

## THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE AND HOME MAGAZINE.

THE LEADING AGRICULTURAL JOURNAL IN THE  
DOMINION.

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### Why the Half-rate Privilege was Cancelled.

A bold Ethiopian stepped out of the wood-pile at the Dominion Cattle-breeders' meeting in Toronto, last week, when a certain well-known horseman unblushingly admitted that he had been the means of having the railroads cancel the half-rate privilege on stock going from one exhibition to another, which had been in force until last fall. His argument was that an exhibitor sending stock, say, from London to Toronto at single fare (with the usual free return, of course), and then sending it on from Toronto to Montreal at half fare, with free return again, had an advantage over a Toronto exhibitor sending to Montreal at full single rate. Naturally, his objection looked good to the railroad freight agent, and so, as a result of this dog-in-the-manger action, Canadian exhibitors of live stock have the privilege of paying full rates from fair to fair. This works out to introduce many anomalies, such, for example, as the payment of practically full return rates by an exhibitor living at, say, Maple Lodge, unless he went to the inconvenience of shipping home from Toronto, and then re-shipping at once to London. SELFISHNESS seems stamped on some men's characters.

### United States Imports of Farm Products.

The farm products imported into the United States during the fiscal year 1907—the year of highest record—amounted in value to nearly \$627,000,000. The imports for 1908 were valued at \$510,000,000 in round numbers, and the average for the five years, 1901-1905, was a trifle over \$475,000,000. These and other interesting figures appear in a bulletin recently issued by the United States Department of Agriculture, which reviews imports of farm products during a period reaching back to the middle of last century.

The farm products imported may be divided into two general classes: (1) Those which compete with products of American farms, and (2) those which do not so compete to any considerable extent. The first class, embracing such items as sugar, tobacco, hay, and hides and skins, make up a little less than half of the total. The principal

items of the second class are silk, coffee, tea, sisal grass, manilla fibre, jute, bananas, coconuts, and Peruvian and Egyptian cotton.

Farm products have always constituted a large part of the imports of the United States, but not the preponderant share that such products hold in her export trade. In the fifties, only about one-third of the imports were farm products. But their importance gradually increased, and in 1875, to the end of the century, agricultural products made up just about one-half of the total, in some years rising above and in some years falling below the 50-per-cent. line. Since 1900, however, while farm products have continued to increase, the gain in imports of manufactured and other non-agricultural articles has been even greater, so that only about 46 per cent. of the total imports since 1900 are to be classed as agricultural.

By comparing imports with exports, it is found that for the five years, 1901-1905, the average U. S. exports of cotton, grain and grain products exceeded by \$74,000,000 her total imports of products of the farm.

Imports of agricultural products have increased much faster than population during the period covered by this review. In the period 1851-1855 these imports averaged in value \$2.71 per capita; during the five years, 1901-1905, the average was \$5.67. Of this increase of \$2.96 per capita, 55 cents was due to increased imports of silk, 55 cents to packing-house products, 45 cents to vegetable fibres, 28 cents to coffee, 20 cents to wool, 18 cents to tobacco, 17 cents to all fruits, 10 cents to coca and chocolate, and 7 cents to vegetable oils.

Comparing the two periods, 1851-1855 and 1901-1905, it is found that in fifty years imports of coffee increased from 7 to 12 pounds per capita, imports of tea from 1 to 1.2 pounds, and imports of sugar from 17 to 46 pounds per capita; while, during the half century, imports of manufactured tobacco doubled, and imports of wool trebled.

Import prices show some marked changes. Cheese rose from 9 cents a pound in 1851 to 19 cents a pound in 1908, and potatoes from 32 to 70 cents a bushel during the same period. Manila hemp, imported direct from the Philippines, was valued at \$76 a ton in 1862, when first recorded separately among the imports; it has subsequently more than doubled in price, being rated at \$171 per ton in 1908. Philippine sugar, on the other hand, despite improvement in grade, fell from 2.9 to 1.7 cents a pound during the fifty-eight years under review, while Cuban sugar declined from 3.3 to 2.5 cents a pound. Among the spices, pepper advanced from 3.5 to 7.5 cents a pound, while nutmegs fell to 12 cents a pound, less than a fifth of the 63 cents recorded in 1851.

### Our Scottish Letter.

AN ELECTION IN MIDWINTER.

The first month of 1910 is about over. It has been a stormy, blustering, snow, hail, frost, everything kind of month, and farm labor in the lowlands is far behind, while the terrible snowstorm of the closing week of the month has greatly increased the anxieties and expenses of the hill farmer. With it all we have had a General Election in progress, and in some parts of the country keen politicians have done their duty by the State under very great difficulties. I am not sure that a general election has during my lifetime taken place before in midwinter. It is not at all a pleasing experience, and the candidates in the extreme north of Scotland have had a rough time. Personally, I am not a party politician at all, and at this election I have not cast any vote. This may seem unpatriotic, but I have a heart-hatred of party politics, and would give a deal to see all caucus-mongering abolished, and a great deal more independence displayed by all candidates, however labelled. Fortunately, a few members have been returned this time who do know a little about agriculture at first hand. Whether they will put their knowledge into practice for the good of the country is another matter.

It was difficult to determine what the issue before the electors on this occasion really was; yet several of the subjects which bulked largely in speeches have a deal to do with the well-being of agriculture. The House of Lords said the Budget contained so many novel proposals that the country should have an opportunity of passing judgment on it before it became law. It proposed to tax the windfalls which come to land owners through the purchase of parts of their estates for purposes of public utility. In one such case land which was regarded as so worthless that it was rent of about £60 per annum as the site of a lighthouse. The Chancellor of the Exchequer said: If that land is worth £60 per annum now, it was worth something before. If it was worth nothing before, the practice of penalizing the public when such is required for public purposes should be put a stop to. He therefore proposes two things: To get a share of a windfall for the State, in the shape of taxation, and to prevent such ransom prices being charged for such worthless pieces of land in future; to value all the land

in the United Kingdom now, and to rate it according to its present and prospective value. This is manifestly a very big job, and some declare it to be an impossible job. For obvious reasons land-owners do not like it, and hence they referred the Budget to the verdict of the nation. They do not object so much to the taxation of their "windfalls," and in respect of land "held for a rise" in an urban area, on which taxes and rates have not hitherto been levied, it is generally agreed that it is quite fair something should be charged on such for the benefit of the community.

Another ground of objection to the Budget is the proposed sweeping increases in the duties on alcoholic liquors. These are intended to be levied in various ways, and there can be little doubt, from the experience of the past six months, that whatever they may do to raise revenue they unquestionably have operated to reduce drinking. The liquor interest in all its phases is up in arms against these proposals, which became operative as soon as the Finance Bill passed the second reading. Those who desire to see a sober Britain in order to a prosperous Britain, cannot weep over the result, which is altogether in the way of righteousness. Of course, revenue must be found in other directions, and there can be no doubt that the ideal method of raising it is by assessing men according to their means and substance. The problem is to find out what those amount to in any given case. The Treasury must get money, and not unnaturally it takes the line of least resistance in collecting it. Lands and heritages cannot be hid, and they are therefore the first attacked, but all the same there is inherent unfairness in taxing a man who invests his £2,000 in land, while the man who invests his £2,000 in Consols gets off free. The problem is by no means an easy one, and the alternative of the Unionist party appears to be: Raise the revenue by means of a tariff on manufactured goods, and on all forms of imports which compete with home products. It needs no Adam Smith to recognize that here is a very big problem, and those who plead for Tariff Reform have certainly had considerable encouragement from the results of the elections in the English boroughs and counties. In Scotland it has been otherwise, and, on the whole, the results here must be regarded as giving a general approval to the Budget, and a repudiation of Tariff Reform. The net result of the election appears to be to place the Asquith Government again in power. In the fight some have fallen who occupied foremost places—notably T. W. Russell, the Vice-President, and actual head of the Irish Board of Agriculture. A similar fate befell his predecessor, Sir Horace Plunkett, who probably did more than any man of our time to revive the agricultural industry in Ireland.

DEATH OF MR. SPEIR.

The death of John Speir, perhaps the best-known tenant-farmer in Scotland, took place with startling suddenness on January 25th. Mr. Speir was a native of the parish of Dalry, in Ayrshire, and shortly before he attained his thirtieth year, he entered on the occupancy of the large farm of Newton, on the banks of the Clyde, near to Glasgow. He had reached the sixtieth year of his age when the cord was so suddenly snapped. Mr. Speir was educated at the Parish School in Dalry, and after leaving it he educated himself by extensive reading, wide travel, and accurate observation. A man of amazing industry, he toiled incessantly, and seemed to have an infinite capacity for work. He wrote much, lectured often, and took a large share of the burden of public responsibility. Whatever he did was exceptionally well and thoroughly done, and his mind was constantly planning and organizing new developments in agricultural practice on his own holding, and new experiments in connection with agricultural and dairy problems. Mr. Speir was a great traveller. He was at least twice in Canada, and he may have been oftener. He travelled far and saw much, and whatever he saw of value he put to use in his own work. His farm was the Mecca of all agricultural visitors to Scotland, and those who saw it at the height of the season, when every crop was ready for the reaper, got an insight into up-to-date Scottish farming not otherwise attainable. He had almost constantly several farm pupils from Continental countries, eager to learn the best agricultural methods of Scotland. Those who placed themselves under Mr. Speir's tuition had to work. He had no patience with drones—and the dilettante youth who took to farming as a pastime had a rough time on Newton. The loss of such a man to agriculture in Scotland is almost irreparable.

CO-OPERATIVE AGRICULTURAL ORGANIZATION.

The Co-operative or Mutual Association Movement is rapidly extending among Scottish farmers. The idea of combining for the purpose of reducing expenses was long recommended by men who recognized the leakage which took place when farmers were each working for his own hand, and against his neighbor. The Scot is naturally independent and self-reliant. He does not care to lean on anybody else, and this trait in the national char-