

FARM AND DAIRY



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The Recognized Exponent of Devising in Canada.

Trade increases the wealth and glory of a country; but its real strength and stamina are to be looked for among the cultivators of the land.—Lord Chatham.

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A Champion of Farmers' Rights and a Practical Farmer

A Visit to the Home of W. L. Smith, ex-Editor, who is Now Running His Own Farm

By F. E. ELLIS, EDITOR, FARM AND DAIRY

FOR 18 years W. L. Smith, of Toronto, with a love for farmers as a class and for farming as a profession, travelled and visited among the farm homes of Old Ontario and fought many a strenuous battle on their behalf. Against those subtle influences that sap the vitality of all that is best in agriculture by diminishing in secret ways the earning powers of those who engage in it as a profession, he was an uncompromising foe. During this period he became widely known to the farmers of Ontario as the editor of *The Farmers' Weekly Sun*. To-day he is revelling in the freedom from public responsibilities and the joy of being next to nature that is his through being the owner and manager of his own farm at Orono, in Durham county.

It is a long jump from farming on paper to farming on land, particularly when one has farmed on paper until his hair has grown grey in journalistic service. W. L. Smith often spoke of the day when he would lay down his pen and go back to the farm. As the years passed, his friends grew dubious, his older children grew up, passed through college, and started out on careers of their own. Mr. Smith seemed wedded to journalism. Four years ago, however, he surprised even his intimate friends by buying a 60-acre farm in Durham Co., Ont., adjoining the village of Orono. Although the family moved immediately to the country, Mr. Smith still spent several days a week in Toronto supervising the editorial work of *The Sun*. For the last year, however, he has lived on the farm. His connection with *The Sun* is only that of contributing editor. He has joined the ranks of the practical farmers.

His Sympathy For the Toiler

As intimated, W. L. Smith has always been a most sturdy champion of farmers' rights. It would be more correct to say of the rights of all men who toil. The paradox of our civilization—that the rich continually get rich and the poor poorer—appealed to his democratic mind as a condition at variance with things as they should be. He saw the workers of both country and city despoiled of the products of their toil and he protested with all the vigor and ability with which he is so well endowed. *The Sun*, during the 18 years that it was in his charge, was one of the most democratic papers in Canada. His sympathy with the common people led him to become an



W. L. Smith, Practical Farmer.

advocate of free-trade and the thwarting of the greed of corporations by more equitable taxation. To the farmers, however, he looked to establish justice in high places. This he saw could be accomplished only by organization. His greatest dream was an organization that would embrace in its membership all of the farmers from the Atlantic to the Pacific. He did more than dream; he worked. He travelled up and down his own province for many years doing all in his power to draw the farmers together into organizations

of their own in the hope that the provincial organization would become powerful in all provincial affairs, and be an important constituent of the united farmers of Canada. He was and is one of the most enthusiastic members of the Dominion Grange, and assisted in the organization of the United Farmers of Ontario.

It was on one of his organization campaigns that W. L. Smith happened upon the farm of his choice. He was campaigning with E. C. Drury in Eastern Ontario, their object being the establishment of new granges. At the conclusion of a meeting in Orono, he was asked to spend the night with one of his audience. As usual, he questioned his host on the subject of land values in the locality and farms for sale.

The Farm Purchased

"Why, I would sell this farm if I got a chance." The reply was unexpected; the price asked was even more unexpected. Next morning Mr. Smith and Mr. Drury carefully inspected the farm. They found a splendid two-story house that had cost within \$500 of the price asked for the entire farm. The outbuildings consisted of a bank barn, with a good but somewhat inconveniently arranged basement, an L arranged as a hog house, and a commodious drive-house. There were some five acres of bearing orchard and some more just set. The soil they found to be a light sand loam, almost verging on to blow sand at the back of the property. The farm, too, was cut up and uneven, but still it represented good value for the price asked. For two weeks Mr. Smith considered the possibilities of the farm and then he bought it. For the next two years he combined farming on paper with farming on land and daily became more convinced that farming the land gave him the highest and the best satisfaction.

It was a radical move for a man to make so far on in life as Mr. Smith. "Actually I used to feel weak when I thought of what I had done," he confided to me on the occasion of a recent visit. "Had I waited another couple of years, I would not have had the courage to make the plunge. The man who intends to go back to the farm should go as soon as he possibly can. You knew the late Alexander McNeil at Ottawa? Yes, I thought you would. Probably you didn't know that he had always intended to go back to the farm, giving up desk work entirely, but kept putting it off from year to year, until



"Brother Smith Believes That the Home Must Always Come First."