

The Farmer's Advocate AND HOME MAGAZINE.

THE LEADING AGRICULTURAL JOURNAL IN THE
DOMINION.

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London, Canada.

Taking it Out of the Land.

A tenant farmer in Ontario is very often looked upon as a poor farmer. Why? Largely because it has been the custom in the past in this old Province for the tenant to get as much out of the land as possible and put as little back as he could—a poor system for owner, tenant and the farm. Short-term leases have been largely responsible for this state of affairs. Leases for one year, two years or five years are too short. The tenant goes to the farm, which, mayhap is in good condition. He crops every field he can for the length of time of his lease and the last year puts the whole thing into cereal grain and leaves the place in poor condition for the next man, who operates on the same principle. We do not mean that all do this, for there are some good tenants. One of the best tenants we ever knew made the remark one day that he farmed his farm exactly the same as he would if he owned it. He paid a high rental, was always able to meet his rent at the appointed time, saved money and finally became the owner of a farm of his own. He rotated his crops, kept a large stock, fed all he grew on the place, returned a maximum amount of fertility to the soil, left the farm in better condition than he found it, had it rented on a ten-year lease and was a success. A neighboring farm was worked on the other principle of short-term leases, large acreage of cereal crop, grain sold to meet the rent and other expenses, little stock was kept, a minimum of plant food was returned to the soil and the farm in ten years went down and down, the rent had to be lowered, the tenant made only a living, the landlord lost money, the farm suffered and the community was injured thereby. Everyone loses through a tenant working on the policy of taking all he can get out of the land. He really gets much less than he would by working the land well and systematically. It is always short-sighted policy for tenant or owner to mine the soil.

We recently attended a fall fair where all the cattle on exhibition ran loose in a field. They were judged, or guessed at, all running together. Of what educational value is such a practice? It is the Directors' place to make rules and see that they are carried out. One of these rules should be that all cattle are halter-

The Trouble With Co-operation in Canada.

Co-operation is a word that has been much used and almost "ridden to death" by journalists and public speakers in Canada, but they should be excused on the grounds that a wrong existed and they selected this movement as a remedy for the ailment. It has been easy enough to prescribe, but the patient, like a small boy, has often poured the physic into the sewer, and got along just the same. A disagreeable taste is the most common objection to medicine, and, figuratively speaking, co-operation has had a bad taste to many Canadian people who have tried it. The system of getting together has done a remarkable amount of good, and in many lines it is a wonderful factor at the present time. Both East and West it is bringing the grower more for his product, and supplying him with the necessities of life and occupation at a reduced price. In spite of that, from one end of Canada to the other, one will find members of the different associations who are dissatisfied and who are disrupting the local institutions that have been built up to alleviate some unfavorable conditions in the community. Co-operation, both on a large and small scale, has proved a success in many cases; why is it not universally so?

In the first place the spirit of the Canadian people does not correspond with what has long been preached as the true attributes of a successful co-operator. We need not repeat these attributes here. Suffice it to say that when co-operation is advanced as anything but a purely commercial proposition, intended to bring about more favorable prices and needed reforms of a mercantile character, it is not receiving a fair show in this country. The people of Canada are independent in life and manners, and they do not care to divulge family secrets that a few more dollars may result thereby. When they enter into an agreement they wish to know the extent of their obligations and their probable revenues. "Unlimited liability" will never become popular here, but it does appear to be the fullest expression of true co-operation. Farmers in this country will invest their good will, patronage, and so many dollars, nevertheless they will not sell themselves to the movement or make co-operation a pseudo-religion with them or accept it as a new god.

The staff, and the salaries paid them, are often the cause of much trouble. Members fail to realize that without an efficient manager the organization is doomed from the beginning. A more capable man is required for a co-operative association than for a private business of the same magnitude. Available men with business acumen must be paid well for they are in a position to command a good salary anywhere. When a manager is receiving anything like a fair wage from a co-operative enterprise, the members too often feel that money is being spent extravagantly. A small association cannot afford to hire the proper kind of a manager, and they experience difficulty from the first. What it costs to sell a barrel of apples, a pound of wool, a bushel of wheat, or any unit from the farm is one factor to consider; another, is what the unit sells for. If the net proceeds are in excess of what might have been obtained without the organization it matters not if the manager is receiving five or ten thousand dollars per year, for the member is still ahead of the game.

Once in a while factions arise in the association and a certain clique get control. This is disastrous to the movement. A member of one of the largest co-operative associations in the country recently said to the writer: "The average grower is no better qualified to select a manager for his business than he is to select the markets to which he should cater." This is significant. A few can often influence the many and have the wrong man appointed.

Then with regard to price. Members frequently compare their average receipts with the returns to some outstanding man in the community, or, more correctly speaking, the comparison is made and brought to the members' attention. The reason for this practice is obvious; someone desires to stir up strife and dissatisfaction within the ranks. They have an easy field to till, for the average co-operator is usually more or less suspicious of undue profits on the part of someone on the inside. These suspicions are not always groundless, perhaps, but the books of every co-operative company should be audited by some disinterested person, and the whole matter

washed let it be cleansed and cleansed thoroughly by the members themselves. A reliable auditor would do much to inspire confidence, and prevent a small error growing into something sufficiently formidable to wreck the organization.

With further regard to prices one must consider conditions prior to the inception of the association. Sometimes a co-operative movement in a community will do as much or more for the independent producer as it does for a member. The standard of quality is often improved, new markets are exploited, congestion averted, and, on the whole, a relieved state of affairs is brought about. Any improvement in transportation facilities or conveniences which can be credited to the association is also there for the non-member to enjoy. Furthermore, the independent grower is frequently paid a higher price for his product than the co-operative member receives in order to create a feeling. The purpose of this is easy to comprehend, and it is one of the most effective weapons employed by the enemies of the co-operative movement. The broad-minded man will ignore rumors and hearsay; they are usually started rolling for a purpose. If a grower prefers to remain outside an organization of this kind it will do him no good, but probably harm, to put obstacles in the way of its success. There are pitfalls being prepared all the time. Help the thing along, "don't knock."

Co-operation in Canada is right primarily, the trouble is with the people who too often abuse it.

Too Much Work!

Farmers are too often little more than day laborers. They work so hard for long hours each day that they have little time or inclination to plan a system of management for their farms. They do too much work and not enough thinking. True it is that labor is scarce, and work must be done, but it is possible on most places to lighten the labor considerably by planning it better. The majority of Ontario farms, particularly since the war began, are one-man farms, and the farmer must keep "slugging" away from early morning till late at night in order to keep the place running, the chores done, crops harvested, and to manage any preparation for next season's crop. It takes considerable country spirit and pride in the ownership of land with good stock, to live down the lure of the town or city with its shorter hours and more leisure. It will take much talk on the part of city people to convince farmers that, under present conditions, there is not too much work on the farm. Farming, properly carried on, is a business, and it requires ability and energy to make it the success which every ambitious farmer desires to make it. No manager of a city enterprise is called upon to work with his hands all the time. The man at the helm of big business does his most valuable work with his head. In no uncertain measure the same should be true of the farmer. We do not mean by this that the farmer should do no work with his hands, because under conditions as they will obtain in Canada for some time, it will be necessary that the farmer work as well as think. But he should have enough leisure time to lay and carry out plans. There should not be so much work, work, work in the business of owning and operating a farm to tie the owner up for fifteen or sixteen hours every day in the year with the exception of Sundays, and for five or six hours on each of these. The most successful farmers are not always those who slave and serve all their lives, but are very often found among those who exercise a certain amount of the trading instinct, buying here and selling there to advantage, and using a certain amount of their leisure time in planning the farm work, believing it good policy to pay someone else a liberal wage to do a great deal of this work, releasing the owner and manager to carry on the straight business of the farm. No one can blame the farmer and his wife, growing older on the farm, if they both yearn for a less strenuous life, retired in the near-by town, and yet we have seen so many leave the farm and move to town and ever after be dissatisfied, wishing themselves back on the land. After all, there is, for the man who has lived his many years on the farm, a certain something in farming which gives him greater pleasure than he can find elsewhere, although it may be that it is necessary for him to try the town or city in order to be convinced. Yes, the average farmer has altogether too much work to do himself to be the manager which his business calls upon him to be, but there seems to be no remedy

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