

## NEWS AND ITEMS OF INTEREST TO HALTON FARMERS

W. F. WATSON  
ADDRESSES HALTON  
LIVESTOCK PRODUCERS

The law of Supply and Demand does not mean much, unless coupled with the ability to pay, stated W. F. Watson, Ontario Live Stock Commissioner, when addressing a meeting of the Halton Livestock Improvement Association in the Court House, Milton, last Friday afternoon. Mr. Watson, as usual, delivered a most informative, thought provoking and logical address in which he reviewed the world situation as it affects Canadian Agriculture. Having just attended the Dominion-Provincial Agricultural Conference at Ottawa during the past week, and prior to that the International Live Stock Show at Chicago, Mr. Watson ably substantiated his statements with facts and figures. In short, it was the type of address which all farmers in Halton should have heard. In his introduction he reviewed the war period when "agreements with Great Britain called for definite quantities at specific prices. Canadian goods were sent overseas under Mutual Aid or Outright gift. Today the contract system of buying still exists and Canadian products are paid for out of funds provided or loaned by Canada and

United States. In reviewing the Marshall Plan or E.R.P., the speaker pointed out that the U.S. is prepared to assist materially any country in Western Europe prepared to maintain the democratic way of life, and prepared to help rehabilitate herself. Mr. Watson made it very clear, however, that under the Marshall Plan the U.S. will not supply money to any country to purchase commodities from Canada of which there is a surplus in excess of domestic requirements in United States. Fortunately for us, he added, there is up to the present time no surplus in the U.S. of the main products which we export. While the Marshall Plan extends over a period of four years, the volume of goods which will be exported under the Plan to Great Britain, France and other European countries will be reduced as these countries get U.S. funds available. In short, stated Mr. Watson, "The whole economy of the world revolves around the economy of the U.S." — and he added, "that is the shadow hanging over the economy of this country." He also pointed out that U.S. has harvested the biggest corn crop in history — 3 1/2 billion bushels of corn — and when in Chicago a week ago the price of corn was less than two

cents a pound, although there is a support price of \$1.42. A prominent U.S. official stated a few days ago that their hog objective called for a sixty million pig crop for the spring of 1949 in order to use up the huge corn crop. The same U.S. official predicted that hog prices in U.S. would drop six cents a pound by next fall.

In reviewing the home situation, Mr. Watson pointed out that milk production in Canada had decreased in 1948 by approximately four percent. In other words while ten million pounds less butter and thirty million pounds less cheese was produced in 1948, there had been a phenomena, increase in the production of concentrated milk products. In his opinion, the outlook for 1949 would be approximately the same as in 1948. In so far as consumption of whole milk is concerned, he felt this would be determined by price. If present employment is continued with prevailing wages, and the price is not increased, consumption would be not less or very little less than in 1948. Our contract for cheese with Great Britain calls for fifty million lbs. at a price of 30¢ f.o.b. cheese factory and as our export of cheese in 1948 would not exceed 34 million pounds, it was not likely this would be exceeded in 1949. While our dairy cow exports in 1948 doubled those of 1947, Mr. Watson was of the opinion that the returns from milk in 1949 are likely to be about the same as in 1948, although he reported that while in Chicago the retail price of milk had dropped one cent per quart, and in another State the price of milk had dropped \$1.00 per cwt.

In dealing with the hog situation, Mr. Watson pointed out that our contract with Great Britain called for 160 million pounds of bacon less than in 1947. The bacon at \$36 per cwt. at seaboard or 35 million pounds of bacon less than in 1947. The speaker pointed out that it was not a question of Great Britain not wanting more bacon, but that they had only so much money with which to purchase bacon, and consequently it was a question of either a larger contract at a reduced price, or a smaller contract at the same price as in 1948. At the Ottawa Conference, official promise had been made that in the event of surpluses of bacon in this country, alternative markets would be opened up. In this connection, it was pointed out by the speaker, that in the twenty year period between the two wars there had only been three years, and then only

for a few months at any time, when the price of hogs in Chicago was higher than in Toronto. If the buying power remains constant, stated Mr. Watson, our good quality beef cattle will go to the U.S., and in his opinion any surplus hogs we have, can and will be consumed in Canada. Cattle men in the United States, in his opinion, are a bit jittery and consequently are not putting as many cattle into feed, and those going into feed for the most part will be for shorter feeding periods.

The poultry industry, stated Mr. Watson, is one industry where some retrenchment is necessary. Our poultry contracts call for nineteen million dozen eggs less than in 1948, at a price two cents less than during the current year, and eleven million pounds less poultry than in 1948.

In dealing with the grain situation, it was pointed out that adequate supplies are available in Canada with the U.S. price slightly less than ours at the present time. We have a surplus of 100 million bushels of wheat above that needed for domestic requirements, plus sufficient to fill our 140 million bushel contract with Great Britain. It was also pointed out that our oat crop is 13 million bushel over that in 1947, and the barley crop also shows a substantial increase.

When referring to the flax crop, the speaker pointed out we have a 13 million bushel exportable surplus above domestic requirements with no market, due to flax being declared a surplus crop in the U.S. under the Marshall Plan. This was cited as an illustration of what can happen on other products, should they too be declared surplus crops by the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture.

However, as Mr. Watson sees the situation, it is his feeling that our prices in 1949 will be about the same as in 1948, but if there is a good crop in 1949 in Canada, in United States, and other parts of the world, he foresees a lot lower prices in 1950.

In the light of this prediction, we have one year to get our house in order, and if one has inferior animals it is a good time to turn them into hard cash.

The new Dairy Herd Improvement Policy was also dealt with by the speaker; There is not much, he stated that government can do about prices, however, we all can do something to maintain our margin of profit by reducing the cost of production. It is the belief of his department that Artificial Insemination units are a good way to improve the quality of our cattle, and this new policy provides a method for measuring the ability of daughters in comparison with their mothers. It was pointed out that pure bred dairy men have a policy in record of performance work. However, 75 percent of our cattle in Ontario are grades, and the time is long past when we should be doing something about eliminating some of the boarders from our herds.

Our readers can secure a copy of the policy from the Agricultural Office, Milton.

In conclusion, we have no hesitation in stating that Ontario's Live Stock Commissioner presented the most comprehensive and illuminating address heard in many a day.



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