late at night. In the harvest season, when so much depends upon getting the crops housed in good condition, no farm help should object to working for a longer time each day.

If some understanding of this kind were reached as much work would be accomplished, the help would be better satisfied and there would be a little more time for reading and recreation. Is it any wonder the hired man is inclined to loaf a bit in the field when he has to work twelve or fourteen hours a day in season and out of season?

Canadian Threshermen Organize

Several weeks ago a meeting of threshermen was held at Brigden, Ontario, for the purpose of organizing an association for the purpose of furthering the interests of those engaged in this line of business. The meeting must be considered a success, as it has resulted in the formation of what is to be known as the Canadian Threshermen's Association. From what we can learn, one of the objects of this association will be to keep up prices and, if possible, increase the prices which farmers are paying at the present time for getting their threshing done. It is claimed that

there has been too much price-cutting among those operating threshing machines in the past, and an effort will be made to bring all such under the banner of this new organization and secure their co-operation in maintaining prices at a profitable basis.

While such an organization will, no doubt, be of direct benefit to threshmen and, perhaps, indirectly to farmers if an effort is made to improve the quality of the work done, still we are inclined to the belief that so far as prices for threshing are concerned it is costing the farmer as much now as he can afford to pay. It is not, however, the price per bushel or per day which the farmer pays that is the biggest item of expense, but the large outlay of time and money which he has to undergo in returning work or engaging extra help under the present system of getting his threshing done. If the amount per bushel or per day which the farmer has to pay the owner of the machine for his part of the work were the only item of expense there should be no ground for complaint; but when the farmer has, in addition, to spend three weeks or a month in the busy early fall in helping his neighbors who helped him to thresh we are inclined to think that he is paying too dearly for the work done.

The more we look into this whole question the more convinced are we that it will pay the average farmer to adopt some system whereby he can get his threshing done within his own help or with a slight extra outlay. This can be done by the farmer having a machine of his own to do the work. This need not be a large machine such as we see travelling through the country at the present time, but a small, compact thresher adapted for farmers' use and which can be run by a tread or sweep power or by a small gasoline engine. Some imagine that this is a retrograde step. But it is not. The small machines of to-day are completely modern in their make-up and especially adapted to the farmer of to-day who wishes to do his threshing economically and with the least trouble to himself. In this province, where farmers are going more into stock raising and require to feed the bulk of the grain on the farm a system by which they could thresh when they needed the grain or straw for feed would enable them to get the most value out of it.

Make the Fall Fair a Success

Elsewhere will be found an article on "Closed Township Fairs," read before the Canadian Fairs Association last spring, and sent us for publication. It opens up a wide field for profitable discussion. Many things, no doubt, can be said for or against the open or closed township show. Perhaps, if the small township fair is to remain it would be better to confine its premium list strictly to those living within its limits. There certainly is room for a difference of opinion, and we would be glad to hear from persons interested in such fairs as to the advisability of doing so.

Some weeks ago the Bowmanville *Statesman*, in an editorial directed specially to the management of the local agricultural society in that town, gave some advice of value to every local fair directorate in the country, from which we take the following:

"Our county agricultural fairs are, or should be, educators, institutions of learning, and we should be as ready to consider new ideas and advanced methods as are other institutions of learning; in fact, to keep abreast of the times and be recognized and accepted