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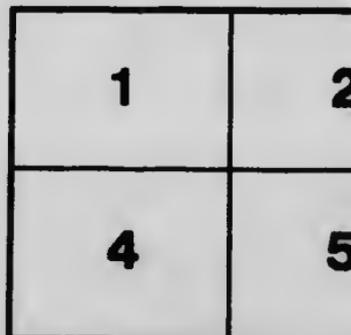
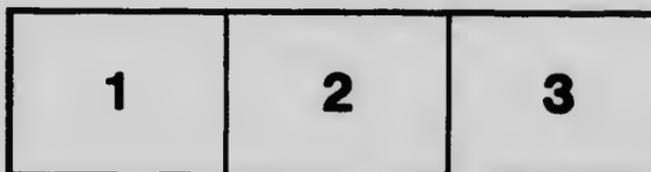
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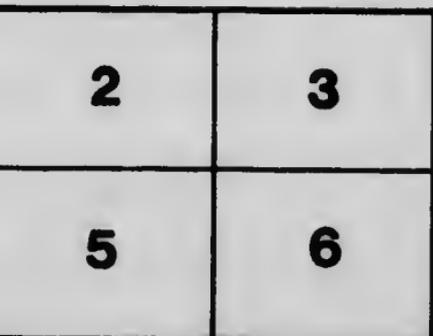
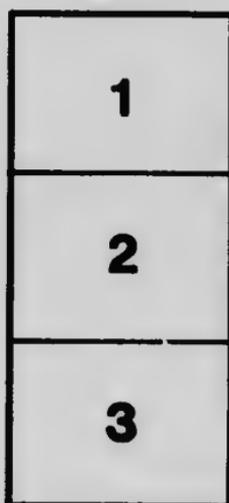
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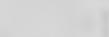
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**AN OPEN LETTER ADDRESSED TO THE HONOURABLE THE
MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE FOR ONTARIO, BY
MR. J. W. FLAVELLE.**

Can.
Farm.
F

Flavelle, Joseph W.

An open letter addressed to the Honourable the Minister of Agriculture for Ontario, by Mr. J. W. Flavelle, (which appeared in the Toronto Evening "News" of June 18, and the "Farmers' Advocate" of June 23, 1910).

Toronto, June 18, 1910.

Hon. J. S. Duff,
Minister of Agriculture for Ontario,
Toronto.

Dear Sir,—

Why are food products at extreme prices in Canada and the United States? Both countries (Canada in particular) are advertised the world over as being possessed of boundless acreage of cheap lands. Agriculturists from Europe are urged to come to Canada, where land can be had at a minimum price. They are advised that the cost of raising farm products is so moderate that older countries with high-priced lands, cannot successfully compete. Notwithstanding these statements, congested Europe is now being supplied, or is supplying itself, with many lines of staple food products, at prices below present values in Canada and the United States. At different times during the past year, imports from Europe into these two American communities have only been stopped by the high tariff against such importations. Eggs, butter, poultry, bacon, beef, are being sold in continental cities and in Great Britain, at prices in some instances equal and in others lower than are current on this continent.

It is strange that there should be so much confusion as to the cause of the extreme prices of these food products on the American continent. There may be warrant for sharp differences of opinion as to the causes, which have led to lessened production in Canada and the United States, or as to where the chief emphasis should be placed for the disinclination of farmers to produce greater supplies, but there can be no intelligent difference of opinion as to the fact itself. There is but one cause: Present production gives an insufficient supply to meet present demand.

It is singular that journalists, who so readily write with authority concerning food products, and officials in departments of agriculture from the Minister down, have so signally failed to understand the character and causes for the increased demand which has so overtaxed the available supplies. No serious consideration has been given to the added demand, occasioned by the

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higher standard of living the world over, or to the extended markets which have opened to the producers of Canada and the United States, through the enterprise of manufacturers and distributing merchants, who have brought to the problem fine courage and high intelligence. Their efforts have been made possible through controlled temperature in storages at points of production, through improved transportation facilities, through controlled temperature in refrigerated cars and in refrigerated chambers on ships, and through controlled temperature in storage houses at consuming centres where perishable products are carried for even distribution over long periods.

It should occasion you surprise that ministers in charge, and for the most part officials associated with departments of agriculture in the various provinces in Canada, who it might be assumed would feel under obligation to secure a closer acquaintance with prevailing conditions, have failed to appreciate the significance of the remarkable enlargement in the domestic demand which has arisen during recent years in Canada for staple food products, or to know that the chief producer, the Ontario farmer, has not only not planned to meet this demand with increased supplies, but has actually decreased the production of every line of food products for which the demand calls. It is apparent that you have not understood that this added demand has been chiefly supplied by products from the Province of Ontario. You have permitted, you are now permitting, thousands of young Ontario farmers, the cream of our agricultural people, to leave their own province for the West, while by your inertia you indicate you are not cognizant of the advantages of continued residence in this province, if full advantage is taken of the opportunities which open in response to intelligent effort.

New Ontario with its mining development has created a body of consumers, who every day take quantities of meats, butter, eggs, which reach a volume of surprising proportions considering the recent character of the development. The enlarged towns and cities in this and other provinces have greatly increased the body of consumers, who daily require the same products. The added consumption of milk and cream in these larger towns and cities constitutes a new and heavy drain upon the available supplies in their immediate vicinity. There is an army of men, all consumers, employed in railway construction from St. John in the East, to Prince Rupert in the West. These men are in camps on the Transcontinental Railway, on the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway, on the Canadian Northern Railway, on the Canadian Pacific branch lines, their numbers running into startling figures, and

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the consumption daily of meat and other products assumes proportions which have received little attention. In the West there is an inflowing tide of emigration, which last year amounted to 150,000, which this year is estimated at 250,000, and which during the last five years has created a great body of new consumers requiring meats, butter, eggs and poultry for daily consumption. Moreover, it is peculiar to this westward immigration, that those who go on the land follow the line of least resistance, and for the earlier years of their occupation give their attention chiefly to the raising of grain crops, and little or no attention to dairying, to the raising of poultry or the feeding of stock. An important percentage of them therefore, continue to be buyers of meat products, buyers of eggs and butter, not producers. There has been the development of mining and lumber camps and large cities in British Columbia, which have established another body of consumers, demanding the same products as are required by those upon the prairies or in railway camps, or in New Ontario or in the enlarged towns and cities in the East.

A few examples will indicate somewhat the volume of this new demand. In 1904 officers of your department supervised the shipment of 2 cars of mixed tender fruits from the Niagara Peninsula to Winnipeg. The department assumed the commercial hazard of the venture. From these initial shipments the trade has developed until during the year 1909, upwards of 500 carloads of tender fruits were forwarded from the Niagara Peninsula to that city. Last Fall one firm in a town in Ontario took orders in the prairie provinces and in British Columbia for 40 carloads of poultry, in all 1,300,000 lbs. They were sold at a price equivalent to 16c. per lb., on board cars in Ontario. This shipper was only one among many in this province buying supplies for the same market. The demand so exhausted supplies and created such fiercely competitive conditions to secure the available stock, that by Christmas prices were forced to almost a prohibitive point. The lesson which this incident gave to newspaper writers in this province was indicated in their advice to the public to visit their displeasure upon the wicked retailers, who charged such extravagant prices, and who in return said, "Not the retailer but the wicked wholesaler is to blame."

Recently in a visit made to the East, a wholesale dealer from Victoria, B.C., made purchases of 23 carloads of eggs (10,350 cases of 30 dozen each) at a price approximating 24c. per dozen f.o.b. cars in Ontario, shipment during the Fall and Winter months. Winnipeg merchants, during this last week, have been inquiring for 20 carloads of eggs for shipment this Fall. Other wholesale

merchants in Winnipeg, in Calgary, in Vancouver, in Victoria, have trade calling for similar supplies. During the past six months over 200 carloads of pork products have been purchased for shipment to Winnipeg, and the West, between the date of purchase and the middle of September. This is for the most part all new trade, and the development of the last few years, and increasing greatly each season in volume. This demand at present has to be met chiefly by products raised from the farms in the Province of Ontario. I suggest that it is worth while for you, as Minister of Agriculture to seek to understand the possibilities of this new trade which is being offered to the farmers of Ontario.

How have the farmers of Ontario responded to this added demand? They have responded by producing a lessened number of milk cows, a lessened number of beef cattle, a lessened number of sheep and lambs, a lessened number of hogs, a lessened quantity of butter, a lessened quantity of cheese, a lessened quantity of poultry and eggs. Even in a small matter like honey they have kept a lessened number of bees. What has been the result? The export of eggs has ceased. The export of butter has practically ceased. The export of bacon has been cut in two. The export of cheese has been reduced 50,000,000 lbs., while prices for consumption in Canada, have been established on so high a basis that consumers have suffered distress, and an outcry has been raised at the high cost of living.

Concurrent with this decrease in milk cows, beef cattle, hogs, sheep and lambs, butter, poultry and eggs, has been a reduced acreage in wheat, a reduced acreage in barley, in oats, in peas and in beans, while there has been a small increase in acreage in corn, in rye, and in buckwheat. There has been a reduced acreage in orchards, a reduced acreage in carrots and turnips, and a fractional increase in acreage in potatoes and mangles. There has been a material increase in the acreage in hay. Everything has been reduced, which demands labor and intelligent discriminating effort. More extensive farming in place of more intensive farming is being adopted. The former calls for a minimum of effort, a minimum of labor, a minimum of organization, and gives a minimum return. The latter requires maximum effort with organization, expenditure, discriminating judgment and courage, which are repaid with maximum returns. Why have you and your predecessor permitted such conditions to develop without making a serious effort to understand the facts, or a serious attempt to correct the tendencies reflected by such results?

Why is there enterprise and development in every field of activity in this province except agriculture? If the manufacturer

finds an enlarged market for his product, he taxes his resources, uses all the profits he can keep back from his shareholders, borrows all he can from the bank, that he may put it into new buildings, buy new machinery, use more material, employ more work people, and thus seek to take advantage of the opportunity presented to him. In adopting this course, he has to meet the competitive effort of his fellow manufacturer in the same line of business, and to accept the hazard of over production and corresponding break in prices. What is the farmer in Ontario doing? Where profits in excess of his immediate needs are secured, he is putting them into the savings bank and receiving in return 3 per cent. interest. He is content to have imperfectly drained lands, to use run out seed, to keep milk cows producing less than half the yield that good stock would produce for the same amount of feed, and to reduce his production of beef cattle and hogs. He is not careful to treat his help with consideration. He fails to put up proper houses for their accommodation and to give them facilities for home comforts, without which, stability and efficiency of service cannot be secured against the lure of the town or the demand for labor from the West. He is wanting in his own field in that grasp and vision which are dominant in every other field of activity in the country. He is permitting manufacturers to borrow from the bank his savings upon which he earns a pittance of \$3.00 per \$100 per year, and then scolds because in the use of the very money which he, the farmer, has put into the bank in place of putting it back into his land, the manufacturer is able, through his enterprise and through the employment of a large body of labor, to make handsome returns to his shareholders.

The farmers of this and other provinces have been diverted from enterprise and have been encouraged to look for returns through agitation, frequently ungenerous and generally wrong, which has had for its key-note that farmers were being deprived by the greed of others, of a legitimate share of the returns for their labor. Farm journals, the press generally, and departments of agriculture, whether represented at Ottawa, at Toronto, at Winnipeg, Regina, or in the various states in the Union, have all followed the same course and have lost sight of the fact that the farmer, like every one else in the community, can, on the last analysis, secure results only from his own effort, supported by intelligence, sound sense and industry. When he has not had satisfactory returns, it has been chiefly because he has not brought to his problem intelligence and capacity.

During the first half of the present decade there was healthy development and vigorous increase in production in farm products

in this province. During the last half a blight has come upon the enterprise of farmers. Added returns from lessened production seem to have developed rather than corrected the trouble. In Ontario the deposits of farmers aggregate tens of millions of dollars accumulating steadily, while the farmer cripples the output of his farm by continuing the use of inferior seed, by refusing to do away with wornout stock, by neglecting the profits possible through good drainage, by denying the land the benefit of fertilizers, and by failure to exercise the type of intelligence which requires capital to supplement it, and which capital he is depositing in banks and securing for it a return of 3 per cent. per annum. I speak of farmers as a whole. There are notable exceptions, where the same character of intelligence and active enterprise is shown as in other activities in the country.

If you will consult the Annual Report of the Bureau of Industry for the Province of Ontario 1908, published by your Department, you will find tables showing the yield per acre of grain, hay and roots in detail for each year, for ten years prior to and including 1908, and in bulk for twenty-seven years prior to and including 1908. These tables, it is true, establish the fact that during the last ten years of the period as compared with the previous seventeen, there was a moderate to an excellent increase in the yield per acre of the above field crops. You should not, however, fail to be impressed with the significance of the detailed statement showing the average yield per acre for the last ten years, and the average yield per acre for the last five years as compared with the previous five of this ten year period. Development has apparently ceased. You may well inquire why continued betterment has not been sustained, in view of the educational work which is being carried on by your Department. In estimating the result of education as reflected in increased returns to the farmer, care should be taken to distinguish clearly between the money value per acre of the crop produced and the yield in bushels or tons secured. In the first instance you have the increased value determined by markets reflecting world-wide conditions, over which neither you nor the farmer have any control. In the other, increased returns are due to increased yield per acre secured in response to the intelligent effort of the individual farmer, with which you are most intimately concerned. Hence while an inquiry into market conditions which affect the price of products may be useful, or interesting, or necessary, or all three, your department has chiefly to consider what can be done to influence the individual farmer to increase his yield per

acre of grain, of roots and of hay, and to enlarge the volume of the associate enterprises of live stock and dairy products.

You have in the records of your Department, accurate information as to what has been accomplished in the experimental work carried on at Guelph, and in actual results secured through improved methods by individual farmers. These tell of increased production of milk, of better returns from live stock, of increased quantities of butter, of better returns from orchards, and of increased yields in grain, which if repeated on each farm in this province would give returns astonishing in the aggregate, and would bring prosperity and comfort to the whole country. You can learn that the average production of milk per cow, per year in the Province of Ontario, is one-seventh of the maximum yield at Guelph, and one-third of the average yield secured from good herds, the same amount of feed being consumed in each case, the difference being in the character of the stock and its treatment. You can learn that the same trees in orchards are producing five, ten and fifteen times as much return through intelligent cultivation and attention as compared with the normal conditions under which they were treated earlier. You can learn of hogs and cattle being produced at a minimum cost with profitable results. You can learn of direct money returns secured through the drainage of lands, through the use of good seed, and in the benefits arising from treating labor well and housing the laboring man comfortably. You can learn what has been accomplished in the little country of Denmark, through intelligent co-operation between the Government and the farmer. You can learn in 1909, after satisfying home consumption, that there was exported \$49,000,000 of butter, \$8,000,000 of eggs, and \$28,000,000 of bacon. You can learn how the manufacturer of oleo margarine of a superior type killed the industry of making inferior butter in Denmark, and led to the manufacture of product of uniform high excellence. You can learn that the Danish farmer is educated, securing the benefit of public and high school training, as well as for the most part attending agricultural schools, and you may fairly ask whether you, with the Minister of Education, have not some responsibility in inquiring as to whether rural schools in Ontario are contributing to the sound education of farmers' children.

You are the official chief of the greatest industry in this province. You are fortunate, as is the province, in having a body of men associated with you who are actuated by a fine spirit of public service, and who are possessed of uncommon capacity. If you, and successive ministers give leadership to these men, they will accomplish much. You are confronted with the competition

from the West that is taking from you the best of your young farmers. How are you going to meet this competition? You can demonstrate what can be accomplished through co-operation between your Department and the farmers of the province. You can demonstrate what can be accomplished through better organization, and through increased capital expenditure, through the employment of more help, through the use of improved seed, through the breeding of better stock, and generally in the sound sense used in administration. Much work of excellent merit has been done at Guelph, and through the various agencies of your Department, but you have not come within sufficiently close range of the individual farmer. He has not learned to take the lesson to himself. He has not had the courage to make the necessary expenditure, or the enterprise and energy to employ the necessary amount of labor to secure the results which can only be secured by such expenditure and energy. If you are to succeed you will have to do hand picking in every section of this province. This means the use of efficient men, many of them, and the willingness to recommend an expenditure of money on a larger scale than you have hitherto considered. It is a matter of little importance whether the sum expended annually is \$750,000, as authorized by the legislature of last year, or twice \$750,000, if back of the expenditure there is the character of effort which produces results. There are ten times ten millions of dollars increased earnings annually possible from the farms of this province, by the exercise of improved methods and larger development, and after the ten times ten millions have been earned, through the impulse given by you and your successors, there will still be for later ministers, an opportunity to secure equally enlarged returns in response to equally efficient effort. This province should establish leadership in constructive plans, and in the enthusiasm which will command a following. It is not too much to ask that the responsible minister should be the leader, and should show grasp, vision, enterprise, and that mastery of all that is involved in being the chief of agriculture, which will command the respect of the entire province, and secure a hearty response from the community of farmers.

J. W. FLAVELLE.





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