

The Commercial

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A LESSON OF THE SEASON.

The present season of large crops of coarse grains, with a considerable quantity of stuff which it will hardly pay to ship out of the country, again points farmers a lesson which if they are wise they will take advantage of. There are many avenues of profit open to our farmers in which they could direct their attention to the very best advantage. Time after time experience has shown openings for the profitable diversification of the interests of the farmers, but these have been largely disregarded. Many farmers have confined their efforts to growing grain, and have neglected these excellent opportunities of improving their condition.

To-day there is probably no more inviting field for Manitoba farmers than that of raising hogs. On several occasions during recent years THE COMMERCIAL has endeavored to bring this matter before the people. Now circumstances have arisen which will force the matter upon the attention of our farmers, though too late to take full advantage of the present situation. There is an immense quantity of coarse grain in the country, as well as a lot of damaged stuff, which is only useful for feeding. Some of this it will hardly pay to ship, but it could be fed at home and return a handsome profit, if we had the animals here to consume it. Unfortunately the country is almost bare of hogs and the opportunity is largely lost for the present.

As to the profit in raising hogs, there can be no difference of opinion. Agricultural journals refer to this as a very profitable industry, and an Ontario journal recently claimed that raising hogs is the most profitable branch farmers in that province can engage in. If profitable there, it would certainly be equally profitable here. The return is rapid and the profit large. A six months' old porker, weighing 150 pounds, would at the present time be worth \$10 live in the Winnipeg market. About 75 per cent. or more of this would be clear profit. The present value is abnormally high, but even at a couple of cents per pound less, the profit would be equal to 50 per cent. or more.

In a country where coarse grain yields so heavily and can be so cheaply grown, it is a shame that we should be obliged to import our hog products. The present season pork has brought fancy prices in this market, and the supply is hardly equal to local requirements for consumption fresh. All cured hog products are imported from the States, or brought in from the East. The cost to the consumers of Western Canada of imported hog products, including freight and duties, is probably not less than \$2,000,000 per annum. This should all be produced at home. Manitoba is paying duties both ways by exporting stuff which should be consumed at home, and importing stuff which should be produced at home. We ship barley and potatoes to the United States, upon which we are obliged to pay the duty going into that country. Then we import

bacon, hams, lard, etc., from the United States, upon which we are obliged to pay our own customs tax of three cents per pound. On account of the smallness of our market, and the largeness of the market to which we ship and in which we purchase, we are obliged to pay the duties both ways on exports as well as imports. The common sense way would be to use our barley and potatoes at home. By following this plan we would save the duties both ways, as well as the freight charges both ways. When we ship potatoes to St. Paul the grower here pays freight and duties to get them to that market. When we buy bacon in Chicago, the consumer here pays freight and duties to bring them to this market. The smaller market is thus forced to pay tribute to the larger. Besides saving freight and duties, a profitable industry would be established in the country. Farmers would make a much larger profit by raising hogs enough to supply the home market than they can by selling their coarse grain.

It is a matter for surprise that Manitoba farmers have so neglected this profitable industry. Hog products to supply the home market could be produced at home, without interfering with grain crops to any extent. The packing and curing of the product would provide a further profitable industry at home. The raising of hogs is within the reach of any farmer. The outlay is small, return quick and the profit large. It would appear from the way in which this and other interests have been neglected, that Manitoba farmers do not make the best of their opportunities by a long way. The neglect of the industry in question shows this very plainly.

EGGS.

In view of the high duty placed upon eggs by the recent tariff bill adopted in the United States, it is worth while taking a glance at the egg trade. The exportation of eggs to the United States is one of the most important items in our trade with that country. The total value of eggs exported from this country for the year 1889 was \$2,159,510. Only eight articles of export exceeded in value that of eggs. Of our total export of eggs last year, all but about \$3,000 worth went to the United States, and only \$18 worth were reported as having been sent to Great Britain. This shows that our egg exports have heretofore found a market in the United States for practically the entire quantity.

Eggs were formerly free of duty in the United States, but the new tariff places a duty of five cents per dozen on them. This is a prohibitory duty and it means that Canada will have to find a new market for this article; or failing this we will be obliged to kill off our hens and lose this valuable item in our trade.

An attempt has been made already to ship eggs to Great Britain, with a view to finding a market there for our surplus quantity, and it is said that the shipments have turned out satisfactorily. These light shipments, however, will not settle the question as to the value of British markets for our egg trade, and the matter will remain in doubt until next season. The imme-

diante effect of the new tariff on eggs going into the United States will not be known until next spring. The Canadian egg trade is over for this year. All available stocks were hastily shipped over the border to the United States before the new tariff came into force, and we will not have any considerable surplus again until next spring. Then the value of the British markets for this commodity will be thoroughly tested. With a fast steamship service, it may be possible to lay our eggs down in British markets in good condition, but it hardly seems probable that the trade will be as valuable as it was with the convenient markets previously enjoyed in the United States. England imports vast quantities of eggs, imports last year of this article being placed at 1,000,000,000 eggs, and these came mostly from France and Ireland. The English market is doubtless large enough to take our surplus, and the only question will be to get them there in a fresh state. In cool weather in the fall this may not be difficult, but in the warm spring and summer weather it may be different.

It is not probable that the higher duties will advance the price of eggs in the United States materially, as the quantity imported by the republic is small in comparison with the home production. Less than 200,000,000 eggs are imported, while from six to nine billion are produced at home. The shutting off of the Canadian supply will therefore not effect prices, and a little extension of the home production will make up for the quantity formerly imported. The tendency of prices for eggs in the United States is downward, prices having declined during the past five years from an average of 21 cents per dozen, to an average of 14 cents per dozen. The imposition of the high duty it is likely will not do more than stop for a time the downward tendency in prices. While the new tariff puts a duty on eggs, formerly free, it lowers the duty on live poultry from ten cents per pound to three cents, and on dressed poultry from ten cents to five cents.

Exports of eggs from Canada are altogether from the eastern provinces. In the west the opposite is the case. Manitoba and British Columbia both import large quantities of eggs, from the states to the south. In British Columbia especially imports of eggs are large. Manitoba for some years nearly supplied the home market with eggs produced at home, but it has been a peculiarity of the present season that the production of eggs in this province has dropped away to a surprising extent. For the past few years imports of eggs into Manitoba were only necessary during a short time about the close of the winter season. This year receipts of country eggs in the Winnipeg market, for some unaccountable reason, have fallen away to such an extent that the market has been mainly supplied ever since last spring by imports from Minnesota.

Eggs come into Canada free of duty. It is reported from Montreal that a movement is on foot there to induce the government to place a duty on eggs coming into this country. This would mean an additional tax upon consumers of this article in the west, while it would be a very doubtful benefit to the producers of eggs in eastern Canada. The