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The Farmer's Advocate and Home Magazine

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LONDON, ONTARIO, SEPTEMBER 25, 1919.

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EDITORIAL.

■ Sweep down the cobwebs and use whitewash freely in the stables.

A rusty plow at this season of the year is a very bad omen for next year's crops.

Speed the plow. The more land turned this fall the easier it will be to get the crop in on time next spring.

Silo filling time is at hand. The corn is more mature than usual, although the tonnage per acre is considerably lighter.

Good breeding is reflected in the fleece as well as in the lambs. Select a good ram for the flock header, and increase all the revenues from the flock.

Cows should not be allowed to idle away the fall and winter. Milk production is no longer confined to the summer months on farms that show good returns.

To have implements break in a rush season and then not be able to get repairs quickly is exasperating. Farmers might well consider the service obtainable when buying implements.

The farmers movement to be represented in Parliament is gaining impetus as time goes on. There is an awakening in the rural districts which is making politicians fear and tremble.

Gather the well-grown cockerels together and banquet them for a couple of weeks. Chickens will show as good returns for grain and milk as any class of live stock, and when crate-fed they have a higher market value than the poorly-finished birds.

Why is it that the farmer is the first one attacked in the reduction of the cost of living? Boots, clothing, groceries, etc., have reached a higher level than farm products, but the tiller of the soil was the last to raise prices and is the first to have them reduced.

It is to be hoped that when farmers have the balance of power in our legislative halls, that more value will be placed on time and less of it wasted in useless talk. Business should be handled as expeditiously as possible instead of being prolonged, as now seems to be the case at Ottawa.

There are plenty of cases where 8 hours in a factory are all that should be endured, but an 8-hour day standard for all Canada will not give us the production the country requires, or permit agriculture to employ labor in competition with other industries. The matter of hours should be determined by the character of work engaged in.

The veterans of the great war who served on the various battle fronts are entitled to every consideration on the part of their countrymen and the gratitude of those for whom they fought. However, a further gratuity of \$2,000 would have embarrassed the country and made conditions worse for everyone, the soldiers included. The Gratuity League got considerable encouragement from weak-spined politicians who knew well enough that Canada could not afford it. These representatives who are turned about by every wind that blows will make poor legislators for the future, when staunch men will be more necessary than ever. It is fortunate, however, that the great majority of the returned men are moderate in their ideas, and anxious for a just and equitable management of affairs.

The Way of Investigators.

The country will be more disturbed by the result of all this agitation for the reduction of living costs than it was by the sudden advances in prices. While it is quite apparent that something should be done, and that investigation should be carried on to reduce living costs, we doubt very much if the investigators are going about it in the proper way. The logical place to begin is at the beginning, and trace an article through the various channels of production and distribution to its ultimate destination, the consumer. Already the agitation amongst consumers has given rise to a whole series of investigations by governmental agencies. Great Britain, the United States and Canada are each making strong efforts to reduce the costs of food-stuffs, and the effects are already noticeable. The man who notices them first, however, is the farmer; just as he is the last to gain by any increases in values. When hogs took a sudden drop in the United States market, due to a combination of consumer, government and packer, it was some time before a reduction of price was noticeable in retail stores. Nevertheless, the price has stayed down for the farmer in spite of the same exceptionally high cost of production. This phenomenon is being repeated in Canada, where, due to a combination of circumstances, to which United States and Great Britain have contributed, prices of hogs have suddenly and seriously declined. Here is where the Board of Commerce, which has such full powers, might do some permanent good in the interests of the consumer and producer alike. Last year, with bran and shorts around \$40 to \$45 a ton, oil-cake in the neighborhood of \$70, and prepared hog feeds in the vicinity of \$60 per ton there was not enough difference between market prices for live hogs and the cost of production to encourage farmers to increase their output. Bran and shorts, since then, have risen to about the \$60 plane, oil-cake is in the neighborhood of \$85 when it can be obtained, oats are worth between \$2.80 and \$3 per hundred, depending upon whether they are new or old, and prepared hog feeds have been climbing up towards \$70 per ton. It is easy to see what will happen, fewer sows will be bred this fall, and prices will have to remain high during the next few years or consumers will go without altogether.

A more complete analysis of the situation reveals several important facts. A combination of these feeds, such as have just been mentioned, will range around 3½ cents per pound, and it requires about five pounds of grain to make a pound of gain. It will, therefore, cost in the neighborhood of 16 cents per pound for feed alone to produce hogs; but it has been demonstrated at the Central Experimental Farm, that the feed cost is only 67% of the total cost of production, so that on the basis of these figures hogs should sell for \$20 and over.

It would be more to the point if these various commissions were to investigate the high prices charged farmers for feeding stuffs instead of beginning at the other end every time, and working backward. "Hit the farmer first," seems to be a stock and brand of instruction to all commissions having to do with food-stuffs, or else these commissions are so constituted as to have a deep-seated grudge against agriculture. The fine irony of the situation seems to be entirely lost upon the Government, however, because rule one in the plan of campaign for reconstruction is increased production. The farmer is long-suffering and everybody knows it, so he is blamed if he has anything to sell, and blamed if he hasn't.

It has also been reported that one of these high-powered investigators has said that milk prices cannot be raised without first bringing the matter to his attention to be investigated. This is utter folly. The Federal and Provincial Governments are spending

thousands and thousands of dollars annually on agricultural institutions where the most thorough investigations are conducted and the most complete information is on file concerning costs of production. The Central Experimental Farm, or the provincial agricultural colleges are in a position to supply this information at once.

A great deal of the agitation for lower living costs centres about foodstuffs. If the Board of Commerce want to do good and lasting work, they should begin where the farmer buys his raw material, and make production costs cheaper. Farmers will be willing to sell their product for less money when they can produce it for less.

The Grain-Bin Cross.

In the agitation for better sires and improvement of breeds, there has not been sufficient emphasis placed upon the importance of good and liberal feeding. The blood-cross is an all-important factor, but we cannot get away from the fact that without plenty of grain, abundance of nutritious roughage and intelligent feeding practices our herds and flocks will always have the appearance of being mediocre and the prices we receive for our surplus will ever be in proportion to the depth of flesh and finish. With a light grain crop staring us in the face, with the price of millfeeds soaring, with labor scarce, and with the values of meat animals declining, it does not seem an opportune time to discuss the subject of better feeding and finishing. However, we should not allow temporary reverses or successes to alter our policy, for a man with a hundred acres, more or less, will find it to his advantage to farm those acres well, which he can only do by rearing and feeding live stock to maintain the fertility of the soil; this much is axiomatic. When we endorse the principle of mixed farming there seems little left to do but carry on in spite of the real and apparent difficulties which confront the modern farmer. Thus it is that the grain-bin cross is just as important now as though we had an abundance of feed and an eager market; in fact, it is a more pressing matter, because markets are being sought after with increasing energy and determination by several meat-producing countries which we may well look upon as rivals.

Canada is peculiarly situated in regard to live-stock husbandry. We have many advantages, but where length of grazing season and cheapness of production are concerned our contemporaries are very happily blessed. Every one knows that the mild climate of Britain and a very long season for grazing combine to make that country a splendid one for live stock. Argentina, too, has similar advantages which are duplicated again, to a more or less extent, in New Zealand and Australia. The United States, our nearest competitor, has vast grazing lands and abundance of heavy feeds with which stockmen are able to turn off nicely-finished stuff. Nevertheless, Canadians have shown themselves able to compete, and even to produce fat bullocks that surpass in excellence anything which the green hills of Virginia or the fertile corn belt can bring forth.

We need to go on improving our live stock, using better sires, eliminating the poor breeding females, and thus making the blood richer in those qualities which combine to give us a good animal, but this will not suffice. A thin, ill-nourished pure-bred of the best type is not much to be admired, and the rich blood in his veins will never deceive the butcher. Good breeding only guarantees the framework upon which flesh can be laid, and the ability to store that flesh where it is worth the most money.

It we are to compete in the markets of the world and establish ourselves in such a way as to ensure a demand for future production we must supply what those markets desire. Our egg standards are recognized as the best in the world, and our dairy products have a