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News and Information for the Busy Farmer

Furnished by the Ontario Department of Agriculture

Canadian Bacon Leads

The current issue of the Live Stock Market Report contains a particularly interesting item with respect to the comparative prices of bacon in the British market. It shows Canadian bacon selling at a price of 41 to 60 shillings per long cwt. for the week ending March 24, as compared with a price of 43 to 55 shillings per long cwt. for the Danish product. It also shows that during the previous week the price range on Canadian bacon was from two to four shillings per long cwt. over the Danish product. It should be noted in passing that the Canadian product is now selling second only to the finest Irish bacon, which is holding steady at a price of from 46 to 58 shillings per long cwt. of 112 lbs.

Get the Right Fertilizer

Never in the history of Canadian agriculture has it been more important for the farmer to be absolutely sure that he is getting the right kind of fertilizer for his crops than at the present time. One authority observes: "In many parts of Canada the farmer is still sold fertilizer as recommended by local agents instead of buying it on the basis of his own knowledge of its proper use. As never before this would appear to be a good time to consult the soil and crop authorities at the Agricultural Colleges and your local agricultural representative before making substantial purchases of fertilizers, because with proper care their use, even in these times of low farm prices, may be made profitable."

Farm Loans

The number of applications granted for farm loans by the Agricultural Development Board in 1931 was 3,361, an increase of 20 per cent. over 1930. Applications refused totalled 876 as against 905 the previous year. In presenting his report the chairman, W. Bert Roadhouse, stated: "Collections under present conditions are difficult both for the Board and the borrower. The season has been one of good crops and very, very poor prices. Faced with returns cut in half or less and yet little decrease in the things they have yet carried on with commendable courage and steadiness. We have been able to reduce arrears outstanding more than two years to less than 15 per cent. Arrears for the years 1930 and 1931 are very substantial. Appreciation of the loan service is shown by a determination to 'catch up' just as soon as possible." During the year the Board completed sale proceedings on 31 farms, and it also sold 49 other farms which were previously taken over. An interesting summary of the ten years of operation by the Board is provided in the pamphlet, copies of which are obtainable from the Department.

Tribute to Farmers

That the Department will do all in its power to find markets for the products of Ontario farmers was the pledge given by Hon. Thomas L. Kennedy, Minister of Agriculture, in an address to sugar beet growers at Chatham recently. Representatives were already at work in England, the Maritimes and the Canadian West. The Minister paid glowing tributes to Ontario farmers, claiming that in point of intelligence and all-round ability they stand higher than in any other country. He declared that other lands were beginning to emulate Ontario's methods in agricultural training. In optimistic vein he predicted: "I look forward to greater prosperity in this province than we ever dreamed of. Those who have learned to grow good crops will reap the harvest of the new prosperity. Ontario will be in the van of the new era."

Have Your Seed Graded

The Seed Branch at Ottawa calls attention to the facilities which are available throughout Canada for the inspection and grading of seeds more particularly alfalfa, clover and grass seed. In every district where these seeds are grown there is a Seed Branch inspector who inspects seed offered for sale for seeding purposes and furnishes information relating to cleaning and grading of seed and, under some circumstances, performs grading himself. Seed of course must be properly cleaned to remove the weed seeds and dirt before submitting it to the inspector for grading. In a large number of localities this could be done best perhaps at the local power cleaning plant designed for small seeds. Where such is not available, however, the hand mill on the farm, when equipped with suitable screens, should do reasonably well.

Strawberry Root Weevil

Experts of the Federal Entomological Branch provide a timely summary with respect to the strawberry root weevil as follows: 1. The strawberry root weevil is a native insect abundant everywhere; the larvae live on the roots

of grasses, clovers and other plants. The strawberry is a favorite food plant. The insect makes its appearance wherever this crop is grown. 2. Control measures consist in the adoption of a suitable system of rotation of crops so that the plant can be started on a clean field and the application of a poisoned bait twice a year, commencing when the plants are first set out. 3. The proper time to apply the bait is in the middle of April for the first application to destroy the overwintering weevils, and from the middle to the end of June for the second application, to destroy the summer generation which appears about that time. The second application is the one which is most important.

Grading Potatoes

"An axiom of trade is that the demands of the consumer control not only what the producer grows and raises, but how he packs his products," said J. A. Carroll, secretary, Ontario Marketing Board. "As an example of this," continued Mr. Carroll, "I would point out the most recent development in the marketing of Ontario potatoes. The Central Ontario Potato Growers' Association are now marketing a 5-pound pack of Tee-Pee Brand, fancy grade, potatoes. The quality prior to that of Canada No. 1, hitherto the top grade being marketed. That such a quality of potato may now be secured is a direct result of consumer demand. "It occurs to me that the next step will be a demand for potatoes to be as clean, for the homemaker to handle, as a head of lettuce, for example. This will call for potatoes being washed before being packed. I happen to know that the washing of potatoes is already being done in certain sections of the United States. "In brief," concluded Mr. Carroll, "the best defence against competition, in addition to the grower receiving a premium for his product and the consumer being satisfied, is that of lifting Ontario potatoes to a class by themselves for quality and pack."

Sales of Ontario Apples Increased in Western Canada

Ontario apple sales, largely due to the efforts of the commercial representatives of the Ontario Growers' Markets Council have greatly increased in Winnipeg and Western Canada this year. In 1930 some 43 cars of apples were shipped to Winnipeg, while in 1931 at least 150 cars have been sent to the Prairie markets. The chief service of the Markets Council, however, did not pay in developing this business, although this was valuable, but in adjusting claims for shippers. Owing to the unusual long, hot season claims were frequent and often in excess of the actual damage done to the shipment. It is conservatively estimated that at least \$10 was saved to the shipper on every car shipped West last season through having the Council's representative on the spot to act as an intermediary between shippers and jobbers. Where necessary a car would be repossessed by representative and resold when claims were too high or could not be settled. This service alone, for which no charge was made this year by the Council, meant at least \$1500 in the pockets of Ontario apple growers. Plans are now on foot through the co-operation of the Ontario Board to maintain commercial representatives in the Prairie Provinces, the Maritimes and, if possible, on the Montreal market.

Miss Macphail's Letter

The criticism of the budget was lead off by Colonel Ralston, financial critic of the Liberal party. He spoke at great length covering the financial position, the trade, the taxation and the railway situation in Canada. He twitted the government over its return to the sales and nuisance taxes and quoted from speeches made by Mr. Cahan and the Prime Minister when they were in the opposition. Colonel Ralston claimed that the sales tax at the time the Liberal party went from power would cost a family spending \$750 a year, the sum of \$7.50, whereas under the rate this year they would pay \$45. The trade of Canada, he said, had fallen a hundred per cent. and charged that the extremely high tariff was at least in part the cause of this tremendous decline. In 1930 the average tariff was 24 per cent. and this year with the 3 per cent. excise tax added, it will be on an average of 35 per cent. over and above that of the Minister of National Revenue has the power to value goods for customs purposes above their cost price if he so desires. He told the story of the importing of a radio. The importer would go down to the customs officials and say, "I have paid \$42.75 for this radio." The official retorts: "I don't care what you paid for it; the Governor-in-Council says the Minister of National Revenue is empowered to fix the price at \$100 less 30 per cent. \$70 is the value of that radio." "What duty have I to pay?" "You have to pay 27 1/2 per cent. that is \$19.25. That makes a duty paid value \$89.25." "What else have I to

pay?" "You must pay a 4 per cent. sales tax, \$3.57, a 1 per cent. excise tax, \$9 etc., and you must pay as dumping duty the difference between \$42.75 and \$70, that is \$27.25. So your radio is going to cost you \$50.96 for duty and taxes although its favorite price is only \$42.75." Col. Ralston pointed out that a duty of 120 per cent. and taxes had to be paid on that one article.

Some weeks ago the Prime Minister, the Rt. Hon. R. B. Bennett had said that the government worked twenty hours a day. Col. Ralston thought it remarkable that they got any sleep at all since they were required to know the value of "sheets of iron and steel, fruits, vegetables, peas, livestock, common and colourless window glass, bean-pot, fir doors, dried egg albumen, meats prepared or preserved, grapes, hats, hoods, shapes, bodies, cape-lines, radio receiving sets, wicker furniture, jute twines, cotton fabrics, artificial fabrics, wiping rags, wire pot cleaners, nursery stock and baby pants."

The decrease in exports was blamed on the tariff preventing imports and the government was criticised for not having included some British preference in the budget as a friendly gesture preceding the Imperial Conference. Col. Ralston concluded his speech with an amendment asking the house to condemn the excessive increases in tariff and the power to set duties for customs purposes by Order-in-Council.

The first speaker on the government side of the general budget debate was the Hon. H. H. Stevens, Minister of Trade and Commerce. His speech was well constructed and his delivery excellent. After replying to the criticism of Mr. Ralston, he went on to make what was quite evidently a carefully prepared statement of the causes of today's difficulties. There were, he said, four disturbing factors; price levels, debt, interest and trade. Price levels are admittedly the most disturbing factor today, he said. Could we restore the price levels of 1928 for wheat, copper, paper, lumber and fish, we would restore prosperity to Canada. "What is the cause of this drop in commodity prices," he asked. "Prices are expressed in terms of currency and in the leading countries of the world, the value of currency, is attached to gold. If gold is scarce or is being hoarded, it is in abnormal demand for debts, then inevitably commodity prices will fall simply because people will be anxious to dispose of their commodities in order to secure gold to meet their debts. We are confronted with this situation and it is admitted by everyone that gold is scarce. To my mind that is perhaps the underlying cause of most of our troubles today. We must now admit and I think it will be admitted that the value or purchasing power of money does vitally affect commodity prices."

The Minister of Trade and Commerce then went on to show that commodity prices have fluctuated violently in the last couple of years. He pointed out that while a ton of copper weighed 2,000 lbs. in 1928 and continued to weigh the same number of pounds in 1931, the ton sold for \$350 in 1928 as against \$120 in 1931. He took as his second example, wheat, which of course remains at 60 lbs. from year to year, but the value of it fell from \$1.20 in 1928 to 60 cents in 1931. The Minister stated that the first and most important step was to stabilize the purchasing power of money.

Dealing with debt, the Hon. H. H. Stevens, said: "The world is sunk in a veritable morass of debt." And he pointed out that the weight of debt in this as well as all other countries has been doubled due to the drop in commodity prices. For this statement he got hearty applause from those who sit "angularly opposite."

We can all clearly see that a woman whose revenue came from eggs and who contracted a debt in 1930 when eggs were selling in the winter around 45 cents a dozen, would have to have three times as many eggs to pay the debt in March of this year; that is her debt had trebled when measured in commodity prices.

In discussing interest the Minister of Trade and Commerce said: "No agriculturalist, no industrialist and no merchant can afford to pay 10 per cent. interest for the money he uses in his business; it simply cannot be done. Normal business will not permit of that rate of interest." Even though the amount of interest had not increased, all interest that had to be paid for by selling commodities, had actually increased. On a farm loan of \$2,000 interest at 8 per cent. would require \$160. In 1928, 133 bushels of wheat would pay the interest, whereas in 1931, though the interest was still \$160, it required 266 bushels of wheat of wheat to pay it.

In commenting upon Mr. Stevens' statement, Mr. Gardiner, the leader of the Farm Group in the House, said it was as impossible for a western farmer to pay 5 per cent on his indebtedness as it was for him to pay 10 per cent. or in other words, he could pay neither. Mr. Gardiner advocated the taxing of incomes above \$25,000 a year to a degree that would amount to practical con-

scription of income above that amount. He devoted most of his speech to a discussion of the need of a change in our financial system and at the conclusion moved a sub-amendment, the last paragraph of which reads as follows: "Therefore be it resolved that in the opinion of this house, as a first step toward general economic reconstruction, our financial system should be nationalized and provision be made to issue immediately sufficient money to bring the value of the dollar as speedily as possible to that point at which the major portion of our debts were incurred during the war; stabilize the dollar at this point internally and thereafter manage credit and currency issue to secure and maintain a stable level within Canada."

It is now fairly generally recognized in the House of Commons that Canadian agriculture requires our currency to be on a level with the pound sterling, so that when the price we are paid in Liverpool is translated into Canadian currency it will be as much in our money as it was in English money.

In the Senate the other day a most interesting story of the discovery of radium in Canada at Great Bear Lake, about 1,000 miles north of Edmonton, was related by General McRae. He was urging that the government form a Radium Commission to take charge of the development of the radium field and the putting of this life saving metal on the market at the lowest possible cost. Only 300 grammes of radium for medicinal purposes is available in the whole world. It is used in the treatment of cancer. 95 per cent of all radium is found in the Belgian Congo. The wholesale price of it is \$50,000 a gramme, retail \$70,000. General McRae gave some very interesting statistics in regard to cancer and its treatment by radium; he quoted a Philadelphia authority for the statement that 960 grammes would be needed in United States if all the cancer cases there were to be treated with radium.

At Great Bear Lake there are three veins of radium running out 1,400 feet and a fourth vein is indicated. General McRae believes that a carload a day of the ore could be mined and should that be the case, in a year the Great Bear Lake deposits could produce 1,800 grammes. The Department of Mines of the Federal Government estimate that it would cost \$10,000 a gramme but the General believes that it could be done for a little in

excess of \$5,000. Yours truly, Agnes C. Macphail.

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