

THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE AND HOME MAGAZINE.

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DOMINION.

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JOHN WELD, MANAGER

AGENTS FOR THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE AND HOME JOURNAL,
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It is impartial and independent of all cliques or parties, handsomely illustrated with original engravings, and furnishes the most practical, reliable and profitable information for farmers, dairymen, gardeners, stockmen and home-makers, of any publication in Canada.
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his guide, and drop a few scales of prejudice and error from his intellectual optics, he may derive a great deal more in knowledge and satisfaction than can be made by spending the day grubbing away within the boundaries of his own line fence. Agriculture, in common with other industries, needs a broader outlook, a deeper understanding, keener observation, more active thinking, and the power which knowledge gives. One day a year at the agricultural college is the least that any farmer owes himself. And if his wife cannot well accompany him, by all means let him take the boys and girls along.

Certified or Clean Milk.

The campaign for pure and wholesome milk reveals the fact that it is not impossible to have a germ-free supply without resorting to pasteurization. Although the methods adopted at Brookside Farms Dairy, referred to on another page, call into requisition some details that cannot be taken up by the average farmer, the essential points are worth considering. Most of them can be followed at least in part to advantage. In speaking of the little precautions that are considered necessary, the manager says: "Never has one of these details been neglected, but what a big increase has immediately shown itself in the bacterial count of the milk." So, also, does this rule apply the other way, when reasonably cleanly conditions prevail; never is one of these details adopted, but what a decrease in the bacterial count is shown. The strict precautions taken resulted in the average bacterial count in weekly tests made in 1908 being only 165 to each cubic centimeter of milk; whereas, in ordinary milk from the average dairy, the number runs up into the millions. Education has stimulated a demand for pure milk, so that in New York consumers pay twenty cents a quart, in preference to eight cents a quart for ordinary grades. In Toronto, the price paid for certified milk is fifteen cents, while common bottled milk sells for eight cents, or even less.

Although everyone cannot cater to a high class

city trade, profits can be increased by more attention to cleanliness in feed and stable, and in milking and care of milk and cream. Elimination of bacteria in the milk and cream means a product of higher quality—one that will keep longer and command a higher price on the market. If the local dealer will not pay a reasonable figure, it is not difficult to find special avenues of disposal.

Apart, too, from all considerations of price, decency demands cleanliness. Milk is the most filthily handled of all human foods, not excepting canned meats. The methods could be improved from one to five hundred per cent., and the bacterial content correspondingly reduced, without any additional expense to speak of, by just taking pains. A wash dish and clean towel in the dairy, a plentiful supply of clean water used to rinse strainers and pails frequently, proper attention to food supply, ventilation and light, with cleanliness all along the line, are what is required. Join the pure-milk producers, and reap the reward of satisfaction that diligence and a clear conscience always bring.

Remedy for Trusts and Combines.

In my last letter I endeavored to point out the widespread existence of trusts and combines among our protected manufacturers, their methods of operation, and the results that follow from their existence. That these results—the oppression of the laboring class, the robbery of the consuming public, the serious handicapping of our great basic industry, agriculture, and the creation of an aristocracy of wealth—are serious menaces to our national life, no thinking person will deny. One of the greatest needs of our nation at the present time is that a remedy shall be found for these conditions. It is my purpose in the present letter to point out the different remedies that may be applied, with something of the merits of each.

So far as I can see there are three ways in which we can deal with combines in restraint of trade among our protected manufacturers. First, we may, by law, declare their formation illegal, and punish those who may form them by fine or imprisonment. Second, we may appoint a commission, similar in powers to the present Railway Commission, which shall take into its consideration all the conditions surrounding each of our manufacturing industries, and fix a scale of prices which shall be binding upon them. Third, we may, where these are shown to exist, throw off the present protective duties, and, by exposing the industry affected to world competition, at once crush the combine. Let us consider briefly the merits and demerits of each of these methods.

The first way mentioned, the prosecution and punishment of offenders, is an already existing fact, so far as the laws of Canada are concerned. It is now illegal to form any combination in restraint of trade, and the offence may be punished heavily by fine or imprisonment. One would think that this would settle the matter, and that by this means the offence would be greatly lessened, or entirely wiped out. The offenders are respectable citizens, not in rebellion against law, as the habitually criminal class is, and a very few prosecutions and convictions should eradicate the practice. But there are practically no prosecutions. So far as results are concerned, the law is a dead letter. The reason is obvious. Private individuals cannot afford to prosecute, and the Government will not.

It is worth while to consider the difficulties that meet the private individual in prosecuting a wealthy combine. In the first place, there is the difficulty in proving its existence. A man may be absolutely certain that a combine exists in some particular case, but he cannot, without incurring great expense, get together the material necessary to prove his contention in a court of law. Then, so long as money plays the part that it now does in law, the man of small means hesitates to provoke a legal battle with a wealthy corporation, in which he will be handicapped from the beginning. In this connection I may mention a statement made by Mr. Pettypiece on the occasion of the visit to Ottawa of the Grange deputation referred to in my last letter, to the effect that it cost the organized publishers of this country \$2,000 to fight the paper combine some few years ago. So large a sum could scarcely, under ordinary conditions, be spent by any private individual. There is also another point to bear in mind, namely, that in many instances the business men, who alone could be acquainted with the operations of the combine, are entirely at its mercy, and could be ruined upon the first show of resistance. Clearly, we cannot count on the private prosecution of combines under the existing law as in any way an adequate remedy for the evil.

And while the private individual cannot prosecute the combines, the Government will not. It is useless to expect any Government to commence

a series of prosecutions against combines, whose ramifications may, and probably do, include many of their strongest and most powerful supporters, who would not only be injured financially, but would be disgraced by the result. Thus we are driven to the conclusion that the existing law will continue, as it now is, a dead letter, and utterly powerless to accomplish the end for which it was made.

The second proposal, the appointment of a commission to regulate prices, has some merits to recommend it, but is, I fear, so hopelessly complex in its working as to be impossible. If we could have an incorruptible, all-wise and tireless commission, that would be unapproachable in its integrity, would be perfectly familiar with every industry, and would be prepared to revise its findings with every change in the wages of labor, cost of raw material, or purchasing power of the country, we should have a perfect means of controlling combines. But such a commission is impossible. No body of men could be sufficiently familiar with the varied industries of our country to set the prices for those industries. They would be constantly the prey of misrepresentation on the part of those appearing before them. Further, their work would be endless. Every fluctuation in the cost of raw material, rate of wages or prosperity of the country would require a fresh revision, a work so endless and complex as to be beyond the power of man. The idea of a price commission, in spite of its seeming merits, we must, so far as I can see, place in the list of ineffectual remedies.

There is but one remedy left, the removal of the protective tariff where a combine is shown to exist. To my mind this is a very effective and simple remedy. As we have pointed out before, combines find their origin in a protective tariff, and operate under its cover. It alone enables them to reap a profit from restricting production and keeping the market understocked. Without the excessive profits reaped in this way it would be impossible for them to cut prices below the actual cost of production in order to stamp out their rivals. The removal of the tariff at once puts the combine out of business, by placing prices on the basis of the cost of production in the world at large. There is then no longer anything to be gained by restricting production or stamping out rivals. World competition is too strong to be met by any combine. Thus, by admitting world competition, the power for evil is at once taken from the combines, while any power for good they may have remains.

This way of dealing with combines, which I think is the only effective one, is already on our statute books. Section 12 of our present Customs Act empowers the Governor-in-Council, wherever any investigation in any court shows the existence of a combine among the manufacturers or dealers in any article of commerce, to remove the duty from that article. Further, it empowers the Governor-in-Council to commission judges to investigate the existence of combines, and, if these are shown to exist, the duty may be immediately removed. Here, it would appear, we have a perfect remedy; but, so far as I am aware, it has never been used, though the existence of combines is generally admitted. The reason is plain. The initiative in the matter must come from the Governor-in-Council; or, in other words, from the leaders of the party in power. The exercise of the power conferred by statute upon the Governor-in-Council could not fail to injure some of the friends of the party in power; therefore, the power is never exercised.

It is plain to me that if any effective remedy is to be found, the matter must be taken out of the hands of the politicians. It is equally plain, since combines are brought into being by the tariff enacted by our national Government, that this Government should undertake their detection and control. To do this effectively a permanent and independent commission should be created, whose duty it should be to investigate the existence of combines, and which should have power, where these are shown to exist, to remove the protective duty on the articles manufactured or dealt in by the combine. Nothing short of a commission, so constituted and so empowered, will be efficient.

There is another and very important service which such a commission might well perform. It is a well-known fact that many industries which are crying out for more protection in order to make them profitable are ill-organized, ill-conducted, or over-capitalized. Why should not such a commission as I have described investigate the conditions, not only of those industries which are found to be combined, but of all industries asking for state aid in any form, and make public the results. It would seem reasonable, since the nation is asked for help, that the nation should know all the circumstances.

It would seem that it is not impossible to find a remedy for the trusts and combines known to exist in our country. The remedy is not provided, and we hear no voice raised among our Parliamentarians to demand that it shall be. Why? This question I shall attempt to answer in my next letter.

E. C. DUNRY.