

The Sheep Industry in Canada

The Movement for More Sheep, and More and Better Wool and Mutton is Bringing Results, Assisted by Commercial Factors

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War, deplorable as it may be from an ethical standpoint, cannot be said to have worked an injury to Canadian sheep raisers. Long before the beginning of the war Canada was unable to supply its domestic demands for wool and mutton. The outbreak of hostilities was accompanied by a natural restriction upon imports, owing to the difficulty to secure an adequate number of bottoms for the transportation of the normal overseas trade; and the United States, so far as sheep and wool are concerned, had at its command no surplus for export. This, therefore, acted as a means to still further increase the prices of these products, which previous to the war were at a higher standard than for many years before. In fact, mutton prices even now have scarcely equalled the mark established in the spring of 1913. With the change of tariff regulations in the United States, wool prices were especially affected and were not long in assuming an equally high status.

Renewed Interest.

The upward trend of prices has been most wholesome in the way of attracting interest to the sheep industry. Sheep are beginning to form a permanent asset in farming operations. For years the industry was looked upon as a side issue and farmers paid little attention to the maintenance of their sheep, permitting them to rustle for themselves on the roadside or the back pasture. The farmer considered that neither wool nor mutton commanded sufficiently high prices to make it worth his while to raise sheep on an extensive basis. He had nothing before him to act as an incentive either to enter into the business or, if pursuing it, to improve his product. Consequently, he became indifferent to this phase of live stock production and this indifference acted strongly against the development of the industry. Inability to sell wool and mutton at a reasonable degree of profit, not only caused farmers to abandon sheep-raising, but acted directly as an agency to lower the standard of market stock. In this respect the producers and exhibitors of pure-bred animals did little to relieve the situation, preferring to reap large profits in the United States market and catered, consequently, to this trade. During these years ranching in the Western Provinces alone made an advancement; sheep in all oth-

er parts of Canada notably decreased. The opposite condition obtains to-day. The encroachment of the homesteader is slowly making it more difficult for the rancher to maintain his flocks, but sheep are entering the sphere of the small farm in almost every district, even in those formerly recognized as distinctly wheat-producing sections. It is to be hoped, if sheep-raising is to assume its proper proportions in Canada, that no reactionary element will enter to jeopardize its development during the formative stage for the next two or three years.

Good Breeding Stock Essential.

Difficulty in procuring breeding stock is one of the main features at the present time exercising an influence against the development of the sheep industry. The high prices of the past few years have induced many farmers to part with their breeding stock, the detrimental effects of which are being strongly recognized now. A campaign which may have salutary results is being put forward in an effort to preserve desirable females. This should be encouraged in every way possible. The United States is in a similar predicament and, consequently, has no surplus of breeding sheep with which they can part without creating an injury to this class of live stock in that country. Therefore, sheep-raising in Canada must rest on its own resources and build itself up by a careful selection and conservation of the breeding stock from its present foundation.

Improvement in the prices of wool and mutton naturally gave to the sheep-raiser the incentive to prepare a better class of product, and in this direction undoubtedly earnest efforts are being made. The sheep-raiser of Canada has not infrequently been impugned for the carelessness with which in the past he prepared his wool for market, but with 12-cent wool which once did obtain, what inclination could he have to do so? In fact, at one time wool was something which the farmer counted little upon to increase his revenues. This condition has radically changed and farmers are striving now to promote the sheep industry on a basis in this country which will bring meritorious recognition to it. To assist sheep-raisers in preparing a better product of wool, the Federal Live Stock Branch has inaugurated a system of grading. Grading, it is believed, constitutes one of the most effective means of demon-

strating to wool growers the variation in quality and condition which exists in wool and shows clearly the necessity of observing utmost cleanliness if a high price is to be attained. A fleece, containing an exceeding quantity of extraneous material as straw or burrs, is included in the reject class which sells considerably lower than the first grades. The spirit of emulation, which is created amongst members of associations to produce the highest type of wool, in itself makes grading a valuable and beneficial practice. Besides, it serves another purpose, since purchasers can recognize more readily the character of graded wool and its real value in manufacture and are assured of securing a uniform product. Prizes for wool in the fleece are also being offered this year by many of the large Canadian Fairs. These represent an innovation and, it is expected, will help to improve the character of the clip and at the same time bring the advantages of producing a better class of wool more clearly before the public.

Wool Growers' Associations.

Another forward step, the initial movement toward the community system of breeding, also marks the years 1914-15 in the annals of the Canadian sheep industry. It must be admitted that types of sheep have been raised in this country in a higgledy-piggledy fashion. No consistent system of breeding has been pursued, such as exists in Great Britain and has made that nation premier in live stock raising. The formation of Wool Growers' Associations has instituted a desire on the part of breeders to raise a uniform type. A commencement has already been made and some time it may be expected that communities may be recognized in live stock circles by the class of animals they produce there. It is a matter of years before it can be worked out definitely, but its mere inauguration undoubtedly will produce much benefit in elevating the sheep industry on a higher plane.

Present prospects tend toward a steady rejuvenation of the sheep industry. In this a mutual cooperation of textile manufacturers, dealers, drovers and packers with the sheep producers will have a most wholesome influence. The undoubted shortage of sheep in the world gives Canada its opportunity, and of this the sheep-raisers are endeavoring their utmost to take advantage. It must not be lost sight, however, that the Canadian type of sheep should be dual purpose for both wool and mutton. This means a production of wool similar to the British types, except in those sections of Canada where ranching may be pursued successfully. No animal can be maintained with such a small initial expenditure for equipment and this appeals especially to the average farm holder. The slogan should, therefore, be, and every means taken to encourage it, "sheep on every Canadian farm."

Our Russian Ally

A Closer Bond of Union between Russia and Britain Will Exist After the War

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A deeper interest is being taken in Russia than ever before in this country. It is directly due to the war that the thoughts of the people dwell so constantly upon our great Ally; but that is not the interest of which I would specially write. The Russian people themselves are becoming better understood; Russian literature (for all that it must be read very widely to be of much use to the man who cultivates correct impressions) is in greater demand than it was before the war; and above all there are many more students of the Russian language than we have ever known. In two of our provincial universities, at Sheffield and at Birmingham, Russian chairs are now being established, and I believe that at time goes on the study of the Russian language, the Russian people, and the potentialities of Russian trade will increase enormously. It will increase at the expense — no great loss — of the study of Germany and the Germans. We have all discovered now that it would have been utterly impossible for the British race to imitate the Germans in their so-called thoroughness, and two or three generations will probably pass before the British mind is swept clean of the hatred of all things German that this war has engendered. With the French we have the Entente, the most wonderful stroke of diplomatic genius the world has seen, making for friendship without treaties and brotherhood without bonds. The cordial

relations between the French and the British are typified by it, and nothing else is necessary. But with Russia we do not yet know what steps to take to perpetuate in international friendship the present alliance in arms. Yet there is somehow a conviction in my mind that it will be found easy after all to forge as many intangible links with Russia as we find binding us with France. One even becomes conscious that there is a good deal in common in the character and temperament of the two races, although I must leave it to others to describe how this unexpected conviction is beginning to dawn on us. It is there and it is the one thing that will make it easy when the war is over for Russia to prefer trading with her present comrade-in-arms rather than with her present relentless enemy. There are hundreds of schemes afoot for entering into closer relations between the Russian Empire and the British Empire. It is not without significance that to-day it is comparatively easy to establish in London organizations of all kinds to foster such relations; and the number of individual trading firms that are already making preparations to enter into mutual trade is very great.

Canadians are doubtless keeping a watchful eye upon these developments. Many people here are convinced that the war will give Russia a tremendous lift upward politically and socially. It is true I meet some whose optimism is tempered by remembrance

of the past history of Russia's writings; but on the whole there can be no doubt that the war will have a bracing effect upon the Russian people. They will seek to develop the untold possibilities of the great territory that stretches over half Europe and half Asia. It is said that even now the prisoners she has taken from Austria are contentedly assisting in the development of that great belt of rich agricultural country in Siberia which will one day be able to feed Europe. Transmigration from European Russia to Asiatic Russia was increasing enormously before the war and will be resumed rapidly when the war is over. The restriction which the war dictated in the public consumption of alcoholic drinks, even if it be not continued so thoroughly after the close of the war, will have revealed powers and given an impetus to ambitions that will not all be wiped out. For these and many other reasons Russia will become more powerful, militarily, politically and commercially, and in the development of her boundless natural resources she will gradually become a big competitor in the food markets of the world.

TO ADOPT MUTUALIZATION.

The Home Life of New York is the latest American Company to plan mutualization. This Company has business in force of \$120,000,000. The capital stock subscribed was \$125,000. This is the "additional security" of which so much sometimes is made. In the case of the Equitable we have \$1,500,000,000 of insurance in force. The additional security afforded by capital stock in this instance is \$100,000. There are probably hundreds of claims impending in The Equitable any one of which would take the whole of the capital stock to liquidate — so much for additional security.