

The Farming World

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Note and Comment

THIS is undoubtedly one of the most backward springs this continent has experienced in a great many years. Canada alone is not suffering. The cool weather that has prevailed almost steadily for a month and a half has extended over a considerable area of the United States. The season is from two to three weeks behind last year, and unless growing conditions are most favorable when the warm weather does come, this year's harvest may be nothing to boast of.

These backward conditions are causing not a little anxiety in Western Canada, even if the Westerner has optimism to burn. Seeding is only beginning in many sections and though favorable weather comes soon the area sown to wheat will likely be no larger than that of last year, in spite of the fact that a great deal of new land has been broken up. There is no growth yet, though the ground is in splendid condition to receive the seed. While the wheat area sown will be below that estimated, there is likely to be a largely increased acreage of barley and oats. Given fine, warm weather from this on there is nothing to prevent reaping a big crop. But it must be seen.

The telephone is specially adapted to country life. It discounts distance and brings people miles apart in direct communication with each other. The doctor, the butcher, the merchant and a host of others can be reached in a few minutes and the wants of the farmer made known. It adds to the pleasure of life on the farm and is fast becoming a rural necessity.

It is unfortunate for the development of the telephone business in this country that one company should have such a foothold all over the land as to practically become a monopoly. It is still worse to find them united and controlled by opposing lines, unwilling to meet the necessities of the locality, either in rates or service. But, if not, they must be compelled to do so or stand aside. Our legislators must wake up to the needs of country life in this respect. Trunk lines must be common property. The people in the country whose time more than others means money must not be precluded from the use of this modern invention. We give due credit to those who in spite of difficulties are pushing local lines in various directions. They must be aided, not hindered, in this work.

At its recent session the Ontario Legislature passed an act respecting stationary engineers which may not be without interest to our readers. Briefly, it provides that after the first day of July, 1909, no engineer will be allowed to operate or have charge of a stationary steam plant of 50 horse power or upwards who does not hold a Government certificate. The exemptions are: Those who on the 29th of 1907 (the date on which the act passed) held certificates from an association of stationary engineers, etc. Engineers who on the above date were in charge of a plant of 25 horse power or over in Ontario, and engineers who had at any time previous to the passing of this act not less than two years' experience

in the operation of such a plant in Ontario. Those who have to qualify as above will have to pass the prescribed examinations, particulars of which can be obtained by addressing The Secretary, Department of Agriculture, Toronto.

The wisdom of this legislation cannot be questioned. A person who undertakes to operate an engine of large capacity should be thoroughly competent for the work. As all engines under 50 horse power do not come under the act, the operators of threshing outfits and cheese factory engines will be exempt. Though there is a certain amount of danger attached to the operation of an engine, large or small, it would, perhaps, work a hardship to many if the exemptions we have mentioned were brought under the act. Operators of cheese factories, threshing and small engines used on the farm should, however, be cautioned about the work. Carelessness or ignorance might easily bring disaster.

Our New Brunswick correspondent this issue refers to the serious difficulty Maritime Province farmers are having with the labor problem. Unless something is done to bring in men who will work upon farms, dairies in that part of Canada will, perhaps, fade out of sight. There are thousands of cows less kept to-day than there were 5 years ago, and Western migration is leaving hundreds of good farms vacant or practically so. Politicians and citizens generally do not rightly estimate the value of agriculture to the nation, or more effort would be made to remedy matters.

The opening up of the West and the rapid growth of labor organizations are controlling the labor market to such an extent that from Fort William eastward, and especially in the Maritime Provinces, agriculture is ceasing to be profitable. Men and women are leaving the farms and flocking to the cities and to the West. In British Columbia Japanese and Chinese laborers are proving of great value. Something should be done to allow laborers of this class to enter the country free, provided they continue to work on the land. As gardeners and general farm laborers some of these men are as good as the best. Among the Italians who are now working on the railroads are to be found some excellent farm hands. In order to employ either Asiatic or Italians on Canadian farms, small houses must be built where these men can live and board themselves.

The management of the Canadian National Horse Show is to be congratulated upon the great success of this year's event. Enterprise and ability were shown and this great annual event in the horse world enters upon a new era of progress. While the ordinary receipts were not sufficient to meet the expenditure, the deficit was a good deal more than made up by donations, thus putting the financing of the project on easy street.

We take this opportunity of tendering a bit of advice to the management, and that is, before another year to specially define what constitutes an amateur in the horse ring. In several amateur classes, notably hunters, parties were allowed to ride who have been

winning prizes at horse shows for many years. Surely such persons should not be allowed to compete in an amateur class with those who are only novices in the business. There did not seem to be any distinction made between amateurs and other classes this year, the same persons riding and winning prizes in both. If this matter is not remedied novices will be chary about entering the ring.

The decision of the Government at Ottawa to establish an experiment station at Ft. Vermilion, on the Peace River, has attracted much attention in the West and Hudson Bay records from that vast Hinterland have been requisitioned for information about its productiveness. People stand aghast at the statement that No. 1 hard flint ripened in 66 days on Peace River. This is only a miracle to those who forget that in that more northern region 17 and 18 hours sunshine in a day of 24 hours is nothing unusual. It is these long days of unbroken sunshine, followed by short, cool nights, that not only bring rapid maturity but give to the wheat that peculiar hardness and clarity of color so noticeable in Red Fife the further north it is grown. Many people forget, or have never known, that the wheat that took first prize at the World's Fair in Chicago was grown on Peace River, and was cut either 85 or 86 days from planting, fully matured and ripened. Up at Prince Albert, in Saskatchewan, in 1905, they had had a late seeding and there had been practically no growth until the middle of May, but wheat cutting started on the fourth of August and was general by the eighth. This was possible because during the whole month of July there had been unbroken sunshine for 17 hours a day, by official record, this spell of intense sunshine following a fairly wet June did the trick.

But to return for a moment to the Peace River. Mr. Fred E. Lawrence, who has spent practically all his life in that country, and who will have charge of the experimental station, very wisely advises people to keep out of that country until the railroads are in. It is sound counsel and should be heeded by intending settlers. By the time the three years of experiments now arranged for are complete, the railway will be in, the country will be surveyed, and settlers will escape many of the initial difficulties that are so disheartening to the newcomer. When once the Peace River country is opened up, settlers will find: "Fat pasture and good, and a land wide, and quiet, and peaceable."

Recently a report was published that the brown-tail moth had made its appearance in the Annapolis fruit belt in Nova Scotia. A single specimen had been found and sent to Dr. Fletcher, Dominion Entomologist, who pronounced it genuine. Principal Cummings, of the Truro Agricultural College, at once detailed Prof. Smith to make a careful investigation of the districts reported to have been affected. After a most thorough search not a single specimen has been found. The investigation will be continued by Prof. Sears, Provincial Horticulturist, in other sections.