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J. W. Coleson, (Vice Principal), Teacher of Rail-roading, Steamboating, Banking, Accounting and Actual Business Practice.
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THE DAILY EXAMINER

MARCH 24, 1898.

CO-OPERATIVE PORK PACKING.

(From the Farmers Advocate.)

A Queen's County, P. E. I., reader writes us as follows: "As a constant reader, who highly appreciates your publication, believing that you subordinate all all other interests to that of the farmer's, I beg to ask your opinion in the matter of co-operative pork-packing by private enterprise. A packing establishment of a capacity of say 800 hogs daily was started in Charlottetown about the 20th of Nov. last. The prices paid for choice hogs have been: November, 5c; December, 4c, to 4 1/2c. Of late, am informed a little better prices obtain. However, by a letter published in our local paper, we are told that we are being 'fleeced, literally robbed,' by this packer. Although I must confess as a farmer this is not my view of the case, still, as a result, a large meeting of the farmers of Prince County convened in Summerside on January 28th and resolved to have a co-operative packing and shipping house established at Summerside, ready for operating by September next. Now, certain it is that there is not sufficient hogs as yet to supply one factory and supposing there was plenty for two, do you advise us farmers to invest in such an enterprise? In your opinion, is the pork-packing today in the hands of a combine? About what ought we to be getting for choice hogs at present? What has been the average price of Canadian bacon in the English market, say from September? What the American, during the same period? Please reply next issue."

A LETTER ON THE SUBJECT.

To the Editor Farmer's Advocate:

Sir,—In reply to enquiry of the 22nd inst., re the proposed Farmers' Pork-packing House; I beg to state that I have heard of such industries being started in towns in the Province of Ontario by farmers on the co-operative system. You ask, "Do you consider it advisable for farmers to launch into such an enterprise which costs so much to equip and requires such an expert staff to manage and run." In reply I beg to state that so far as my observation goes in regard to farmers' co-operative establishments, where large capital is required, I am led to believe that it is not advisable for farmers to put their money into an enterprise of this kind for the following reasons:

1st.—The amount of money required for buildings, plant, the running of the business and establishing agencies in Britain would amount to a large sum.

2nd.—That in a co-operative institution of this kind there are too many individuals to please, as each shareholder has a voice in the matter, and farmers are not likely to sanction such large outlays of money as would be necessary at times to meet competition that do not always yield a profit.

3rd.—I have not seen it shown by any person that the profits of the business are unreasonably high, or that any combine exists among the packers to keep the price of hogs down below proper values.

4th.—The history of co-operative institutions amongst the farmers of Ontario is such as to make prudent men careful about investing their money in an undertaking of this kind. Everything goes well while good profits are being realized, but there usually comes a time of keen competition, that the limit of profitable investment is overstepped, and, perhaps, the market gives away at the same time. This is the time that every man interested should stand firm and face the difficulty, but instead of that you have dissatisfaction, followed by desertion of the penurious

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and weak-kneed, who leave the better man to face the trouble.

5th.—If such an enterprise should meet with great success at the start and divert a large portion of the trade from the regular packing houses, then these establishments would for a time pay the farmers five or ten cents per hundred pounds more for their hogs than could be realized through the co-operative plan. This would be sufficient to demoralize the whole business and bring loss to the stockholders of the new system. This is no mere theory, but the history of farmers co-operative ventures when they come in direct contact with large modern business establishments. I think that the pork-packing business of this country upon the whole has been profitable to those that engaged in it, and there may be room for more establishments of the kind, but I would not advise the farmers to put their money into them with the idea that they will make a fortune out of the business. The Canadian farmer will find it profitable to improve his breed, management and feeding of hogs, raising the kind that are demanded by the packers for their bacon trade in the British market.

H. V. GLENDINNING,
Victoria Co., Ont.

THE QUESTION OF PRICES.
To the Editor Farmer's Advocate:

DEAR SIR,—We are now paying \$5 1/2 per hundred weight for selected singers delivered at our factory. Your second enquiry, we judge, arises from a desire to compare the relative values of American and Canadian bacon in England. We fear, however, that this will be an almost impossible task. England is peculiar. Nearly every county uses a distinctive cut, and establishes a price of its own for that particular variety. Now, the Canadian curer makes what is known as a Wiltshire side; practically, this represents his total effort in export meats. The American packer on the contrary, does not make Wiltshire sides to any extent; his hogs do not lend themselves to this cut, and their meats go to an entirely different class of consumers and a different section of the country. Therefore, we do not keep in close touch with the average price made for American produce, inasmuch as it does not in any sense come in competition with Canadian.

Yours truly,
J. W. FLAVELLE,
Managing Director Wm. Davies Packing Co.
Toronto, March 5th.

[NOTE.—As a general rule, the old adage, "Let the shoemaker stick to his last," is a good one, and the business of farming is important and intricate enough to require the best energies of most men, but the success which has in the past attended cheese factories and creameries run on the co-operative plan is one exception to the rule though there is obviously a good deal of difference between running a cheese factory and a modern pork-packing establishment. At the same time the Farmer's Advocate is anxious to promote any plan of handling farm products calculated to be of real and lasting benefit to the farmers. Hence the above subject is a good one, the discussion of which we welcome, and would be glad to hear from any one who has actual facts to give of experience in co-operative pork-packing among farmers, successfully or otherwise.—Editor Farmer's Advocate.

Co-Operative Pork Packing.

(From Farming)

A new co-operative farmers' industry has sprung into existence during the past few months that is arousing considerable interest in some sections of the country. At Stouffville and Bowmanville co-operative concerns will soon be in operation for packing pork. These factories will be run on a purely co-operative basis and will be owned and operated by farmers in these districts. They are modelled somewhat after the co-operative cheese factories, the producer, or the man who supplies the hogs, to share in the profits after the expenses of operating are deducted.

At Southville every person becoming a shareholder must be a hog producer to the company. Not being a hog producer will debit any person from becoming a shareholder. Each shareholder must deliver at least five hogs for every share he becomes a holder of. Toronto prices will be paid for all the hogs supplied. It is claimed that this will insure the producer one dollar per head more than he is getting under the present system, as no middle man comes between the farmer and the manufacturer. All shareholders shall be paid six per cent. on all the stock they hold as first lien on profits. After this every person will receive the full profits according to the number of hogs delivered by him up to fifty hogs per share. Any shareholder delivering more hogs than fifty per share, the hogs above that number will be considered as bought hogs from non-shareholders and profits on the same will be divided equally amongst shareholders, as per the number of shares held by each individual. The profits on all hogs bought from non-shareholders will also be equally divided amongst shareholders, as per the number of shares held by each individual. Each shareholder shall be entitled to deliver fifty hogs per share, on which he will receive all profits earned by said hogs, less the six per cent mentioned above. No shareholder will be allowed to hold more than \$500 worth of stock.

The progress of this movement will doubtless be watched with the keenest interest. The fact that the co-operative cheese and butter factory has been a success is no guarantee that the co-operative pork packing establishment will be successful also. They are two different lines of business, the one involving comparatively little capital and risk, while in the other a large amount capital is necessary for buildings and plant, and the risk to be incurred proportionately great. The co-operative cheese factory is almost co-extensive with the develop-

ment of our cheese industry, while the co-operative pork packing concern appears on the scene when the business of pork packing in this country has been pretty well developed. The co-operative cheese or butter factory has practically no competitor today, for whether the factory is owned by one individual, or by the farmers themselves, the co-operative principle is practically the same. The pork packing industry today is under the control of the large pork packing establishments which have almost unlimited capital at their disposal for carrying on the business. With these large concerns the co-operative pork packing establishment will have to compete, and we are safe in stating that they will not give up any share of the business which has formerly been theirs without a struggle.

However, we wish this new venture every success, and only draw attention to some of the difficulties, as it is well that our farmers should consider every phase of the question before investing very largely in any new scheme. There is a good precedent for the farmers' co-operative pork packing to be found in Denmark. In that country a large share of the bacon is produced in packing establishments owned and controlled by the farmers, or the producers. As far as we can learn these have been successful. Whether the conditions there are such as would be more conducive to success than they are here remains to be seen. The Danes are much nearer the market than we are, and may have other advantages that we know nothing about.

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