

FARMER'S ADVOCATE

AND HOME MAGAZINE

* AGRICULTURE, STOCK, DAIRY, POULTRY, HORTICULTURE, VETERINARY, HOME CIRCLE. *

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Editorial.

The Stallion Syndicate.

During the last few weeks certain journals claiming agricultural patronage in this country have been most scathing in their criticism of the stallion syndicate. Every man who proposed to sell horses to companies of farmers has been, regardless of his reputation or methods of business, branded as a swindler, and, hence, deserving of a wide berth.

Now, although we have no intention of defending the syndicate system of selling stallions, yet we do feel that a great injustice has been done to firms now operating in this country whose record for uprightness and the practice of sound business principle is of the best. On the other hand, the first denunciation of the faker at so late a date is to be wondered at.

True it is, that a good deal must be said on some subjects before some readers begin to pay attention, but scarcely an issue of the "Farmer's Advocate" has appeared since November 5th of last year in which some warning has not been given to those who were likely to be approached by sharp dealers in shoddy horseflesh. Not only has a firm stand been thus taken in this matter, but we have absolutely refused to accept several hundred dollars in advertising from firms whose reputation we were not prepared to vouch for, and already scores of farmers in Manitoba and the West have reason to regret the day when the representative of some of these concerns set foot upon their farms.

The reason for the presence of so many horse-dealers is not difficult to trace. The prosperity which this country is experiencing and the disposition of farmers to engage more generally in stock-raising have caused an unprecedented demand for stallions, and hence firms whose business it is to deal in these animals have come even considerable distance to share in our markets. It is unfortunate, however, that among the number should come those whose record for business integrity has never been of the best, and when they appeared in Canada West, more unscrupulous means of disposing of their stock than ever before adopted have been used, with the result that hundreds are now interested in a bundle of horseflesh that is neither an ornament in the ranks of the class to which it belongs nor destined to sire good stock, should it happen to be a getter.

In some cases most fraudulent means have been used to induce men to give their signature to documents, little knowing that in so doing their name was being attached to an order to pay. Instances of the work of these fakers have come to our notice, that, for downright swindling, is almost without a parallel, and it is to be hoped that when some of the cases come before the courts of the Province, that such an example will be made of the guilty parties as will forever rid our prosperous West of these bloodsuckers. Meanwhile, we trust that those who have occasion to become interested in the purchase of a stallion for the improvement of the equine race in their locality will proceed with caution, having their eyes wide open; and when a bargain is completed, that it may be with a reliable company of some standing, whose advertisement no paper need be ashamed to carry, and with whom no one need be afraid to deal.

Telephones for Farmers.

Of the many valuable productions which the inventive and scientific mind has placed before the world during the last two decades, few have proved of more practical value to mankind than the telephone. When first introduced, few dreamed that it would so revolutionize the methods of business as it has. At first it was adopted by the man of commerce as a convenience, and later it became a necessity, until it is safe to say that in the average business office in such a city as Winnipeg, the "phone" is used from fifty to one hundred times daily.

To farmers the advantages of a properly organized telephone system may be even greater than to those having their occupation in a town or city, and it is surprising that lines have not been more generally erected throughout the country. The chief difficulty appears to have been lack of reliable information on the subject, and a supposition, generally, that the cost of erection and maintenance would far exceed the material benefits to be had therefrom.

Through a number of letters received in response to an enquiry directed to farmers interested in this subject in Manitoba and the Territories, and published in another column, we believe that the people in the rural districts of this country are prepared to appreciate the value of a telephone system if constructed in their district, and would be willing to contribute to its construction, provided instruments and other materials could be had at a reasonable cost. In many sections in the United States the farmers have organized small companies, and are running so successfully their own telephone system that no one would think of disposing of his line.

In Western Canada the reasons for having rural telephones are even greater than in more thickly settled countries, many farmers being far from town and far from each other, but of course this inconvenience also means greater expense in putting up a line. As to the actual cost of construction, we find that first-class instruments, ready to be put up, without the services of an electrical expert, may be had in the City of Winnipeg for fifteen dollars, and insulators and pins four cents each. The amount of further expenditure will depend entirely upon the completeness of the system desired. In many States of the Union farmers are using the barbed wire fence for most of the lines, and report a fairly satisfactory service. At the Experimental Farm, Brandon, Superintendent Bedford some time ago had connection with the town by means of a wire fence, but in a recent interview stated that it could not always be depended upon, and that he found the present system where poles were used very much better. In some cases good lines have been erected by stringing a special wire to scantling, which were fastened to the fence posts, and extending high enough that no animal could reach it from the ground. There is no reason why this method should not prove satisfactory, for short distances at least.

In putting up a permanent and independent line, telephone companies use about thirty-two cedar poles, twenty-five feet long, per mile. These can be laid down anywhere in Manitoba for \$1.65 each, and in the Territories for \$2.00. They also

use about No. 9 wire, which runs about 330 feet per mile, and costs about six cents per pound, but a lighter wire, costing much less per foot, is said by some authorities to give better results. This cost, however, can be very largely overcome where fences can be made use of. The cost of maintaining a telephone system amounts to practically nothing. A new battery may be bought for sixty cents, and outside of that there is nothing in particular to go wrong.

A farmers' line is nearly altogether a matter of organization. All that is necessary is for a few to get together, organize a little association, and interest everyone in the district to join. When their line has reached town the business men will be found ready to make connection, because their interests will be at stake.

After looking carefully into this question, the "Farmer's Advocate" believes that the time has come when a campaign in favor of farmers' telephones should begin. Conditions everywhere, we are aware, may not justify their erection, but in scores of districts of this country they would be a boon to the farming classes, and we hereby extend an invitation to our readers to give their views upon the subject. A number have already done so, and their ideas are almost unanimously in favor of having lines constructed, provided the cost were not too high. Nothing can do more to dissipate the social isolation surrounding so many farm homes and encourage the development of an enlightened and homogenous agricultural people.

Siftings.

The first thing toward bettering a condition is to recognize it.

The greatest success is being accomplished by those who are putting the most thought into their work. Are you one of them?

While the Grain-growers' Association is being organized in your district don't stand back and say it will be a good thing if properly managed. Get in line, and use your influence toward making it accomplish something worth while.

If there is any subject which you desire to see discussed in these columns, say so, on a card addressed to the "Farmer's Advocate," Winnipeg. We mean to make this journal suit everyone who reads an agricultural paper.

Marconi has shown to the world that wireless telegraphy "is no dream." Surely it is time that the farmers of this country should enjoy the advantages of a rural telephone system in their home, or at some convenient center. Read what thoughtful men are saying on this question in another column.

Never sign a paper for a stranger, is a good motto in these days of prosperity, when so many suckers are searching for the financial blood of the agricultural classes.

In a few more weeks the season for soil cultivation and sowing will be here. Labor is going to be as scarce as ever, and hence every movement likely to save time when the busy time arrives should be performed without delay.