



LADY OF THE SNOWS

Prof. Robertson and This Appellation.

WE WANT NO FAVOR

From the Mother Country but Canada's Separation From Britain Either in Trade or Sentiment Would be the Blunder of the Generation.

(From The London Morning Post.)

The Dominion Minister of Agriculture, the Hon. Sydney Fisher, is on a visit to the home country, accompanied by the able and active Commissioner of Agriculture and Dairying, Mr. James W. Robertson. With the Commissioner a representative of The Morning Post has been accorded an interview. The purpose of the interview was twofold, to enquire the errand on which the Commissioner has come to this country and to learn something at first hand of Canada's progress in agriculture and dairy work.

"Our purpose in visiting the mother country," said Prof. Robertson, "is twofold also: to come into immediate touch with the requirements and tastes of the consumers here of our butter and cheese, our beef and bacon, our bread-stuffs, our poultry and our fruit, and to bring home to the population of the home country the very simple but very important fact that we can supply them in these lines to an extent they hardly dream of. You have no idea how difficult and delicate a matter it is to come up to and keep level with your varied likes and dislikes. Fresh well-made butter for instance, that would sell largely in London would sell badly in Lancashire and Yorkshire. It is not a question of quality, but of color merely, the people of the manufacturing districts preferring their butter very pale. That prejudice have taken note of and have met. The same constant attention to detail we try to maintain in all branches of our agricultural and dairying industry. Here, for another instance, in our blue book on 'Agriculture and Dairying,' are reproductions of a set of photographs which I got taken last year of the various stages in killing, plucking and dressing a turkey for the London market. Copies of these were distributed throughout the Dominion, so that farmers and others could readily see how to prepare their birds for the London market."

The Government and the Farmer
The Dominion Government does a great deal for the farmer. Is it not sometimes glibly referred to as being too 'paternal' or 'maternal'?"

"It is. But the action of the Government is justified by results. Take the butter and cheese manufacture, alone. In three years the value of butter exported has risen from \$687,476 to \$2,089,173. In cheese the increase has been from \$6,754,626 to \$14,676,939 in twelve years. By far the greater part of both exports comes to this country; indeed, 60 per cent of all cheese now imported by Great Britain is Canadian, and soon, with the general application of the cold storage system, we hope that our exports of butter to this country will reach very nearly as high a percentage."

"What is exactly the cold storage system?"

"It is this—and it is a good instance of the method pursued by the Government in helping the farmer—in doing for the individual what he cannot possibly do for himself. The individual farmer could not by himself provide cold storage accommodation for the safe transportation of butter, poultry, eggs, dressed meat, or tender fruit from the place of production to the ultimate market in great Britain, and the merchants who handled these goods had not singly, enough business to enable them to arrange for a regular cold storage service on the railways and the steamships. That was arranged for by the Department of Agriculture—and equal opportunities were given to all shippers to take advantage of the arrangements

—in this way. We approached the railway companies and asked, 'What would it cost to run through from point to point regularly a cold storage car?' The answer was \$60. We said, 'We will guarantee you \$40 to run through such a car at certain regular times, and pick up at intermediate points the goods brought for cold storage transmission at the regular freight rate. If you earn above \$40, well and good; if below, we will make it up to \$40.' That was agreed to for three years, at the end of which time the traffic will be so large that the railway companies will be glad to run the cold storage without any guarantee. Similarly we approached the steamship companies. They could not fit up cold storage chambers for less than \$2,000 per ship; we offered to pay £1,000 in three years, and it was accepted, and there are now thus guaranteed twenty-three steamships. But we considered that if butter, poultry and other perishable products could not be kept fresh and cool from the first moment till the last, our trouble to arrange system with the railways and the steamships would be thrown away. We therefore drew up plans for cold-storage buildings and circulated them and offered a small bonus to all who should adopt them within a given time, and up till now the result has been very satisfactory."

OBJECT LESSONS FOR ADULTS.
"Is there no fear that such tutelage may tend to weaken the independence and enterprise of the farmers?"

"In our experience our action rather increases and stimulates both through the larger opportunities of their exercise which it provides. Moreover, by helping to introduce a general orderly system of the kind I have instanced we economize the energy of the community and make it more productive. But the efforts of the department are mostly in the way of instruction, and it took us some time to discover the best modes of instruction. When I began—and I may tell you I had taken up agricultural lecturing as a labor of love before I became a Government commissioner—I early told myself that in the kind of instruction I wanted to give words were of comparatively little use. The ordinary farmer is not a man of books, and an abstract statement has for him little meaning, even if he does not understand it. He cannot well create mental images, so new facts must be presented to him in a concrete form. One must be patient with him, as the operations of his mind are slow, like those of the soil and the seasons. And all fresh facts, to make a lasting impression, must reach him through his senses. So we arrived at our system of instruction by illustration—by object lessons."

"Indeed, we may say, by a superior, grown-up kindergarten sort of instruction?"

"That is so. And in practical affairs there are any other system of much use? For instance, we wish to promote in a new district the making of butter during the winter after the co-operative manner now pretty well established in all parts of Canada. We do not begin with lecturing and hectoring; we establish in a place of public resort a Government Dairy Station, with a capable person in charge. On market days the farmers and their wives come and look at the place, handle things and see them at work, and ask questions, and by-and-by a co-operative creamery is established and working well in that district. Moreover, there is another use of such stations besides as illustrations of dairying. They are employed for research and experiment, the results of which are published for practical use, and made widely known by the bulletins of the department and through the press."

EXPERIMENT AND PROGRESS.
"You do much, then, in the way of experiment?"

"Experiment is the life and progress in every industry. And with us the department undertakes what else is left to the enterprise of individuals or of societies, with much consequent waste of effort. We maintain experimental farms, but, since the farmers are frequently inclined to say, 'Do these wrinkles pay? Who knows?' There is the Government behind them.—we have arranged for a new departure, which will show you how we persistently work our idea of instructing by illustration and object lesson. We remember that illustrations will be of most advantage if they can be seen without much trouble, seen frequently, and seen in such a form as will be readily understood. We propose to arrange in any district for a piece of ground, some 10 or 20 acres of suitable soil either lent or rented, situated near a market town, beside a public road, and, if possible, close to a schoolhouse. The piece of ground will be cut up into strips according to what we wish to illustrate—the growth of varieties or methods of culture. For instance, one fourth of an acre each of four varieties of oats may be grown side by side—four varieties of grain are enough to experiment with, or to show different kinds of culture, one quarter of an acre of Indian corn for fodder might be sown broadcast; one quarter in rows two feet apart, with the seeding quite thick in each row;

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another quarter with the corn in rows three feet apart and cultivated according to the best known methods; and still another quarter with the corn three feet apart, but left uncultivated. Similarly (according to the district) with varieties of root crops, showing one, two, three, four kinds of turnips, mangel wurzels, or carrots, and showing them well-cultivated and ill-cultivated, and attaching to each plot a plain descriptive board. The farmer riding by to market, or returning, must needs stop and look and ask questions of the person in charge. And then the impressions thus given and sketched up in the summer will be elaborated in lectures in the winter by a practical farmer with some skill in the use of words."

"It sounds a most interesting experiment."

"I am all the more interested in it because I expect it to improve our cultivation of root crops, in which our farmers are rather backward. Our breeds of cattle are of the best—all of English and Scottish derivation, as I suppose you know—and I have the conviction that to keep the cattle up to the highest mark their winter food must be similar to and as good as what the were originally reared on. Therefore I think that our root crops must be brought up to the highest standards."

AN APPEAL TO THE HOME COUNTRY.
"And what do the farmers themselves think of your unceasing activity instruction and urgency in improvement?"

"Well for the most part, they are as eager as we are ourselves. At first the sad thing was their want of interest. They had to be tempted to come to meetings with all sorts of twopenny inducements—kinds of side-shows—and only a sharp man here and there would think of asking a question. But now the sad thing, I may say, is that we frequently have not information enough to answer all the questions that are put to us; and they have got now to trust the department, and to believe if the department recommends anything it must be a good thing. We claim to have done a great educational work; for our farmers can now assimilate book knowledge—printed information—to an extent we could not have dreamt possible some years ago. And again, let me utter an obiter dictum: I am convinced that that is the proper method of education in any subject for both young and old—illustrations, object lessons first, with no more words than are absolutely necessary, and these of the simplest; and book learning afterwards. And the practical results are more than cheering; I think I may say they are astonishing. All we ask of our fellow citizens at home in the old country is to remember that we

are growing fast, to take an interest in our efforts after progress and prosperity, to try our products and see if they are not as good as can be bought, and to recall the fact that to the extent they buy of us to that greater extent should we be able to buy of them. It would be the blunder of the generation if for any reason Canada should be severed either in trade or sentiment from the mother country. We desire no favored treatment; we wish all our products to be known as Canadian, and not 'prime Scotch' nor 'best English,' nor anything else. We occupy a wonderful country and are responsible for working it to its fullest value. I think you people at home have a very hazy and limited idea of the extraordinary fruitfulness of the soil and climate of Mr. Kirling's 'Our Lady of the Snows.' Have you ever considered this for instance—how the very rigor of our winter tends to conserve the fertility of the ground? During the autumn and winter in Britain an enormous amount of rain falls. That water, out of the soil it is the rivers and thence into the sea a great quantity of valuable nitrate which in Canada during the same seasons are held tight with frost. Well, perhaps you may think we boast, but we are proud of our country and proud also of the empire of which we are part."

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