

FARM AND DAIRY

AND RURAL HOME

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FARM AND DAIRY

PETERBORO, ONT.

WHO WILL BENEFIT?

The plan for a great national highway extending from the Atlantic to the Pacific is finding much support in some quarters. The city press and the federal government both look on this expensive national undertaking with much favor. The plans of those good roads enthusiasts who are pushing the idea have now been worked out in some detail. It is proposed that in Ontario the main highway shall run from Montreal to Windsor, following quite closely along the lake front. The promoters of the scheme believe that branch highways would gradually be constructed leading off the main highway to all parts of the province.

And when this great work has been consummated and millions and millions of dollars of farmers' money have been spent on it, who will benefit? What farmer ever thinks of going from outlying points in Ontario to Toronto with his products?

His market is the nearest town or railway station, and the roads that he is particularly interested in are the roads that lead to that market. It is the same with the average town dweller. The only roads that can be of benefit to him are those that lead from the country to the city, thus reducing the cost of marketing farm produce and hence the cost of living. Fully ninety per cent of the people of Canada will derive but little benefit from the proposed highway and the immense expenditure that it entails.

We farmers should protest strongly against such an unwise expenditure of the public funds. We are the class that will be most heavily taxed to meet this expenditure, and the beneficiaries will be the comparatively small percentage of our people who ride in motor cars. It is they who are boosting the idea of the national highway under the guise of helping the farmer.

ABOUT MAKING LIME-SULPHUR

It is a big open question whether or not it is worth while to make home-made lime-sulphur concentrated spray solution. Much deep science pertaining to chemistry is involved in its preparation. Of course few of us farmers are chemists, and, therefore, are in a very poor way for knowing when we have it right.

The main and active principle in the lime-sulphur spray is the sulphides. Should there be—owing to defective preparation—sulphates, then one may as well apply gypsum or land plaster, and all his work will count for naught.

Many figures given, apparently in the best of faith, as to the cost of home-made lime-sulphur are most misleading. To any one having a knowledge of the chemistry of the preparation it is obvious that figures often quoted take into account only about one-half the amount of sulphur there must be in standard lime-sulphur concentrated spray of final quality.

The cost per forty-gallon barrel of making lime-sulphur was given one of the editors of *Farm and Dairy* by Mr. Robt. Thompson, of St. Catharines, recently to be as follows: Sulphur, \$1.60 a hundredweight. Only about two-thirds of the sulphur can be placed in solution. We estimate it will therefore require at least 166 lbs., which, at \$1.60 a hundredweight, gives \$2.65; lime, 70 lbs. at 25 cents; labor, 50 cents; fuel, eight cents—a total of \$3.48. This does not include waste and losses, nor does it allow for the barrel, which is worth about \$1.50; nor does it consider the cost of plant and the general nuisance of making the preparation.

Another important consideration also enters into the account. The spraying, to be effective, must be done at the right time. A day out of time may make the whole work ineffective, and, therefore, a total loss. The busy fruit grower is apt not to have his spray prepared in time, hence another argument for the commercial sprays.

The home-made wash is never as strong as the commercial lime-sul-

phur; therefore the two are scarcely comparable in some of value. Tests made at the O.A.C., Guelph, and reported in Bulletin No. 177, show a much lower percentage of sulphides—from 15 to 25 per cent—in the home-boiled solutions, and while a goodly number of prominent fruit growers are content to use their own home-made lime-sulphur, it is proven that they often are getting only 40 per cent of the efficiency possible with high grade, concentrated commercial lime-sulphur.

The best argument that we know of in favor of using the best commercial brands is that all the leading United States fruit growers are using the commercial brands and have discarded their own plants. Even many co-operative plants where the home-made solution has been prepared on a large scale have come into disuse, through progressive growers coming to see that the making of the spray is a work for the expert chemist, thoroughly equipped to make the preparation.

DON'T TRUST TO LUCK

"Too many farmers in Iowa are trusting to luck and Providence for their crops next year," said Dr. W. Thompson, president of the Iowa State College, in a recent address. Dr. Thompson's remark applies to more farmers than those in the State of Iowa. Here in Canada we have far too many farmers whose crops depend largely on the amount of rainfall that comes during the summer months.

The real test of a farmer's ability is not the crops that he raises in a year of abundant rainfall but the crops that he secures in a season such as last year, when the rainfall is away below the normal. Even with our scanty rainfall in 1911 there were many farmers in the drought-stricken sections who harvested good crops. Where did the moisture come from to mature those crops?

It is a fact that cannot be emphasized too strongly or repeated too often that the moisture that really matters in growing crops is that which seeps into the soil in the fall, winter and spring and is held there for the use of the crops the succeeding season. The best test of a farmer's ability is the manner in which he conserves this moisture and uses it for the production of crops in a dry season.

Full plowing is one method of conserving that moisture. If we have neglected fall plowing, however, thorough spring cultivation will do much to conserve soil moisture. When plowing, for instance, the plow should be followed almost immediately by the roller and then the harrow to prevent the drying out of the soil. Tile drains also help to conserve moisture. With hoe crops, the dust mulch preserved by constant cultivation will keep the corn or roots growing in the dry season. We farmers can pretty nearly control the situation, and luck plays a small part in the success of good farmers.

Our most successful corn growers tell us that they never use a single ear of corn for seed without first testing it for germinating power.

Seed corn. It is a comparatively simple matter to take four or five kernels from each ear of corn, put them in a warm, moist place, and thus determine what ears of corn can be depended on to give seed of strong vitality, and what ears if planted will result in a thin stand. We will be wiser to go to a little trouble now to test our seed corn than to sow it indiscriminately and find out next June when it is too late that much of it was not fit for seed, and that we will have a thin stand and a short crop in consequence.

That heredity counts in determining the production of grains and grasses is not a theory; it has been proven to be a large factor in

Results from successful crop seed selection. Duction by hundreds of our most successful farmers.

Elsewhere in this issue, Mr. T. G. Raynor, of the Seed Division, Ottawa, tells of the results that a few representative farmers have secured with grains, potatoes and so forth. The success of these men in increasing their crops through seed selection should appeal to the rest of us farmers who have not yet realized the importance of having seed from good producing strains. Seed selection is something like testing cows for production. It looks like a lot of work from the outside, but when one actually gets started we find that it is not so much of a bother and trouble we used to talk about as was largely imaginary and exaggerated. If the work were there the financial results would more than justify the expenditure of labor.

"A stitch in time saves nine." This is particularly true in the care of implements. A few bolts, a few nails, a little lumber, and a little paint made use of at the proper time will, by an expenditure of cents, save dollars.

The Contagion of good Farming

Breeder's Gazette.
It is not imitation that accounts for the adoption by farmers in a given community of the methods that one of their neighbors has employed with success. Object lessons are not valuable merely because they engender rivalry or lead to imitation; they do their work through a contagion. A progressive, steadfast man who works out his economic and large salvation on a farm is the source of a compelling local drive toward social and material betterments. His own progress represents an inner desire for these things. His influence and example act as a helpful contagion in his community. Once the seed of which this mental and moral contagion is the fruit is planted in agricultural soil welcome results are inevitably follow.

What comparatively backward farming regions need first of all is the training, ambition and balance that come from the power of awakening their fellows. If each township could claim even one farmer of this type the country life problem, of which this nation is devoting much thought and money, would solve itself.

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