

Farmer's Advocate

and Home Journal

REGISTERED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE COPYRIGHT ACT OF 1875.

Vol. XLV.

Winnipeg, Canada, June 23, 1909

No. 874

FARMER'S ADVOCATE AND HOME JOURNAL

ESTABLISHED 1866.

Canada's Foremost Agricultural Journal
Published Every Wednesday.

SUBSCRIPTION PRICE

Canada and Great Britain, per annum, in advance \$1.50
" " " " " (if in arrears) 2.00

United States and Foreign countries, in advance 2.50
Date on label shows time subscription expires.

In accordance with the law, the FARMER'S ADVOCATE is sent to all subscribers until an explicit order is received for its discontinuance, accompanied by payment of all arrears.

British Agency, W. W. Chapman, Mowbray House, Norfolk St., London, W. C. England.

Specimen copies mailed free. Agents wanted.
Address all communications to the firm, not to any individual.

FARMER'S ADVOCATE
OF WINNIPEG, LIMITED

14-16 PRINCESS STREET

WINNIPEG, MAN.

EDITORIAL

The Inquiry of the Swine Commission

It may reasonably be expected that the persons who suggested and urged for the appointment of the Swine Commission, notice of which appeared in last week's number, will make many suggestions as to the line of investigation to be followed. The circumstance that gives rise to the demand for a commission of inquiry is the fact that prices for hogs have been so unsatisfactory. Not that the average price has been extremely low, but that the fluctuations in the prices paid have been so mysterious, and unaccountable. This in turn resulted in the falling off of supplies until today the exports of bacon and hams, from Canada, are not more than two-thirds of what they were five years ago.

To discover a cause and remedy for the situation is the object of the swine commission.

To get at the root of the trouble inquiry will have to proceed in two directions, first to secure all the information possible on cheap production and secondly to endeavor to discover, if it is not possible, to improve the conditions surrounding the packing and marketing. If we mistake not the trouble lies and the remedy is to be applied in the second instance. The farmers of Canada have had a thorough schooling in the economical raising of hogs, and while it is possible to lower the cost of raising the average hogs by the more general use of forage crops, roots and dairy slops, it is yet probable that the Canadian hog is raised as cheaply as his brother in any other country. And not only that, but the packer, the buyer, the country merchant, the public school teacher and editors know about as much about hog raising as the man who actually does the work, which goes to show that if education in the science of breeding and feeding held the panacea for the

economic ills of pork production the trouble would have disappeared long ago.

There is only one thing wrong with the hog raising industry and that is it is questionable economy to feed grain having a definite market value to hogs with the possibility of getting less for the grain afterwards than before. A margin of profit in the value of the grain is never sufficiently certain. The real competition for the British market seems to be not between the Canadian and European farmer, but between European and Canadian capital. Reports giving the percentage earned by capital invested in Danish packing plants are not to hand, but it is safe to say that enlightened self-interest would prevent it going above twenty-five or thirty per cent., and reports of dividend of over fifty, sometimes up to one hundred, as given by Canadian packing plants would be sufficient to demoralize the trade. In almost all Canadian enterprises capital is grasping, but probably not more so in any other than in the pork packing business. It would be interesting to know what the price of hogs to the farmers might have been had the packers been satisfied with a dividend of not more than twenty per cent. It would not simply mean the paying to the producers of the difference between this amount and the actual, but in every establishment where the earnings are large there is a certain generous expenditure for current needs. And also the making known of profits would not tend to drive farmers out of production as at present.

So far we have not learned whether or not the swine commission is to be vested with royal powers to enable it to inquire into the details of the management of our packing plants, but unless it is vested with such authority the enquiry cannot be complete.

The Question of Hail Insurance

The question of hail insurance and farm insurance generally is up for discussion in this issue, and in another column a number of our readers set forth their views on the subject. To insure or not to insure against damage to grain crops from hail is a question on which difference of opinion may exist. Those in districts liable to a visitation of this form of natural destruction—and certain sections of the country are certainly more liable to hail than others,—usually see the advantages of protecting themselves against damage to the extent at least of the value of the seed and labor of putting in the crop. Others whose location is such that hail storms are a more rare phenomenon, usually assume that insurance is scarcely worth the cost, and at any rate can be carried by themselves more cheaply than protection can be purchased from the hail insurance companies.

There is, however, a sense of security in having one's crop insured to the extent at

least of the seed and seeding. The cost of this amount of protection is small. To the man who has funds sufficient laid aside to tide him over in case his crop is destroyed, this amount of protection may not appear as large as to the settler commencing operations where one year's crop is depended upon to provide for a living and running expenses during the year to come. It is the latter who stands most in need of insurance against hail damage but, unfortunately, he is the one who too frequently, either from neglect or inability to meet the premiums, small as they are, fails to provide himself against loss from hail damage. Hail insurance, as a general proposition, is sound, as necessary as fire or life insurance.

A Work Agricultural Societies Could Do

The plowing match has become, in some sections, an important phase of institute and agricultural society work. Successful matches have been held already at Bird's Hill and Carrol, the former, one of the oldest annual events of its kind in Manitoba, and the latter, this year, the provincial competition. One or two others will be held during the remaining days of June.

Since the work of Farmers' Institutes and Agricultural Societies is educational in nature, and the function of these institutions the encouragement of better farming, the raising in every way possible the status of agriculture in the community where they are situated, it follows that a good deal may be done in the interests of the objects sought by means as common as plowing matches. If men can be induced to plow their land better they will be better farmers for doing so. By saying they will be better farmers we mean to apply the statement in the sense that they will make more money from their business by attending to their business better. Few men in this money getting age will respond to any stimulus save that of the almighty dollar and the value of the educational work carried on by our institutes and agricultural societies, whether it take the form of fairs, demonstrations of one kind or other, or lectures, it must be judged finally on the basis of the dollar. The cultivation of the soil has an important bearing, very nearly the whole bearing, upon the returns resulting from it. For this reason any line of work that tends to induce more painstaking methods of cultivation is worth the while of our agricultural organizations engaging in. The plowing match is justifiable for the results attaining from it, and a good many of the institutes and agricultural societies, especially, in any of the prairie provinces could develop this department of their work to the advantage of the communities they exist to serve.