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JANUARY 24, 1918

THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE.

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Necessity for Production Greater Than Ever Before

An Appeal to the Farmer is Made by Sir Edmund Walker, President of the Canadian Bank of Commerce, in His Annual Address.

THE CONDITIONS AS THEY EXIST PORTRAYED IN PLAIN LANGUAGE.

After dealing with the subject of the various kinds of war supplies made in Canada, Sir Edmund Walker, President of the Canadian Bank of Commerce, in his address at the Annual Meeting of the Shareholders, said:

We have made an attempt also to follow the purchases of such ordinary articles as wheat, cheese and meats. It is understood that the purchases in Canada by the Wheat Export Company of wheat and oats from this year's crop will reach 350 million dollars in value, and that there have been shipped cheese valued at between 30 and 40 million dollars and a large supply of meats, partly the product of Canada, and partly from animals bred in the United States, but cured here. The published returns are not easy to follow but we appear to have exported, during the year ending March, 1917, live animals, including horses, to the value of 15 millions and meats to the value of over 60 millions; against this we have apparently imported meats to the value of about 25 millions. For the six months ending September the totals of both imports and exports, measured only by value, are on a basis 50 per cent. higher than for the previous year.

These figures show some of the activities of the Canadian people in the way of production, but the need is greater, in some directions much greater, than ever before. The outpouring of supplies of all kinds, from wheat to shells, must go on, but the most crying needs are for sea-going ships, aircraft and those forms of food which are more necessary than others to sustain the life in its fullest vigor and without a sufficient supply of which the allied nations are threatened with starvation. The supply of wheat is vital, and the losses of

shipping add enormously to the difficulty of obtaining supplies from the southern half of the world. At the same time the scarcity of labor makes the life of the North American farmer so difficult that he needs all our sympathy, and should have all the assistance which the city worker or student can give him in summer time.

The Food Question.

One of the most valuable foods for the soldier is bacon. He can apparently do more fighting on it than on anything else. In the United States, when necessary, breeding stock and help in other forms is being supplied to farmers to ensure the largest possible production of bacon, and associations of breeders have been formed for the purpose of distributing well-bred stock. This is being done by men who realize that if we fail in producing greater quantities of bacon than ever before, we shall fail in our duty to the soldiers. In this country we have been occupied in an effort to place the blame for the high price of an article, which, beyond any doubt, we ought not to consume in large quantities just now, and we have apparently forgotten that the price has gone up mainly because bacon is vital to carrying on the war and that if we do anything to lessen the efforts of the producers, the price will certainly be much higher next year than it is now. In England well-to-do people are standing in line for their food supplies, and they, at least, are learning that the talk of famine is not a story to frighten

children with, but a terrible possibility. The harvests have not been plentiful and the danger is as real as the menace of the submarines. We ask the farmer, in spite of the great difficulties which confront him, to produce to the last ounce, but how can we make our city people save food, remembering that every ounce saved will provide food elsewhere for those who without it must starve?

High Cost of Living.

We are living in a time of social unrest affecting greater areas of disturbance than the world has ever known. We are experiencing this unrest at a time of which it may be said, that those who live in our part of the world were never so easily able to obtain employment suited to their varied capacities, never so highly paid, so far as those are concerned who aid in the production of goods for sale, never so prosperous, using the word in a material sense. The price of everything, however, was almost never so high, and the purchasing power of the dollar has declined so much and so rapidly that people with a more or less fixed income suffer keenly, while those who earn more money than they could have conceived possible a few years ago, are disappointed and apparently surprised to find that everything else has advanced in proportion to their high wages. Out of this turmoil has come a bitterness towards all who, by any stretch of fancy, can be held responsible for existing conditions, a bitterness often without any real basis, and which is accompanied by explosions of wrath directed at whatever happens to be the nearest object of criticism, but, if continued, and kept at fever heat as it has been of late, promises ill for our country after the war. I am aware that I shall be accused of defending Capital and what are called the Big Interests, but there must be many readers of the annual addresses made by the officers of this Bank who will believe that we try as faithfully as we are able, to portray conditions as they exist.

Result of War.

Nothing in the end is to be gained by blaming the premier or the food controller, the provision dealer or the farmer, for high prices which are not merely a result of the war but a result of war requirements so peremptory that the question of cost almost disappears. The conditions arising out of the war are at the bottom of most of our troubles, and what is necessary is not only fair dealing on the part of those who supply the wants of the people, but patience, and some remnant of belief in our fellowmen, on the part of those who feel the pinch and who, perhaps naturally, would like to punish somebody. If dealers have combined to put up prices, let them be punished, but apparently we are complaining because dealers, in buying from producers, did not combine to lower prices or to keep

them down. The needs of the war are, however, so great that no combination can control prices either in one way or the other.

Personal Thrift.

We have been told that we should save money, not for our own benefit so much as because we should not spend on unnecessary things the money needed to carry on the war. It is even more necessary that we should eat less, again not so much because we need to save for ourselves but because if we do not eat less others across the sea must go hungry. If we have men, money and food we shall win. If we fail in any of these we may lose. Individual tests, particularly in hotels and restaurants, show that very large savings can be made wherever the effort is directed to that end, but the difficulty is to make advice, or even the regulations of the Food Controller, effective in a country which produces food largely in excess of its own requirements and where economy in the use of food is thought to be evidence of a mean and sordid disposition. It is not, however, enough that we should eat less but that we should as far as possible replace some articles of food, especially white bread and bacon, with others. There is a satisfactory increase in the use of fish, but only a small fraction of our people are responding in any degree to the call to economize. England has reduced the supply of sugar per capita per annum from 93 pounds to 26. Our normal supply is 90 pounds and we are not reducing it yet. Working in harmony with the United States, an order-in-council has been passed prohibiting the export, except to places within the empire, of food and relative commodities, unless a license has been obtained.

Food Conservation.

The Food Controller is bringing under license the milling and packing industries, and is controlling the refining and distribution of sugar. The license system will also be applied to fish, fruit, vegetables, groceries, package cereals, milk, etc. In our London Manager's Review of Business Conditions the following deeply significant words will be found:

"Too much importance cannot be attached to the steps that may be taken in the United States and Canada towards conserving food-stuffs, with a view to increasing the amount available for export to the Allies. The shortage of food, with which all the belligerents are confronted, and the difficulty of increasing production, owing to the lack of available man power, may hasten, or even prove the dominating factor, in bringing about a cessation of hostilities."

He means, of course, that such a shortage may prevent us from continuing the war until we can end it on our own terms. Do you wonder, therefore, that we return so often to this subject? Difficult as the problem may be, we must produce more, and we must eat less, otherwise some of those who are dearest to us across the sea must starve and we may lose our chance of dictating a peace, the nature of which shall be a guarantee that our children shall not have to fight again for those liberties which are now in jeopardy. —Advt.

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Gossip.

Shorthorns and Herefords to Sell at Lindsay.

Very thorough preparations are being made for the ninth annual auction sale of the Victoria County Pure-bred Stock Association. This will be held at Lindsay on January 29. Thirty-five Shorthorn bulls and 15 females will be offered, also six Hereford bulls. This is reputed to be the largest sale of its kind in Eastern Ontario, and every animal is inspected by the Association's committee. There will be some extra choice young bulls sold, and a fine lot of heifers; a number of them being of breeding age. A request addressed to the Secretary, A. A. Knight, Lindsay, will bring a catalogue and any information you desire. Do not overlook this event.

A Scotchman and an Irishman meeting in Toronto had an argument as to whose walls were the thinnest in their respective boarding-houses.

"My walls are so thin," said the Scot, "that you can hear the man in the next room changing his clothes."
"That's nothing," exclaimed Pat, "my walls are so thin that you can hear the man in the next room changing his mind."

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