WELL, HOW MUCH DOES IT COST TO KEEP A HEN A YEAR?

"Biddy" Is Apparently the Only One Who Knows and She Won't Tell—Editors Now Discuss It and Receive Many Communications.

None of Them Can Answer Question That is Puzzling Congressmen But Declare That There is a Profit in Raising Poultry — Some of the Views.

WASHINGTON, April 24. — Overshadowing in importance any other feature of the hen house inquiry is the firm refusal of Mrs. Hen to be smoked out from behind the dollar mark. Serenely indifferent to the searching investigation of her financial affairs, now being conducted by congress and the country at large, the sixth day of the struggle finds her still on the job cackling contendly.

That she is master of the situation is admitted by those who have undertaken the task of proving that she is living far beyond her means; that she is irresponsible; that her annual output does not warrant the enormous increase in the cost of keeping her and that by reason of her loose methods of bookkeeping she is setting a bad example for the next generation of hens.

In the face of this terrible indictment, conviction upon which means the surrendering of her proud social and business position to the well behaved, straight laced and economical incubator, the ruler of the roost and the queen of the quick lunchery maintains a four-ply silence that worries her friends.

Editorial Advice.

Up New England way the natives are choking the letter boxes with information on the subject, most of which has found its way to this office. The hen editor appreciates the kindness of the subscriber in Topknot, Mass., who enclosed a fresh egg in his communication as proof of the sterling character of his feathered employees. The fact that said egg was badly scattered when it reached the editor does not lessen the obligation he feels, but if this custom is to become popular it would be well to fry the eggs before placing them in the envelope.

And now to put New England on record:

PANCAKE, Vt., April 25. — "I don't know why this investigation was started at a time when every hen in the country is doing her level best to keep up with the Easter demand," shouted Jabez Juniper. "For all I can see it is giving a whole lot of folks a chance to work off a surplus sputter. And some of them wouldn't know which end to feed a hen on, much less what it costs to keep her. My boy Ben, who has a diploma from Dusenbury High school, figures it out that each of our hens spends $2 a year, and I don't begrudge them a cent of it. Yes, they may be holding out, but when I get that 'spicious I'll stop keeping hens."

JUMPINGJACK, N. H., April 25. —"Carrying the muck raking business into the hennery is small potatoes," was Lish Lundy's lament. "Of course, a hen can make both ends meet on $1.25 a year. She can make both ends meet without any appropriation, for that matter. But why force her to work at starvation wages when there is no need for it. As between the hen and the eagle, I'll take the hen. I know the eagle screams, but who ever heard of a scream sandwich?"

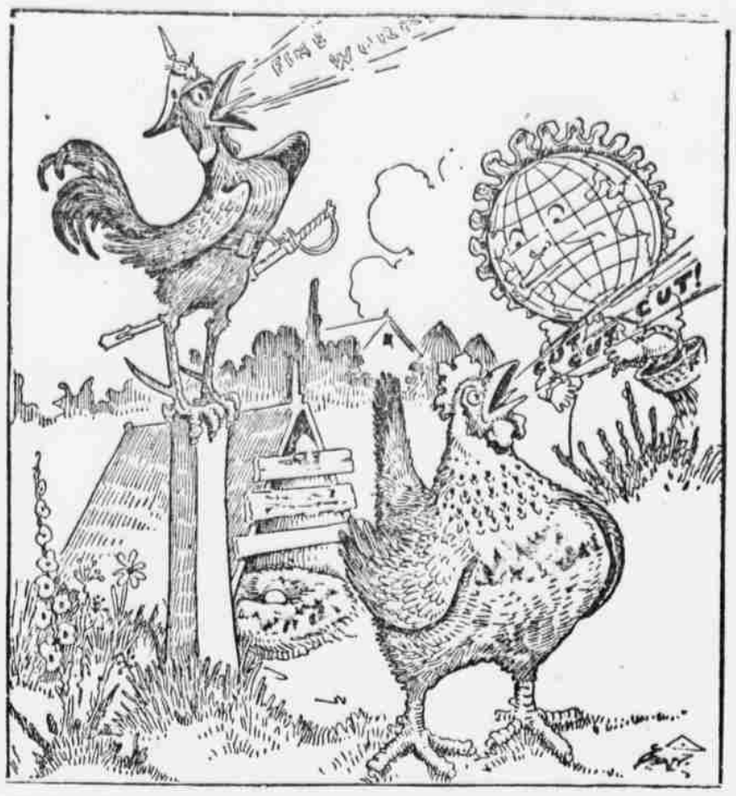
Be Liberal, Says Major.

LEWISTON, Me., April 25. — Major Holman F. Day, the Yankee poet and story writer, who immortalized the hen in his sawdust poem, believes that each hen should be maintained in a position commensurate with her producing capacity. "When this interesting discussion is ended," he said, "the American hen will be crowding the stork and the eagle for first place. I'm liberal with my hens, and they have the utmost confidence in me. Most of them are equipped with rubber heels to save the jar when they light from the roost. I've minimized their labor in a great many ways, such as hiring a man to cackle while they deliver the goods. There isn't a hen in Maine who wouldn't be proud to work for me. I refuse to subscribe to the $1.25 standard."

Hen and Unions.

WEST CHAZY, N. Y., April 25. — Edwin Sheldon says:

"Allow me to state that I have sixty hens. I buy their feed—corn, oats, buckwheat, middlings and oyster shells—and keep them fat at a cost of less than 10 cents per month. I do not care what Joel Gates says or any other high-toned hen man, this hen business is about like the union men of today—they want big pay, little work and plenty of rum and tobacco."



THE COST OF A HEN.

Note.—Suburbanites will be pleased to hear that the Department of Agriculture is still agitated over the yearly expense of keeping a hen.

How much it costs to keep a hen,
In dollars and in cents,
I do not know, but otherwise
It simply is immense.

She's such a busy, active thing
And wrecks more garden soil
In half an hour than one can fix
In days and days of toil.

She doesn't seem to bother much
About her mortal needs
Until the flower-beds are done,
And then she swipes the seeds.

She's neighborly as she can be,
And when her larder's poor,
She climbs the high dividing fence
And helps herself next door.

She roams around the livelong day,
As cheerful as can be,
And plays the very dickens with
All growing property.

She seems to think she has a right
to every little bit
That she can see, and what she can't
She goes and digs for it.

Oh, say!
What does a hen cost every year?
To calculate is vain,
For figures cannot measure half
Her owner's mental strain.

W. J. LAMPTON.

The question that is now absorbing the interests of Congress and poultry raisers in the East—"What does it cost to keep a hen a year?"—is arousing considerable interest among Coos Bay people who have raised chickens, are raising chickens or who expect to raise chickens. There is a wide divergence of opinion and each one insists that he is right and in the several discussions that started around town this morning, the debaters were lamenting the fact that they couldn't find some accurate figures some place to decide the matter.

"I have fourteen hens and one rooster and they eat about 100 pounds of wheat a month," said Tom Rook, the city hall superintendent. "What other feed they require and the cost of it, I don't know. However, I know that it pays to keep hens and then there is the satisfaction of having fresh eggs. One time, I keep tab on my chickens for about three years. During that time, I had from a dozen to three dozen. I allowed the current price for eggs regardless whether we ate them or sold them and also the price of each chicken we killed. At the end of the three years, I found that we had $150 profit on our chickens. However, I don't know exactly how much it costs to keep a hen a year."

"I don't know what it costs to keep a hen a year but I know I wish that I could raise poultry and have fresh eggs when I want them," remarked City Engineer Sandberg. "I heard a man say that it costs fifty cents a month to keep a hen. However, you needn't quote me as an authority. You can quote me on city improvements."

"I don't know what it costs to keep a hen a year but I know it is a lot of bother to fix them up like this," remarked Frank Parsons, the druggist, as he put the finishing touches to a very pretty window display of a Bantam family—a rooster, a hen and several chicks. "It is a lead pipe cinch that I won't keep them in that window a year to find out, either. I suppose hens are like people, though—the cost of keeping them depends on the hen."

"I don't know anything about the cost of keeping a hen a year," said Dr. E. E. Straw, the mayor of Marshfield. "I don't believe that the medical expenses would be great, though."

"I haven't any idea what it would cost to keep a hen a year," remarked Jay Mahoney. "However, I know that you can sit down and figure that a man can become a millionaire in a few years by raising chickens. Starting with two hens and allowing for the natural increase in the flock, it will be only a short time, according to your figures, until there are millions and millions of offsprings of the two hens."

"I don't know what it costs to keep a hen a year even if I always have chickens," remarked Tom Hall this morning. "It all depends on the kind of chickens you keep, I presume. I have fourteen hens and we get more than enough eggs from them to supply my family of four. Last year, my little girl sold about $8 worth of eggs that we couldn't use in the house. My hens are good ones, though. One day when we were only keeping twelve hens we got seventeen eggs for the day's products of the chickens."

May Have Succeeded at Home.

A physician went rabbit shooting and returned, tired out and empty handed, telling his wife he hadn't killed a thing. Thereupon she remarked: "I told you so. If you had stayed at home and attended to your legitimate business, you might have been more successful."

COOS BAY MEN GIVE VIEWS

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$ $ A Few $ $
$ $ Cents $ $
$ $ Invested $ $
$ $ In a $ $
$ $ Want Ad. $ $
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$ $ You $ $
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$ $ In Return. $ $
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Lawyers.

Francis H. Clarke Jacob M. Blake
Lawrence A. Liljequist
CLARKE, BLAKE & LILJEQVIST,
ATTORNEYS-AT-LAW
Times Building, Marshfield, Ore.
United States Commissioner's Office.

J. W. BENNETT,
Office over Flanagan & Bennett Bank
Marshfield, - - - - Oregon

COKE & COKE,
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