

Manitoba Cheese in Disrepute

A few years ago the opening up of the cheese industry in Manitoba attracted considerable attention in other parts of the Dominion. It was felt then, that though Manitoba would never become a very formidable competitor of the Eastern Provinces in the production of cheese she might in time become an important contributor to the sum total of the cheese products of the Dominion. But these aspirations and hopes seem to have been nipped in the bud. The cheese industry of Manitoba to-day appears to be in a far worse position than it was a few years ago when we had the pleasure of sampling some goods from that province that were of very fair quality.

What has been the cause of this degeneracy? The *Nor.-West Farmer* in its issue of Nov. 5 deals with this question pretty fully. According to our contemporary there are a number of causes. The patron, the maker, the inspector or instructor, and the buyer are all to blame. In fact every one who possibly could be connected with the business comes in for a share of the responsibility for the failure to make the Manitoba cheese industry what it gave every promise of becoming a few years ago. The patron has not given that attention to the care and the feeding of his cows and the caring for the milk necessary to produce the first quality of product. The maker also has been negligent and has allowed matters to run along in a slipshod fashion feeling that any kind of quality would do for the local consumer, and the consumer on the Pacific coast, who was the chief buyer of Manitoba cheese. Quite a number of the makers are Ontario men who went to the prairie province a few years ago. The undesirable condition of the industry at the present time, therefore, does not speak volumes for their skill and early training. They must have degenerated as well as the cheese.

But the criticism of our contemporary is directed more pointedly perhaps to the provincial instructor and his work. It states that what is required in the way of instruction is an individual who will spend a week in each of the factories, take off his coat and go right to work, and show how good cheese should be made. We quite coincide with this view. Where conditions are so bad as they are pictured in Manitoba, mere written or word instruction will not go for much with the maker without a practical demonstration. Perhaps it is because the instruction of the past few years has not been of this practical kind that the western maker will not accept it.

However this may be we are not in a position to speak definitely. The Manitoba cheese industry at the present time is evidently in a bad way and only radical measures can bring improvement. Whether the dairymen of the West will be willing to adopt such is for them to say. We may tell them that unless they do they cannot hope to make a success of the business. The days for a poor, inferior quality of Canadian cheese have gone by. It makes little difference whether the product is made in the East or in the West the quality must be of the best if the industry is to progress. And in our opinion any province or portion of the Dominion that has not within itself the conditions for making first-class cheese, and whose makers, patrons and instructors are not willing to adopt the best ways and means for bringing about this result, had better drop out of the business altogether.

But are the natural conditions of the West suitable for making the best quality of cheese? We have no reason to believe they are not. To speak frankly, however, we are inclined to the view, that considering the short season and great distance from the market butter-making rather than cheese-making would be better suited to the Western province. In the Territories the creameries under Prof. Robertson's direction have done and are doing good work. The creameries in Manitoba have also demonstrated that good butter and lots of it can be made in the West. A system splendidly adapted for the West where farmers live far apart and distances to the factories are great is the farm separator system. This system involves the purchase by every patron of a small cream separator

and the separation at the farm of the cream from the milk, sending only the former to the creamery. We understand that several districts in the Canadian West have already adopted this system with marked success. It is something for Manitoba dairymen to consider.

Maintaining Soil Fertility

Some Valuable Information on Improving Sandy Soils

The following letter, received from a correspondent at Agassiz, B.C., asks for information on several important points connected with the maintenance of soil fertility that cannot but be of value to every farmer. We submitted copies of this letter to several authorities on the subject, asking for their views on the questions contained therein. So far, we have received replies from Prof. Shutt, Chief Chemist, Dominion Experimental Farms, and Prof. Shuttleworth, of the Ontario Agricultural College. The replies of these gentlemen are given below. The letter itself reads thus:

"My soil is a sandy deposit with a vegetable mould on top, said to be a rich soil, but I want it very rich, so that I can grow the very best roots, grain, vegetables, corn, etc. I have not nearly enough barnyard fertilizer, but I can buy nitrate of soda here for about \$40 per ton; muriate of potash, \$55; sulphate of potash, \$57.50; kainit, \$25; superphosphate of lime, \$28; Thomas-Phosphate powder, \$30; mixed fertilizer, \$20. Can you inform me what I had better procure of the above, and in what quantity per acre, and how and when to apply to secure the best results?"

Prof. Shuttleworth replies to the above as follows:

"Your soil, being of a sandy deposit and covered with a vegetable mould, should, in my opinion, receive surface rather than deep cultivation. It must be remembered that sandy soils do not retain plant food well, nor do they possess a large quantity of natural fertility. To keep such a soil in a high state of fertility, it is necessary to observe a suitable rotation, with regular and proper manuring. I would recommend that you plow under a crop of clover or a clover sod, providing you cannot obtain farm-yard manure. The following crops might be roots or corn. In either case, hardwood or elm ashes to the amount of several tons per acre scattered upon the surface, along with 200 to 250 pounds of super-phosphate, will make an excellent manure for either of the above crops. In the fall of that year, late fall plowing, followed in the spring with surface cultivation for the preparation of a seed bed, is necessary for a grain crop, such as wheat, barley, or oats. The land should be seeded down to clover along with this grain crop and left in hay one to two years, after which it may be again plowed shallow and followed the next season by roots or corn as before. It is, therefore, by a system of shallow cultivation, together with the above rotation, that a high state of fertility may be profitably maintained.

"It is quite a mistaken idea to suppose that any of these artificial fertilizers alone, even if applied in large quantities, will furnish a high state of fertility. I would not recommend that you apply extensive potash manures, such as muriate or sulphate, unless you cannot obtain ashes. Neither would I recommend you to use mixed fertilizers. The rotation above indicated, together with surface cultivation and the proper use of ashes and superphosphate, will, I think, secure for you a satisfactory condition of fertility at a profitable cost."

Prof. Shutt had already received a similar letter from the same correspondent, with the difference that sulphate of lime is mentioned in place of superphosphate of lime as it appears in the above. Prof. Shutt replied to the correspondent direct, but has kindly sent us a copy of his letter, which is as follows:

"In reply to your letter of the 31st ult., I would suggest the application per acre, 100 lbs. muriate of potash, 300