

Farmer's Advocate and Home Journal

REGISTERED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE COPYRIGHT ACT OF 1875

Vol. XLV.

Winnipeg, Canada, May 19, 1909

No. 869

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 arrearages.

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

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14-16 PRINCESS STREET WINNIPEG, MAN.

EDITORIAL

After all there may be some truth in the assertion that to maintain peace we should prepare for war, for the expense of preparing so reduces financial resources that war is impossible, also an occasional war rids us of that element of jingoism in our population that invariably gets us into trouble.

What will the Harvest Be?

Following the wheat corner and advancing bread prices, people are beginning again in the United States to agitate for prohibition, or control anyway, of speculative operations in food products. Patten and other speculators in the various exchanges of America are alleged, by the bread eaters who are dissatisfied, either with the size of their loaf or the cost of it, to have caused an advance of twenty-five cents per bushel in wheat since last October, and to have cleaned up several millions in profits from their speculations. There is some truth in the assertion that those who started on the bull side of the wheat market in the May option any time between October and the first of February, if they had nerve enough to back up their convictions with cash in the form of thinly spread margins, stepped into money faster probably than they could have by any other means. But it is highly improbable that the money they made came out of the bread consumers directly, or at least if it came out of them then it came from a very small number of bread eaters, who had taken the bear side of the market. Charles M. Schwab goes over to Monte Carlo and bets with a number of other idle millionaires as to the color of the ball that will turn up after each throw made by the man with the roulette game, and James J.

Patten goes into the Chicago wheat pit and bets with some other gentlemen that May wheat will sell for a dollar and a quarter before delivery day. Because one plays on a gambling device and the other on a food product doesn't make any difference to the game. The fellow who bet on the yellow when the red was the one to win, simply lost his play and the cash he risked, but the onlookers were none the worse off. So in the wheat game. He who sold when he should have bought lost his stake to the man who was the luckier guesser. But the game had little to do with raising the price of the actual commodity.

Anyone acquainted with the world's situation in wheat knows that since 1904 things have been shaping towards higher values. The first move upward of any significance occurred in 1907, following the short crop of that year. The harvest of 1908 was so very nearly the same as that of the year previous that only the strong flow of the cereal last fall for a few weeks prevented people from seeing earlier than they did, that there was very little in reserve for the world's actual needs. Had Patten never existed wheat was bound this spring to advance in price, and had no corner been affected it would have advanced just as certainly and probably just as high as it did. Some of us might be surprised if we knew how small the influence is of these so-called Emperors of the wheat pit on the price of the cereal itself, and how strongly the current of circumstance affects them and their speculations.

Bears Coming out of Trees

They have been at it already this season, paving the way for bear activity later in the wheat market. For a month now reports of the progress of seeding have appeared daily in the newspaper, and anyone living outside the districts reported on might be convinced, if he believed these apparently authentic statements, that seeding was well under way towards the end of April, that conditions, for the most part, were satisfactory, that the wheat crop of 1909, in Western Canada, so far as seeding could indicate, was off to a better than average start, with the usual prospect for a bountiful harvest. This kind of thing is not unusual. It starts each year about the time the crow returns. Certain interests over bubbling with optimism begin seeing bumper harvests before the seed is sown and keep right on seeing things of the same nature, no matter what results, until most of the crop is marketed. All of which tends to convey a too favorable view of conditions and in general to keep prices down. What we need badly in this country is a government crop reporting service worthy of the name. The one we have at present is seldom considered and we depend too much upon unofficial data for information as to crop conditions.

The Fire Fiend

If there is one thing more than another which incoming settlers to this country need cautioning about, it is the matter of being careful regarding fires. We have had our usual proportion of prairie fires this season and the usual high percentage of them likely were caused by the carelessness of some new comer. While it happens sometimes, it is rarely that the prairie is set ablaze by one who has lived on it for any time. As a rule it is the carelessness or ignorance of some novice from the East or the Old World that is the cause of the mischief. They have not been accustomed to seeing the whole country side start into blaze from a match dropped in the grass, a cigar stub thrown away or a camp fire left smouldering, consequently they take chances with their own lives and the lives and property of others which more experienced persons would be particularly careful not to invite. Carelessness in these matters is the cause of this annually recurring phenomena, seasonal at this time, and if any additional measures can be taken to insure of less havoc being wrought, if the need of caution with fire can be more thoroughly impressed upon those turned loose upon the prairies for the first time, steps should be taken to enforce and impress them.

Cattle Feeding Letters

That cattle feeding is regarded with a certain amount of suspicion, and that feeders realize there is a lot to learn by experiment before they are sure of their conclusions, is evidenced by the articles we have received upon this subject for the regular discussions department. When we name a topic for discussion with which the majority of our readers have had some experience, we are simply deluged with letters, but with the subject of cattle feeding the response has been quite limited. Nevertheless we have a few good letters which indicate that there are many men who are learning a lot about cattle feeding and unlearning much more.

One fact seems to be gaining ground very rapidly and that is, the land is fast coming to demand the benefits of manuring. Only a few days ago it was almost impossible to find a man who actually believed manure was a necessity upon the land in which he was particularly interested. By almost every one it was declared that manure made the crops rank and late, but a few observant men found that by putting manure on thin it tended to make the land warmer and the crop earlier by a week or ten days. This knowledge is spreading, and is arguing for more extensive stock feeding. The fallacy that it is necessary to keep big, matured steers in a temperature around 40° in order to put flesh on them dies hard, but why should it live? After all 40°, or any other temperature just above freezing is in no way

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