

The Cheese Situation Clearing Nicely

Trade is Settling Down to New Conditions—Prices Subject to Change—Western Buyers Unfortunate Position
By H. Bronson Cowan.

ALTHOUGH the manufacture and export of cheese in Canada will be conducted this year on a basis unparalleled in the history of the country, the trade is rapidly adjusting itself to the new conditions. There are war times. Everyone recognizes the fact. There is a universal disposition, therefore, to take sudden upsets in the market with a good deal of equanimity. Ordinarily such a situation would cause a storm of protest, in a spirit of willingness to put up with things that are doing much to make the machinery of trade run smoothly. Last week I spent a day in Montreal and had interviews with Mr. Jas. McGowan and Mr. James Alexander, member of the Cheese Commission, with Mr. Arthur Hodgson, of Hodgson Bros & Rowse, and Mr. B. M. Ballantyne, of Lovell & Christmas, two of Montreal's leading exporters, and brief chats with Geo. H. Barr, Jos. Burgess and George Singleton, of the Dominion Dairy Division. Dairy Commissioner J. A. Ruddick, was in the city for a few hours the same day attending a meeting of the Commission, of which he constitutes the third member. Cheese was going forward in considerable quantities, and there was an evident abatement in the strain under which most members of the trade had been working during the disturbed condition of the trade that had prevailed for several weeks. Briefly the situation is as follows:

The cheese trade in Canada this year will be handled by the Cheese Commission, which is composed of Messrs. McGowan, Ruddick and Alexander. All three are giving their services without financial return. Mr. McGowan is a business man of wide experience, who is the repre-

sentative in Canada of the British Board of Trade.

The trade seems to have every confidence in the personnel of the Commission, which it is expected will handle this season from \$35,000,000 to \$40,000,000 worth of cheese.

From the farmers' standpoint there is going to be very little change in the method of selling cheese that has prevailed hitherto. That is, cheese will be sold on the cheese boards just as usual. There will be, however, less fluctuations in prices than have been customary in former years, owing to the fact that the new conditions under which the cheese will be handled have largely eliminated the speculative element in buying.

"One point would like you to make clear," said Mr. McGowan, "is that the price paid for cheese is not set by the members of the Cheese Commission, but by the British Board of Trade. The price paid is subject to change, and will be determined not alone by the supply and demand for cheese, but by the supply and demand for other food products as well, which, also, are controlled in Great Britain by the Board of Trade. While the margin allowed to the exporters in Canada, and the importers and dealers in Great Britain for handling the cheese will show but very little variation throughout the season, as the charges are practically fixed in character, yet the price paid for the cheese may move up or down as in other years, if market conditions make such changes necessary."

This will be news to many dairymen, as there has been an impression in some quarters that the price that has

(Continued on page 19.)

U.F.O. Protests Against Higher Rates

At a special session of the Dominion Railway Commission held in Toronto on June 12, the application of the railways for a 15 per cent increase in freight and passenger rates, was the subject of public enquiry. The Railway Commission has no authority to grant such an increase without an examination of schedules in detail and the present effort is to persuade the government under the War Measures Act to take the step of granting the increase without admitting it to debate in Parliament. At the meeting held in Toronto to gain the views of the interested public, Mr. Gordon Waldron, represented the United Farmers, Peter White, K.C., the live stock men and D. McIntosh, W. H. Bunting and President Shepherd of the Ontario Fruit Growers' Association, the fruit interests.

Vice president Hanna of the C.N.R., stated that the increased operating costs this year will be \$6,000,000 and the 15 per cent increase in rates asked for would add less than five and one-half cents a ton to the company's revenue. Vice-president Dairymen of the Dominion Trunk, stated that the increase would not meet the increase in the cost of coal alone used by his company.

Representatives of the Toronto Board of Trade and the Canadian Manufacturers Association, offered no opposition to the increase, provided it was considered as an emergency increase only and that coal and a few other items were exempted from the general advance.

Mr. Gordon Waldron for the United Farmers of Ontario, contended that it was not the office of the Railway Commission to grant the request of the

railway. The matter should come before Parliament itself, where necessary enquiry could be made and adjustment and compensation arranged. The duty of Parliament was being shirked if the Railway Commission made the requested representation.

The representatives of the fruit interests produced figures to show that fruit growers could not stand heavier charges than were now being levied upon them. Their operating costs, too, have been increased to the point where they cannot make a profit, but they could not turn to the government for assistance as do the railroads.

Peter White argued that an additional tax on the live stock industry in the form of higher freight rates, would mean that meat would be higher and scarcer even than it is now. He closed his argument as follows:

"Nor do railroads need the advance in rates. The C.P.R. last year made a profit of 22½% on the capital actually invested in the road. True its cost of operation has increased since 1906, but net earnings have increased in equal proportion. Its net earnings in 1916 were the same as in 1915. Its receipts per train mile last year were \$2.84, and its operating expenses \$1.76.

"Lumping all railways together their earnings last year were \$263,000,000 and operating expenses \$180,000,000. True all railways do not make a good showing, but that, as the Royal Commission says, is because some building has not been justified on commercial grounds. Is that any reason why \$40,000,000 a year should be levied on users of railroads at a time when one of the chief bodies of users, farmers, are being urged to increase food production?"



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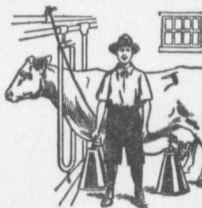
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