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1952 ENDS WITH GLUTTED MARKETS

J. E. W.

The closing days of 1952 saw the stock yards of Canada literally deluged with hogs. Hog producers from coast to coast were making a real effort to get their hogs on the market before the 23-cent floor went into effect on January 1st.

Whole milk shippers find their markets in a similar surplus position. Over the holiday season a large percentage of Halted shippers received instructions from their respective distributors to hold back their shipments from two to five days. Four of the larger Toronto dairies recently advised those who had not been shipping at least 200 lbs. daily during the past three months that their product would not be required after January 1st. Just last week, eight local shippers representing some 32 cans of milk per day, were advised by their dairy that their milk would not be accepted after January 31st.

All this, adds up to lack of markets. The U.S. embargo has played an important part in creating that condition. It is the first time since Confederation that Canada's agricultural products have been shut out of Great Britain and United States both at the same time. It is indeed fortunate for Canada that our domestic markets have expanded tremendously in the past ten years, otherwise the lack of export markets would have made itself manifest earlier in the year and even more seriously.

Immediate Prospects Not Bright

The prospects for any improvements is far from bright for the early part of 1953 at least. Certainly the removal of the U. S. embargo on March 1st should be beneficial not only to the dairyman but to some degree at least, should also help the hog producer and steer feeder.

It is questionable if prices will strengthen materially, since American prices for some of our commodities are lower than our own. However, it should result in the Ontario dairymen being able to dispose of some of our surplus cows and heifers, all of which help to relieve domestic milk markets. It should also result in some of our heavier steers going across the border—also some of our better quality bacon cuts going to the same market. We do not anticipate any immediate improvement in prices but at least the removal of the embargo should ease our present glutted markets.

Our Prices are Too High

That prices are too high may sound like heresy to some of our farmer friends. Nevertheless it is true in so far as export markets overseas are concerned. Our standard of living on this continent has resulted in pricing ourselves out of the export market—that despite the fact that the Ontario farmer has been operating on a very narrow margin for some time. The forty-hour week with high wages per hour in industry has increased agricultural cost of production to the point where irrespective of the pound sterling-dollar impasse, we can't compete with other world producers.

This was made very clear at Ottawa recently by Mr. Fulford, the member for Leeds County. As reported in Hansard, Mr. Fulford presented comparative prices for some five agricultural commodities. Carcass beef in New Zealand sells at 14c—in Argentina at 18.7c with the Canadian price at 44c; Butter in Denmark at 40.7c—37.8c in Australia and New Zealand and the Canadian price 62c. Passing on to cheese, the New Zealand and Australian price 21.2c against 32 cents per pound in Canada. In eggs the prices given by Mr. Fulford were as follows; Denmark 46c; Australia 52c; Ireland 54c; and Canada 61c. Finally coming to bacon and we presume he is referring to Wiltshires, 30.2c per lb, was the price in Denmark and Holland, against 36c in Canada.

These prices may in some cases have changed materially in the past few weeks—in fact, on reliable authority we are informed that the Dutch and Danish price of bacon has dropped 10 shillings per cwt. since that time.

That should be fairly good evidence to substantiate the statement that we have priced ourselves out of the export market. High wages in industrial centres has in the main been responsible for our high cost of production of agricultural products. It would seem that if it may now be booming in industry. The recent lay-off by two of our larger farm implement manufacturers is no doubt largely due to their inability to market their products—or to put it in another way, the inability of the farmer to buy agricultural machinery at present prices. Leaders of labour unions would in our opinion do well to remember the fable of "The Man who killed the Goose which laid the Golden Egg."

However, we would not like to close this article without a little brighter note. From a long time viewpoint we are confident of better days for the agricultural producer. It should not be necessary to remind our readers that in 1951 our production of dairy products was just about equal to our consumption. Consequently once the U.S. embargo is removed it should not be too long before we are back in the same position. In fact many of our leaders feel there is a need for increased production of dairy products. Due to the rapid population increase on this continent some economists go so far as to suggest that by 1980 we will require a 100% increase in dairy products. It may be that time too long, this continent will require all of her own agricultural products to feed her own population.

FERGUS MINISTER WILL CONDUCT CHURCH HERE

Rev. Douglas Rudd of Fergus will commence twice-monthly gospel services at the Oddfellows Hall a this Sunday afternoon.

Mr. Rudd succeeds Rev. E. R. Peterson who left this fall to become pastor of a church in New York State. Since then the services, conducted by the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada have been discontinued in town.

The new minister is a graduate of Eastern Pentecostal Bible College, Toronto, and preached at Dundas before going to Fergus three years ago.

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