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EDITORIAL.

Would an Export Dressed-beef Business Pay?

Following Mr. McCredie's letter on co-operation for the beef industry, any experience bearing on the feasibility of a Canadian export trade in dressed beef will be welcomed by our readers. In our editorial comment of a week ago allusion was made to the fact that the William Davies Co., of Toronto, has been catering to the domestic dressed-beef trade in several Canadian points, including Toronto, London, Brantford, and other places. This company, it appears, slaughters and packs hogs only, drawing its supplies of beef mainly from the Harris Abattoir Co., of Toronto, with which it is in affiliation, though in the case of its outside stores it buys usually on the local market. To ascertain the extent of the facilities of the Harris Abattoir Co., and to obtain their opinion on the possibility of a lucrative export business, we wrote them, and from their reply quote as follows:

"In regard to the capacity of beeves per week of our abattoir, we have facilities for killing 900 per week, but our capacity is considerably in excess of the requirements of our trade. Our killings vary according to the time of the year, our minimum being about 300, and our maximum about 650.

"In regard to the development of an export trade in Canadian beef, we have nothing on which to base an opinion, except our experience of three years ago, which led us to discontinue the business entirely, after experimenting with the trade about six months. We have no reason for changing our opinion then formed, that a profitable business with England in dressed beef is not possible."

Quoting again from a subsequent letter:

"The reasons are all summed up in the market quotations of export cattle at Toronto, and of refrigerated dressed beef on the English market. Anyone with a knowledge of an abattoir business who follows the quotations on export cattle on the Toronto market, and compares with them the quotations for refrigerated dressed beef in England, will see at once that no profit is possible in the trade. England is an open port for the world, and the countries which just now have the call on the English dressed-beef trade are Australia, New Zealand and the Argentine Republic. It is true that, as yet most of the meat from these sources reaches the English market frozen, but the quality of the meat is good, and the price at which this frozen beef is sold depresses the refrigerated dressed-beef market."

It is quite true that the margin between live cattle in Toronto and refrigerator beef in London is not very wide. For instance, referring to our market reports of last issue, June 1st we find London cabling refrigerator beef at 8½c. to 9c. pound, while in Toronto export cattle were ruling from \$5.00 to \$5.65 per cwt., and medium butchers' at \$4.00 to \$4.75. Allow for shrinkage in killing, freight and other expenses, and it becomes evident that unless expenses can be cut down pretty fine, the transformation of live Canadian cattle into beef for the British market must be a losing game. The great drawback to such an enterprise is the comparatively small and irregular supply. Reduction of cost and profitable utilization of by-products are dependent on a volume of business sufficient to warrant an immense and up-to-date establishment, which would require practically all the beeves now raised in the Dominion. Since it is unlikely that any establishment, corporate or co-operative, will ever succeed in securing more than a proportion of the total, the question forces itself all the more

strongly upon us when considering this subject, "Have we the cattle?"

We have no desire to throw cold water upon the dressed beef project, realizing that if practicable and established upon a good footing it would be a great boon to our beef-raising industry, but it is better to be safe than sorry, and we regard it as the part of wisdom, before embarking upon an enterprise of the kind proposed, to take deliberate count of the drawbacks, so as to avoid the danger of rash and unsuccessful undertakings. Meantime, discussion is invited.

Defrauded Through the Mails.

Few people have any idea of the extent to which the mails are used directly and indirectly for the furtherance of schemes by which the public are swindled out of their money. Right and left all over the continent "get-rich-quick" concerns are operating in connection with race-track and stock-exchange gambling, bogus projects for distributing silverware, diamonds, gold mines, town lots and rubber-tree plantations, or dazzling dividends from investments of funds placed in the hands of "promoters," who, in a few weeks' time, have been known to gather millions of dollars together from their dupes.

Some time ago U. S. Postmaster-General Cortelyou inaugurated an energetic policy, in order to prevent the perpetration of these frauds upon the public. Heretofore, we understand, the United States Postal Department waited to receive complaints against persons or companies engaged in illegal business before issuing orders prohibiting their use of the mails. It is now proposed to scan the newspapers for advertisements inviting people to join in "get-rich-quick" schemes, and any which on their face appear questionable will be made the subject of investigation by an inspector of the Post-office Department. It also is intended, even before the investigation is begun, to stop delivery of mail at a place designated in the advertisement. If investigation should prove the business is legitimate, then the mail will be delivered to the person to whom it is addressed. The Department believes it has been successful in stopping the operation of men who advertise for money to bet on the races, claiming that with the special information which they had they could "pick the winners" every time. Later on the "discretionary wheat pools" were attacked. These are made up of swindlers who advertise for money, alleging that they were enabled with large sums to manipulate the markets and pay weekly dividends of three per cent. or more. Ruined characters, homes and fortunes follow in the wake of all these schemes, bearing out the truth of the teaching of the Good Book that, they fall into a snare who make haste to become rich, or of the modern Yankee philosopher who declared that it was a black day in any young man's career when he thought there was some easier way of getting a dollar than by squarely earning it.

These swindling operations have spread their tentacles into Canada; how far, or to what extent, we can only guess. The Canadian Postal Department should be vigorously alive to guard the interests of the people from frauds perpetrated through the mails. It has been suggested also that the law of libel should be amended so that Canadian papers could speak out more plainly for the safeguarding of their readers, without running the constant risks of vexatious actions for damages by worthless fake concerns.

What of the School of Forestry?

With the prorogation of the Ontario Legislature and the closing of the school year at the Ontario Agricultural College will come leisure for the development of a more aggressive forestry policy in the Province. This will relate to the public domain, or the Crown Lands on the one hand, and on the other to the preservation and extension of timber plots in the older agricultural areas. For the former there will be the enforcement of stringent measures husbanding our public timber resources by the employment of competent foresters and otherwise, and for the latter a continued educational propaganda must needs be carried on through the agricultural press, the farmers' institutes and the Agricultural College, where many of the coming farmers of the country are being educated. It is in conjunction with that college that the proposed Provincial School of Forestry should be located, for the reason that it would there secure the proper class of students for the forestry service and enjoy the advantages of alliance with the great farmers' college in which many kindred subjects are taught. To make it an adjunct of the Toronto University, as has been hinted as the design of that institution, would be to foredoom the school to failure from the start, and tend, to the extent of whatever little influence it might exert, to divert the attention of farmers' sons to the professionalism of the University. The farmers of the Province, to a man, should look to the new Minister of Agriculture (Hon. Mr. Monteith) to mature plans for the early establishment of the Forestry School at Guelph, and to set his foot down hard on any incipient schemes for diverting it to Toronto, which would be directly against the interests of the school and against the interests of the farmer.

Concluding Problems in Co-operation.

This is the last of this series of articles on co-operation, summarizing as it does the chief remaining problems. The facts of co-operation—the experience of co-operators in Canada and abroad, and the principles and methods which have been shown to be practically essential to successful organization—have been put as clearly as possible from first to last, and there are many encouraging evidences that the essentials have been heeded by my readers. The treatment of the remaining problems may, therefore, be brief. Those problems may be grouped as follows:

1. Sale of eggs, poultry, homemade butter, etc.
2. Operation of canning factories for disposal of vegetables, various fruits, etc.
3. Sale and purchase of seed grains, etc., and the sale of other crops in market.
4. Ownership and operation of threshing machines.
5. War against noxious weeds and insects.

The first-named problem needs little comment, as organization should proceed on the lines already laid down for sale of bacon. The objects to be gained are economy by use of system, and the "Farmer's Advocate" has already outlined the system as adopted in operation by the Danish co-operators for this object. The first essential is the maintenance of high and uniform quality by regulations, penalties, individual marks for tracing violations, and a trade-mark on all products sold.

The second problem, operation of canning factories, is important enough to merit fuller discussion, but the conclusion is inevitable. Co-operative ownership and operation of numerous factories would make this industry as profitable to the farmers as it has done in the case of cheese factories, and would do it as easily. Organization could proceed as previously advocated.