

HIGH PRICES.

To the Editor of the Peget Sound Herald:

In perusing your columns, I find an article headed "High Prices." After quoting the high prices of butter and milk, you ask the question, "Is it strange that the farmer gets rich quick?" I say it is very strange, and you would come to the same conclusion if you dare step into the mercantile houses and there inquire if it is strange that that class of people get rich quick. Please look at the prices between this place and New York in the subscription list for a weekly paper. In New York, four pounds of butter will pay a week's board; here it takes sixteen pounds to pay a week's board.

The farmer seldom gets rich off the merchant, but, on the contrary, the merchant always gets rich off the farmer. If you please, hereafter pickle up the merchants with their great wealth, as well as the farmers, and publish the above and you shall have butter and milk next summer at 50 cents.

FARMER.

The above is in answer to an item in this paper, two or three weeks since, giving the prices of milk and butter in Steilacoon. Since then the price of milk has been increased to one dollar a gallon, and we are constrained to say, in reply to our query, it is certainly *not* strange that our farmers get rich quick. While we are sometimes made to wince under exorbitant charges for such articles, we are rather pleased than displeased at the fact that the farmer can and does receive such liberal wages for his labor. It is indicative of a high state of prosperity. The two articles mentioned—milk and butter—can be dispensed with, if need be, and their large consumption is evidence of wealth in the community. The French use little or no butter and milk in their kitchens or on their tables, and there is less dainty fare than they provide. If the French can subsist without these luxuries, Americans also can. Very little milk and butter were consumed by the people of the Pacific before Americans came here, and the pioneers among our own people deemed 't no great privation to do without them. A free indulgence in these luxuries, therefore, is an indication of prosperity, and as such we rejoice at it.

When it is taken into account that our winters here are extremely short and mild, there seldom being a month of weather sufficiently cold for snow and ice, it is readily seen that cows are very profitable. Here, cattle are not even housed in the winter, and find their own food during eleven months of the year; in the States they are not only housed, but food must be provided for them at least six months in the year. The price of milch cows here is about double the price in the States. The cost of purchase and the cost of keeping are both to be considered, in order to arrive at a correct idea of the profit accruing.

Thus much for milk and butter. For all descriptions of vegetables better prices are obtained here than rule in California, and for many years to come the prices on the Sound will be such as cannot fail to enrich all engaged in producing them. It is needless to detail instances by comparison; the fact is too well known to require it.

Of the profits realized by the merchants in their trade with the farmers we know but little, as each party in such transactions usually buys, sells, or exchanges to the best advantage, and one bargain is no criterion for another; but with regard to newspapers we will say a few words. For the information of "Farmer," we will state that the cost of printing paper on the Pacific is 100 per cent. higher than it is on the Atlantic, while the relative cost of all the departments of labor is in about the same ratio. A

weekly paper in New York, published in connection with a daily, as most of them are, costs much less in composition than a weekly paper disconnected with a daily; for the same matter that appears in the daily finds its way into the weekly paper without being re-set, thus saving largely in that department.

We fear "Farmer" did not stick very close to the truth when he wrote "in New York four pounds of butter will pay a week's board; here it takes sixteen pounds to pay a week's board." Let us see: here the price of board is eight dollars a week, and the price of butter 75 cents a pound; in New York the price of board (plain) is four and five dollars a week, and the price of butter 20 cents a pound. The two showings are rather conflicting.

As we have published his communication, we hope "Farmer" will keep in mind his promise to supply us with "butter and milk next summer at 50 cents."