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The Horse Situation in Ontario

THE commissioners appointed some time ago for the purpose of making an enquiry into the horse industry of Ontario have presented their reports to the Department of Agriculture. While, owing to the great mass of matter presented a digest of the whole report has not been made, yet sufficient is known to make it pretty clear that a general inferiority in the kind of horses standing for service in many parts of Ontario, that will be scarcely suspected by anyone, will be shown. Commissioners from even the best horse-breeding districts report the presence in numbers of unsound, unpedigreed rakes and skates of all kinds and denominations, while in less favored districts other commissioners have almost failed to find one good sound pure-bred stallion of good type and character standing for service. A regrettable feature is the large number of inferior, cheap, trotting-bred stallions owned by hotel and tavern keepers in many of the small villages and towns.

Just what should be done to remedy this state of affairs, and how to meet the situation, is a question not easily answered. During the past few years a great many horses have been imported into Ontario, and a large number bred annually at home. Good, bad and indifferent have been dumped into Canada wholesale, and the result seems now to be very apparent. Some importers have endeavored to bring in a class of goods that would improve the horses now in the country, others, and this is especially true of some foreigners who have been attracted by the demand in Canada for horses, have merely used Canada as a dumping ground for all sorts of cheap goods at a long price. THE FARMING WORLD has repeatedly warned its readers against this kind of horseman, and unhesitatingly advised purchasing goods only from resident importers with character, reputation and business at stake. It is satisfactory to note, however, that at the present time the sale of inferior stallions has become much more difficult than a year or two ago. The country has too many of this kind and every horseman realizes that in order to assure himself of a reasonable trade he must own something a little better than the other man has. Hence the trade in second and third class horses promises this year to be a rather slow one. The good ones are the horses the trade calls for, and the situation looks at first glance as if things were on the mend.

But a little reflection will show just how this will work out. The owner of an inferior stallion, in nine cases out of ten, will not allow his horse to stand in the stable and call the money he invested in him a dead loss. Rather than this he will send him out to do service at a reduced fee, and he will keep on reducing it until it is quite impossible for anyone to bring in a good kind of stallion to compete against him. The Scotch premium system, of hiring a good stallion for the season to a company which guarantees a certain number of mares, has had the happiest results in that country. Its introduction here has more than once been commended, the greatest difficulty to overcome, seemingly, being the opposition of private stallion owners themselves. The plan

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of licensing stallions, though presenting difficulties, seems to be the more popular remedy. At meetings held by the commissioners in each district the plan for granting licenses met with universal approval.

Just where to draw the line in the granting or withholding of a license seems to be the stumbling block in this licensing plan. There is no doubt that when a practically disinterested party has the power to dictate the value of an animal or any other piece of property belonging to another who has paid his money for it, the situation is one of considerable delicacy. Many plans for accomplishing this in a fair and at the same time beneficial way have been suggested. The following plan, which seems to have a great deal of common sense in it, has been suggested by Mr. W. F. Kydd, of Simcoe, Ont., one of the commissioners:

"In order to accomplish some good," he said, "you must weed out every horse that shows hereditary unsoundness of any kind, physical inferiority, or deformity, while the breeding qualities must also receive some attention. The first thing to guard against after this is to leave

enough stallions in the country to meet all requirements, and not to draw the line too tight or make restrictions too close for the public taste. The issuing of three grades of licenses, first, second, and third class, should fill the bill. You cannot place in exactly the same category all the horses that are fit to stand for public service, as this would give undeserved preference and protection to third class stallions. The horse which has first-class conformation and action, a pedigree of some distinct breed, of size and character typical of his breeding, sound in every particular, should receive a first class license. Then the sound, pedigreed horse with fair conformation and action, should receive a second class license. In the third class should be recorded all sound horses of good conformation and action, and typical in size and character, of some distinct breed. This grading will throw out all non-descripts, ineligible for registration, all horses pure-bred or otherwise, which show hereditary unsoundness or which show distinct inferiority physically. This," said Mr. Kydd, "is, in my opinion, far enough to go at first, and less will not do much good."

The good to be accomplished by regulations similar to the above is no doubt very great. At the same time there is nothing in it to which any reasonable man could object. Those who wish to use anything inferior in character have no good purpose in doing so. How often have worthless, unsound, old, broken-down mares been sold at an auction sale or otherwise, at an enhanced price, because "safe in foal." If one had the assurance that this was at least to a sound and passably superior stallion the fact might be worth something. Probably all will not agree with Mr. Kydd in licensing at all grade stallions of first class character. But should a system of licensing throw out of commission a number of superior grade stallions in a locality where equally good pedigreed animals were not available in sufficient numbers, the wisdom of this allowance, or some form of "special license" would be obvious.

Our columns are open to a full and frank discussion of this whole question.

The World's Hog Supply

While Canada must for some time to come look to Great Britain for a profitable market for her surplus hog products, the situation in other countries is not without interest. The chief interest in the world's pork output at the present time centres in Germany. Prices for live hogs in that country have reached the very high figure of \$18.21 per 50 kilograms (110.33 pounds). The consumption of meat in Germany has fallen off