

Much of this imported labour has been absorbed in the construction of new railways, and this is another feature that has marked the past year. Considerable activity and progress have been manifest in these very important enterprises. The Toronto, Simcoe, and Muskoka Railroad, projected from Barrie to Bracebridge, has been opened as far as Orillia; the extension of the Midland has been completed from Lindsay to Beaverton; the Whitby and Port Perry Road extends up to the latter point; the Toronto and Nipissing is finished to Woodville, 63 miles from Toronto; the Toronto, Grey and Bruce is open to Arthur; the North Grey extension of the Northern will connect Collingwood with Meaford, and is already nearly completed to Thornbury. These and similar undertakings, will do immense service in promoting the rapid settlement and prosperity of the country, though probably during their progress that great difficulty with which the Canadian farmer has to contend—the scarcity and high price of labour—will continue, unless a very great increase takes place in future immigration.

The length to which this notice is already extending warns us to refer only very briefly to a few other matters. Very marked impetus has been given to the importation of improved live stock, and during no previous year have so many persons been engaged in this enterprise, or have so large a number of valuable animals been introduced into the country, as in the course of the past year. Many of these importations have been sold to American breeders, but a large number happily remain with us, and their influence on the live stock of the country cannot but be very beneficial.

This large importation has given quite a marked feature to our principal agricultural exhibitions, and has contributed much to their interest and success. We can only allude in this place to another development in connection with these shows, namely, the growing tendency to hold large union exhibitions. This change will work advantageously, if it is not overdone, and not carried out in a spirit of hostility to the Provincial Fair.

The amendment of the Agricultural Act, which makes the election of all the members of the Council of the Agricultural and Arts Association annual, places the control of this institution more than ever in the hands of the farmers of the country, if they will only use their powers. The settlement of the free grant lands, and the excellent plan of putting up buildings on some of the lots, at a moderate price, are matters that should be more diligently pushed than they have hitherto been. The Agricultural College and Experimental Farms are yet scarcely more than projected, and will require much careful wisdom on the part of the Administration to carry them out to a practical and worthy issue. The recognition and aid given by the Government to the Fruit Growers' Associa-

tion and Entomological Society, have already told greatly in favour of these valuable institutions, which are destined, we feel assured, to take high rank in the education and elevation of the country, besides adding materially to its productive resources.

With one more reference only, though much might yet be said on a great variety of topics, we must close this article. We allude to the increasing use of agricultural implements and machinery. These are hardly manufactured fast enough to meet the growing demand. Among the new introductions that seem to be making way is the double furrow plough, which we believe will be found on many farms to effect a great saving of time and labour, and unless superseded by some still more efficient implement, will come into very general favour.

On the whole, the year affords evident signs of progress amongst us, and though greater zeal and activity are needed in the direction of promoting immigration, diffusing information, raising the intelligence of the farmer, and generally stimulating improvement in agriculture, the aspect and promise of the future are yet hopeful and encouraging.

The Farmer's Holiday.

The present times, especially among the nations foremost in civilization, are characterized by incessant activity, urgent competition and restless enterprise. With a large class, indeed, life is from beginning to end a perpetual struggle. That this condition of things is otherwise than hurtful to mind and body—inimical to man's physical and moral health—we do not believe. By the beneficent ordering of the Almighty, the sentence of labour pronounced upon our race as the punishment of the first transgression has been transmuted into a blessing; and from the enforced exercise of our powers spring life's best enjoyments as well as its noblest achievements. But toil unrelieved—continuous drudgery—is an evil, nevertheless, and not only a hard lot, but unless elevated by some grand motive, will prove unfruitful either of real profit or pleasure. The gain, if any, will be purchased at too great a cost.

Relaxation from work, and recreation in some form, are good for all of us. This relief is more needed in some callings than in others, and perhaps its necessity is less felt by the farmer than by most men. This arises partly from the nature of his occupation, which is mostly in the open air, and is, moreover, not continuous, and partly because the relaxation which other men must make comes to him in the ordinary course of his business. Hence it is not surprising to find from the statistics of mortality that the average duration of life is very much in favour of the farmer, as compared with the average in any other calling.

With the Canadian farmer, seed time, summer, and harvest, are emphatically the busy seasons of the year—seasons all too short for the work that has to be crowded into them—and long days, rising early and working late, are the ordinary experience of every one engaged on a farm during this busy period. But with the winter comes a welcome change. Not only do the shortened days curtail the hours of labour, but the occasions for work are very greatly narrowed. Some city people, indeed, imagine that during winter the farmer has literally nothing to do. This is, however, a great mistake. In a well ordered farm no period of the year is a season of idleness, and there is plenty of occupation to profitably fill a large portion of the months of frost and storm that in this climate effectually preclude all field operations. The care of stock, without which farming is scarcely ever profitable, demands at this time a large amount of attention and no small labour. In addition, the marketing of produce, the preparation of firewood, both for the increased demands of the cold season and in anticipation of the coming busy time, and a hundred other requirements of the farm or the household, will bring abundant occupation for the winter days. There are those, too, who must labour, either in cutting and hauling wood for sale, or in some other way to earn the means of subsistence, or eke out the too scanty profits of the summer's work. In new settlements and bush farms, moreover, there is usually plenty to do in chopping and clearing the land, taking saw-logs to the mill, or other work for which the winter is the best or only time. In short, the winter is a season of comparative leisure only, and not by any means a holiday time of indolence or play.

Now, it is obviously the interest and duty of the farmer to make the best use of this comparative leisure. The opportunity it allows for positive recreation should not be lost. Farm life and a rural home will be more attractive, to the young especially, if not made a ceaseless round of task work and drudgery. The season is one that invites much pleasant social intercourse, and it is well for young and old to cultivate an unselfish interest in those around them, to mix in the society of their fellows, and take a share in all the claims and kindly offices of good neighbours.

There are other still more valuable uses to which the winter leisure of the farm can be made subservient. The long evenings afford excellent opportunities for profitable reading, or for mental culture in other ways. The man who would cultivate his farm intelligently and to the best advantage, who would not see himself outstripped in social standing and commercial success by his more enterprising fellows, must read. During this season, too, farmers' clubs can most conveniently hold their meetings; and these associations are capable of becoming important means of instruction and improvement, as