

EDITORIAL.

Canada Cattle Trade Restrictions.

In Glasgow there was recently held a conference of the representatives of salesmen and shipping companies, with others interested in the cattle trade with Canada. The object of the conference was to consider what action should be taken in view of the recent restrictions which the Board of Agriculture have placed on the importation of cattle from Canada. Those present were unanimous in the opinion that the present restrictions were not only prejudicial to the cattle trade, but to the community in general. An executive committee was appointed to lay their views before the Government and the Board of Agriculture.

It appears that Mr. Secretary Rusk wishes to aim a parting blow at Canadian stock interests before making his debut. The infliction of ninety days' quarantine on Canadian cattle entering the United States, and the preventing them from being shipped in bond over United States railways is, indeed, a clincher. That he has proved subservient to the different breeders' associations and cliques does not require a very exalted perception. At the same time we must admit that the unjust restrictions enforced by Great Britain, along with their continued absurd accusations that our cattle are diseased, give the shadow of an excuse for this ridiculous ruling, and we presume this is another blessing in disguise which so many of our Canadian writers have fancied they recognized.

From the tone of a recent speech made by Mr. Chaplin, the British ex-President of the Board of Agriculture, he evidently is not satisfied with the arrangements of the Australian Government. This body have not only arranged to carry free to the seaboard by the government railways all dairy produce intended for export, but have also decided to pay a bounty for every pound shipped to Great Britain. Mr. Chaplin said, "This is a very grave and very important question, and one which he thought must come before parliament." The British agricultural press are advising Mr. Chaplin to bring the subject before parliament without delay. We are rather curious to know what excuse can be found for the enterprise of this colony.

In order to facilitate agricultural education, the Pennsylvania State College has instituted a Chataqua course in agriculture. All agree that a more intimate knowledge of this science in all its branches is of great service to those who intend to aim at higher farming and can find the means to obtain it; but it is just here the trouble begins: Only a few can afford the time and expense necessary to put in three or more terms at an agricultural college. Again, agricultural pursuits are looked upon from such a practical standpoint, there is always a disposition on the part of a large number of the farming community to look upon these institutions as all well enough in theory, but decidedly lacking in teaching the work when reduced to practice. The fact is, that a college course was not ordained to complete an education, but is only what in farming is known as the preparation of the soil for the after reception of the seed, and thereby attain the highest results in the production of the crop. Thus a college or university course strengthens the mind, and gives it that receptive frame that gives it strength to think out better plans and better methods, which will be found of the greatest assistance in whatever vocation the student may intend to enter in after life. Thus where it is found impracticable to attend college, this Chataqua system has a great advantage for those who are anxious to study the science of agriculture without leaving their duties at home, the object being to direct a course of reading which will cover those branches that are of most importance. Three groups of subjects are recommended, viz.: Agriculture (soils, crops and fertilizers); Animal Husbandry (stock breeding and feeding, dairying and veterinary science), and Horticultural (fruit and vegetable gardening, etc.) Under each group there have been selected five standard books, which the student is intended to read. This course is free to all, and is so planned that the student will have the fullest liberty in the choice and order of the subjects, and the amount of time to be devoted to them. The projector of the scheme, Mr. H. J. Waters, B. A. S., professor of agriculture for the college, estimates the cost of the books required at \$20.00, which will cover the cost of the books required for all three courses, and all of them are standard works which should be in every farmer's library. This course is free to Canadians, but we think that if the staff at the Ontario Agricultural College were to direct a similar course of reading, it would be appreciated by those devoting their attention to the departments of the farm in which they are most interested, and whose circumstances prevent them availing themselves of the more thorough college course.

Valley Home Shorthorns.

The illustration which adorns our front page for this issue represents four Shorthorns from the Valley Home herd of Messrs. S. J. Pierson & Son, Meadowvale, Ont. These cattle are not only of orthodox North Country breeding, but as individuals embrace that true Aberdeenshire type from which so many successful Canadian showyard winners have sprung. The young bull is Mina Lad, just turned two years old, and we feel that no pen of ours can really do him justice, so thoroughly good is he all over. His equal in form is seldom approached, for with him every desirable beef point is clothed with a depth of natural flesh rarely seen. Mina Lad is a beautiful mossy roan of great substance. He has a capital front with deep ribs, particularly good at both flanks, well finished out behind, capital twist, and is one of those good ones that improve on acquaintance. Further he comes honestly by his strong individuality, as he was sired by Stanley, which was a sweepstakes winner two years in succession. He again was sired by Challenge, a bull in whom two of the longest successful Sittyton strains known in Canada are united, viz., those of Old Barmpton Hero and the Matchless of Elmhurst. Imported Mina Lass, his dam, is the roan cow which stands fronting us in the picture. She was bred at Kinnellar, and is full of that feminine character that would lead us to mark her as a breeding cow of merit. She, too, belongs to that easy feeding sort that have made North Country breeding popular among all feeders who are familiar with them, and to her breeding the young bull may claim half of his outstanding excellence, as Mina Lass was sired by Gravesend, a bull of Sittyton breeding that was much used upon the Kinnellar herd, and she herself belongs to the Mina family, one of the most numerous and most valued of the old sorts there.

The other cow in the foreground is Wimple of Trafalgar, a full sister of the roan heifer illustrated in Mr. Cockburn's group in our December issue, and which so successfully showed at the circuit of fairs during 1892. This cow belongs to another Kinnellar family, many specimens of which have been remarkably good ones. She was sired by Grand Warrior, a bull of Mr. Arthur Johnston's breeding, sired by the imported Kinnellar bull, Warrior, his dam being imported Fame 2nd, bred in the Sheriff-Hutton herd of Mr. John Linton, Yorkshire, England. Wimple of Trafalgar's dam is Wimple of Vermont, bred at Kinnellar, and by the Sittyton-bred bull Vermont. Here is breeding that should suit anyone, and she, too, can back it up, as she is a most likely cow for future honors in the show ring.

The third cow, standing in the background, is Jilt, a three-year-old heifer of good substance. She was sired by the imported Kinnellar bull Reporter, her dam by imported Baron Linton. Her grand dam was the imported Kinnellar cow Juliet. Among the many other good things in this herd, the imported bull Tofthills deserves mention. He is a bull of immense scale, and is remarkably smooth and deep-fleshed. He was first in the class for aged bulls at the late Toronto Industrial Show. He has done exceedingly well for his proprietors. Many of the heifers are by him, and we are assured he is still as useful as ever. The herd numbers fifty head, and comprises the thick-fleshed, useful sorts now in demand. Many of the most popular Scotch families are represented, and the herd is in the most profitable breeding shape possible, all the cows being regular breeders, while the heifers are a desirable lot. A number of these are certain to give an account of themselves at next season's shows. The Valley Home Farm is conveniently situated between the G. T. R. at Brampton, distant seven miles, and the main line of the C. P. R. at Streetsville, while the Orangeville branch of the latter at Meadowvale is about a mile distant from the farm. We understand that this herd will be offered at public auction on April 12, due notice of which will be given in our advertising columns later on. Those who are on the lookout for animals to found a herd or further replenish the ranks of one already established, we can cheerfully bespeak material for selection not often at command.

Free corn was one of the subjects which claimed the attention of the delegates at the Central Farmers' Institute at Toronto last week. Just why free corn is not numbered among the articles under the head of raw material we cannot see. The reduction or removal of the duty upon any article on which the cheapest form of production of beef, pork, or any other export depends, is surely in the interest of farmers, and has nothing whatever to do with the political phase of the question. Reduction of cost is the aim of manufacturers in order to cope with competitors. Surely agriculturists should pursue a similar course.

Wood Ashes.

Wood ashes are one of our most convenient and cheapest fertilizers, yet how often are they one of our most neglected, and either allowed to go to waste or bartered away to peddlers for a bar of common soap per bushel.

Our cousins across the line evidently understand the value of this fertilizer better than we do, and buy enormous quantities of what we yearly throw away as almost useless, as is shown by their agricultural papers, in one of which no less than five different firms advertised "Canadian unleached ashes for sale." As early as 1885, ashes were exported from Ontario and Quebec to the amount of \$179,700.

Among the fruit-growing farms of the Eastern States the use of Canadian ashes has steadily increased; the cost is about 24c. to 25c. per bushel of 45 to 50 lbs. These prices are by the carload at Amherst and vicinity.

The prices in the Eastern States are based on a standard of 6 per cent. potash, and 1½ or 2 per cent. phosphoric acid. Fresh ashes will often exceed the above value.

In view of the above exportation and the great waste of ashes in Ontario, it is worth while for the farmers to consider whether it pays to neglect or to sell for five or ten cents per bushel in cash, or barter a bushel of ashes which the New England farmer finds worth to him 25c. per bushel by the carload.

A sample of fresh ashes from London, which were analyzed, gave:—

Water	2.07 per cent.
Insoluble matter	7.68 "
Potash	7.15 "
Phosphoric Acid	1.89 "
Lime	37.33 "
Magnesia	3.02 "
Iron and Alumina	1.53 "

The value of ashes lies in the amount of potash, phosphoric acid and lime which they contain. At the current price of 5c. per lb. for the first two, and 4c. for the latter, the above sample is worth 54c. per 100 lbs.

Leached ashes will contain from one to two per cent. of potash, the other ingredients being about the same, therefore they will be worth from 20c. to 30c. per 100 lbs., according as to how thorough the leaching process has been. Coal ashes contain little or no plant food, but have a mechanical effect on some soils.

Samples of ashes will vary greatly in value, owing to impurities and the care which has been taken to keep them off the earth and in a dry place; also the kind of wood from which they are obtained. Branches and top wood give an ash much richer in potash than the body wood. Ashes from soft wood are not worth as much as those from hard wood. They are usually estimated at about 4-5 the value of hard wood ashes. As a general rule, we are quite safe in putting the value of ashes at 20c. per bushel for hard wood, and one-half that amount for leached ashes.

Wood ashes are a potash manure, and have a lasting influence; the good effect can generally be seen for a number of years. The gain to be derived from their use will depend upon the amount of available potash in the soil; but few of our farms are so rich in this manure but that an application of ashes would do good. They are helpful on all impoverished soils, and especially to sandy land, but their action does not depend entirely on the potash and phosphoric acid; the alkaline nature of the lime renders them very valuable to soils containing organic matter, as they act as a liberator of fertility.

Ashes which are exported are used chiefly by the gardeners and fruit growers of the New England and the Eastern States; some have found their way as far as the orange groves of Florida. Surely it will pay a farmer to keep on his farm a fertilizer which is valued so highly in other countries. Ashes are of the greatest value to plants of a woody nature, hence they furnish one of the best, as well as the cheapest manure for orchards, gardens and grape vines.

The leguminous crops, as peas, beans and clover, are much helped by a dressing, especially if they are applied in conjunction with a phosphoric manure, as bone meal. On corn, pastures and meadows they give good results, and among the cereals they will probably give better results when applied to fall wheat than spring grain, because the season of growth is longer.

The mode of application will depend upon the crop. For fruit trees they may be applied in the fall or in the spring after the frost has left the ground, spreading evenly around the tree as far as the branches extend. For grass lands they are better applied in the spring. For fall wheat apply after the ground is prepared and before sowing. For spring grains apply before sowing. It is better to harrow the land, so as to incorporate this fertilizer with the soil before sowing the grain, for if a large amount is applied the corrosive action of the ashes might be injurious to the young plants. The quantity to apply will depend upon their freshness and strength, the particular crop, and the condition of the land. Light and impoverished soils require heavy applications. Fruit trees will also require a liberal amount. For general crops apply from one-half to a ton of fresh ashes, and two or three times as much leached ashes.