

The Farmer's Advocate

AND HOME MAGAZINE.

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IN THE DOMINION.

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Agents for "The Farmer's Advocate and Home Journal,"
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local creamery or cheese-factory account. From every standpoint the local butter or cheese plant is to be encouraged and patronized. So much for it as a local industry.

Support the Local Factory.

From the farmer's standpoint there are even stronger arguments for supporting the local plants than those enumerated in the foregoing article. So long as a cheese factory or creamery is running in one's midst, he is guaranteed a steady remunerative market for his milk or cream. The cash returns may not always seem alluring when compared with prices offered by condenseries or city purveyors, but when by-products are considered, skim-milk at 25 cents per cwt., and whey at twelve cents, the returns are usually pretty favorable. The milk or cream is taken from one's door without the expense of hauling to town or railway station. Payment is, in most cases, certain, and the care of the milk is not so exacting as for retail trade. Of late years many a local cheese or butter-making business has been cut into and jeopardized by the encroachment of large city supply houses and centralized creameries, which reach out a hundred miles or so, in some cases nearly two hundred, for milk and cream, especially cream. The trouble is they seldom or never take the whole output of a district, but cut into scores of the local plants, taking out the milk of enough patrons to spoil the local business, increasing the cost of manufacture, reducing the maker's wages or profit, and threatening the stability of his business, so that he is afraid to make permanent improvements. This hurts the factory, and threatens the interest of patrons as well as makers.

What would happen if these local plants had to be shut up? Producers would be simply at the mercy of big corporations a hundred miles away. When they wanted milk there would be a market for it—at their own prices. When they had enough the local producer could make butter from his surplus milk at home, or feed it to calves. Those who have studied the centralized creamery business in the United States say it has

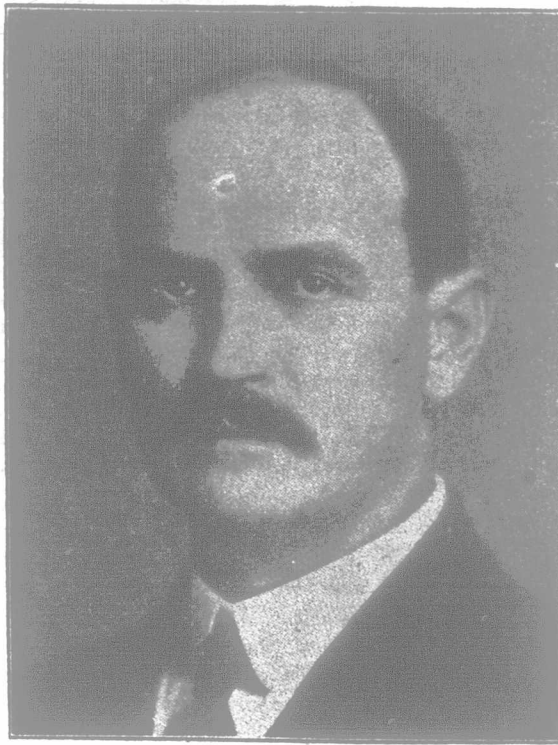
worked out anything but well for producers there. The agents come into a section offering big prices for cream, break up the established local business, and then have producers at their cold mercy. In Canada we hope the centralized-creamery business may never develop along such unscrupulous lines, but even though honorably conducted, we do not believe it has anything to commend it to producers who already have access to a good local cheese or butter plant. Where there is not a good solid local plant the case is different. In such cases the centralizer's agent may be welcomed. During the past year or two, (thanks to the high price of butter) small local creameries have been established at several points from which the big centralized creameries had been drawing their supply, thus accounting for the distance to which the latter have been forced to send canvassers. If it is good business to establish a creamery near the centralized plant, is it not better business to keep up established ones a hundred or two hundred miles away?

Patronize your own factory, support local industry, and protect your own future interests.

At the Helm of U. S. Agriculture.

Canadians are always more or less interested in American politics, and particularly as they apply to agriculture. The work of the agricultural secretary at Washington is always watched with interest by the leading agriculturists of this country, and consequently, at the present time, this interest centers around David Franklin Houston, recently appointed to this position in the Wilson cabinet.

The appointee is a college man of wide experience. Dr. Houston was born in Monroe, Union County, North Carolina, on February 17th, 1866, so is just in the prime of life, being forty-seven years of age. He received his early education in the public schools and South Carolina College, and received the degree of A. M. from Harvard University in 1892, and LL. D.



David F. Houston.

The new United States Secretary of Agriculture.

from University of Wisconsin in 1906. He was a tutor in ancient languages in South Carolina College from 1887 to 1888, and from 1888 to 1891 was superintendent of city schools in Spartanburg, S. C. From 1891 to 1894 he spent in the study of political science at Harvard, was on the staff of the latter university as associate professor and professor of political science for several years. From 1889 to 1902 he was Dean of the Faculty of the University of Texas, and from 1902 to 1905 president of the Agricultural and Mechanical College of the latter State, which he relinquished to become president of the institution, where he remained until 1908. From September, 1908, until his present appointment he has been Chancellor of Washington University, St. Louis, Mo. His wide knowledge of advanced education should stand him in good stead in his new office. He has a firm grip of political economy, so essential to the successful administration of the portfolio assigned to him.

Dr. Houston is a member of the American Economic Association, Fellow of Texas State

Historical Society, and the author of "A Critical Study of Nullification in South Carolina." This book deals with the refusal, in 1832, of the state named to allow certain revenue laws of the United States deemed unconstitutional to be executed within its borders.

Dr. Houston is an energetic man, well equipped to take up the work so ably carried on by his predecessor James Wilson.

Nature's Diary.

By A. B. Klugh, M. A.

It is reported that a shipment of nearly six hundred English birds is on its way from London to Victoria, B. C., where the birds are to be liberated. The shipment consists of thirty-six pairs of goldfinches, thirty-six pairs of linnets, thirty-six pairs of robins, thirty-six pairs of blue tits, and seventy-four pairs of skylarks.

It may appear at first sight that this introduction of foreign birds, some of them noted songsters, is very desirable, but it is, in reality, a highly dangerous experiment. Because a bird or mammal is beneficial in its native land, it is no guarantee that it will prove so in any other country into which it may be introduced. And surely the results of the introduction of foreign birds and mammals, in various parts of the world, have not been so happy as to warrant a continuation of the practice.

The house sparrow was first introduced in 1850 at Brooklyn, N. Y., in the belief that it would prove a valuable insect-eating species. This lot did not thrive, and in 1852 a second importation was made. In 1854 and 1858 the house sparrow was introduced at Portland, Me., and in 1858 at Peacedale, Rhode Island. During the next ten years it was introduced into eight other cities in the United States. By 1870 it had become established as far south as Columbia, South Carolina, and Louisville, Kentucky, as far west as St. Louis, Mo., and Davenport, Iowa, and as far north as Montreal. Between 1870 and 1880 it extended its range by nearly 16,000 square miles, and during the next five years it spread over more than 500,000 square miles. In 1886 it had become established in thirty-five states and five territories, besides occupying 148,000 square miles in Canada.

Now it has spread the length and breadth of the cultivated portions of the continent.

As soon as the house sparrow was firmly established in North America it was found that the warnings uttered by the ornithologists, at the time of its introduction, were only too true, and that the farmers had been saddled with a grain-eating pest and the city people with a filthy nuisance. Then it was resolved that "the sparrow must go," and bounties were offered in many places, nests and eggs were destroyed, firearms and poison were employed against it—all in vain—for it has not "gone", except to occupy new territory.

The common European rabbit was introduced into Australia in 1864 for purposes of sport. So rapidly did they multiply that in 1879 legislative action for their destruction was begun, and since then millions of dollars have been spent for bounties, poisons and other means of destruction, but nothing has been found which will exterminate the pest.

The mongoose of India, a mammal well-known as a destroyer of rats and snakes was introduced into Jamaica in 1872 for the purpose of ridding the cane-fields of rats. They increased with great rapidity, and at first a great decrease in the number of rats resulted. But the mongoose continued to increase, it destroyed young pigs, kids, and lambs, also poultry, game birds, snakes, and all ground-nesting birds. By 1890 the mongoose was considered the worst pest of the island, and the destruction of insectivorous birds, snakes, and lizards, which it effected, caused a great increase in injurious insects.

The European starling was introduced into New Zealand in 1867, and by 1870 had become very numerous. In spite of its preference for insects manifested in its native land, in its new home it has adopted a fruit diet to such an extent as to have become a great pest.

The skylark, the linnnet and the blackbird, all considered beneficial species in England, have been introduced into New Zealand where they have developed food habits different from those manifested in their old home. The linnnet has proved destructive to grain, and the blackbird is proving to be a pest to the fruit growers.

With these examples before us, does it seem wise for us to allow the introduction into Canada of foreign birds?

In the United States a law has been passed under which any person wishing to import live wild birds must first obtain authorization from the department of agriculture.

How is it that so many introduced species become pests? Because in any country the native species have, in the course of centuries, settled into an equilibrium, which we may term the "balance of nature," and every species has cer-