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WINNIPEG

Farmer's Advocate

and Home Journal

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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 im-
possible, 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 specu-
lators 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 gambl-
ing 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 caution-
ing about, it is the matter of being careful
regarding fires. We have had our usual pro-
portion 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 careless-
ness or ignorance of some novice from the East
or the Old World that is the cause of the mis-
chief. 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 experi-
ence, 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 par-
ticularly 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