

### Western Ontario Crops.

In a forty-mile run through that portion of the Province of Ontario lying north and west of London, and embracing parts of the Counties of Middlesex and Huron, one of the best farming sections of the Province, the effects of the unusually wet spring, late seeding, and subsequent scarcity of showers, is observed in the general shortness of the spring-sown grain crops, and the prospect of less than average yields of these. Fall wheat and clover meadows were well up to the standard. Corn is making fair headway, as also are mangels. Pastures have been good, and stock is looking well. The crop of colts in this district, noted for the breeding of high-class heavy horses, is evidently a success, a promising foal or two being seen on nearly every farm, while well-kept yearlings and two-year-olds, growing into money, are not uncommon.

In the section immediately west of Exeter, on the Huron & Bruce branch of the G. T. R., is a considerable stretch of ranch-like country, well watered by streams, and affording good pasturage, devoted mainly to grazing beef cattle, which are chiefly grade Shorthorns of an excellent class. Further west, and nearer Lake Huron, the people are largely of German extraction, and here large fields of flax are seen, giving promise of abundant crops, while an air of comfort and prosperity is observable on all sides, large barns and substantial dwellings being the rule. Nearer the lake, a considerable portion of the population are French Canadians, originally from Quebec, living on less fertile lands, and showing less progressiveness in their methods of farming, but a kindly class of people, of contented disposition. Along the lake shore, from Grand Bend to Bayfield, an excellent farming district is found, with comfortable homesteads, large orchards and capacious silos, evidences of prosperity on most of the farms.

The lesson of the protracted wet spring of this year, as to the importance of improved drainage, has evidently been taken seriously by a considerable proportion of the farmers of this district, as in a number of instances tile was being put in, and the marks of recent work of that class were visible, while the need of more of it was freely acknowledged, and too little of that performed has been done in a systematic manner. A feature observable in this district, as indeed in most others one travels through, is the marked difference notable in the condition of the crops on farms in the same neighborhood, where the land is apparently of a similar class, one farm being clear of weeds, and the crops looking healthy and vigorous, while on the adjoining farm, in some cases, the contrary is the condition, and one can hardly avoid the conclusion that the difference is due more to the man and the management than to the quality of the soil or the character of the weather conditions, and the need of a continued exposition of the gospel of good cultivation and feeding of the land is emphasized by an outing such as that furnishing food for the thoughts here recorded.

### P. E. Island Notes.

After a somewhat extended drouth, we had a grand day's rain July 8th, which has made the agricultural prospect look much brighter, and we feel that a good crop of grain is now assured. The early-sown grains have grown well right along, but the later-sown was much in need of rain. The clover in the seeded-down fields will now have sufficient moisture to develop into strong plants, and we are expecting a good catch. Haying will be later than last year, and will not begin until after the 20th of July.

The hay crop will not be nearly so heavy as last year. Though clover plants seemed quite thick in the meadows in early spring, they were weak, and mostly died out during our cold, backward month of May. There are a few excellent fields of red clover in evidence on rich lands in sheltered localities, but our hay crop will be largely timothy and alsike. The late rain will thicken up the bottom considerably, and during the next ten days, before haying begins, we expect to see considerable improvement. The potato crop is doing extra well, and, as yet, the bug is not much in evidence. The root crop is doing well now; the early sown turnips have come in bunches, but since the rains came, they are coming all along the drills, and growing fast. We have to thin out the patches that come up first, and attend to others later.

Fodder corn came up well, and promises an abundance of cheap fall feed for dairy cows. Our soiling crop of oats and peas will be ready for use in a week's time, and, being sowed at different dates, will last till the corn is ready in September. Pasture has been pretty good, and will improve now after the soaking rain.

Our cheese factories have had the largest June output they ever had, and July will far exceed the average of recent years. The high price realized for June cheese is encouraging dairymen, and the milch cow will be well fed as a consequence.

The fruit crop here will not be up to what it promised in the blossoming period. A good many varieties of apples have failed to set fruit. The reason is not clear, as we had fairly good weather, but when the bloom was on we had very high winds and no rain. Duchess apples have set well, but other kinds in this locality will be very light.

Though the most of the farms on the Island are clean, and bad weeds the exception, rather than the rule, still we have altogether too many weeds here. In a cross-country drive of nearly thirty miles yesterday, as we neared the capital city we found the hay meadows as white as snow, completely covered with ox-eye daisy in full bloom, and in very many grain fields nearer the north side of the Island we noticed vigorous crops of wild mustard (charlock) in bloom, that were choking out the grain. Those two bad weeds are spreading quite fast here, and are very hard to eradicate when once established. Just a little carelessness a few years ago resulted in these conditions, and it is up to us who yet have clean farms to be ever on the watch to keep them clean. Profitable agriculture is impossible where weeds occupy so much space in our fields.

W. SIMPSON.

### Oxford and Its Splendid Dairy Industry.

Oxford County, the birthplace of Canadian co-operative dairying, is still its pride. Many districts boast the title, "Garden of Canada." We do not know that Oxford claims it, and it is just as well, for the line of agriculture in which this thrifty county is engaged does not suggest horticulture, but a fairer, thriftier or more pleasing region to drive through it is yet our privilege to see. These facts appealed to our dairy editor last week, in the course of a sixty-five-mile two-days' drive, visiting some of the famous cheese-factories in this region, north from Woodstock to Hickson and Bright, and south to Burgessville.

Nature designed this country for a park, but man found it too good a park to lie idle. He has tilled it and made it to bring forth produce in abundance, while rather adding to than subtracting from its natural charm. Gently rolling, without being flat, affording here and there charming vistas of sweeping landscapes, set with rows or clumps of trees and single, spreading elms, favors the husbandman with perfect drainage, yet easy fields to work. A friable loam soil has been for many years enriched with the manure from dairy herds, while numerous wells and springs and streams issue forth the purest, naturally distilled and filtered product of the clouds. With a temperate climate, permitting the growth of a suitable variety of forage crops, including that luxuriant grass, corn; splendid factories, well manned and well equipped; tree-lined, gravel roads, passable at all seasons; and with an intelligent population, representing the best elements of Canadian citizenship—Scotch, English, Irish and German—how could dairying help but flourish? Flourish it does, as the splendid herds of cows, large barns and silos, and comfortable, not to say palatial, homes, universally testify. There is probably no district in the world where failure is impossible, and where only the praiseworthy is to be found, but if there be one place where failure is more difficult than another, where prosperity seems the ordinary lot, and where almost every breeze is blessed with plenty, we should say it were Oxford.

Now for a few facts. Within mercantile radius of Woodstock are three of the largest cheese factories in Canada—Imurkip, Strathallan, and Bright—whose combined output of butter and cheese last year was worth \$179,771.81. Strathallan alone made 232 tons of cheese, which, if lined up side by side in 85-pound cylinders, would require over a mile and a quarter of shelving to hold them; and this besides some 23 or 24 tons of butter. The neighboring factory of Bright made a little less cheese, but more butter, bringing its total output up higher than that of Strathallan.

Besides these three factories, are many others whose checks go to swell the turnover of merchants in Woodstock, which, by the way, is one of the brightest, cleanest, shadiest, best-built, thriftiest young cities in the Dominion. There are single patrons in Oxford who send to the factory over a half a ton of milk a day, while deliveries of eight and nine hundred pounds are quite common. Cheese in summer, and butter in winter, is the practice at several of the largest factories, bespeaking attention to winter dairying. The 1908 turn-out of cheese for the whole county amounted to over a million and a quarter of dollars.

And what of the cows which produce this milk? A large proportion of them still bear the stamp and color of the Shorthorn grade. Large, level, capacious cows, swinging business-like udders, with teats it is a pleasure to grasp, it is not sur-

prising their owners are reluctant to change breeds. One wonders, though, how this class of cow is to be maintained with the beef-bred Shorthorn sires, which are almost the only kind of this breed available to-day. Breeders of the Red, White and Roans should visit Oxford, and note the demand for heavy-milking, dual-purpose stock. Holsteins are steadily gaining ground, especially in South Oxford, and a pleasing picture they present, with their mixed colors contrasting in the pastures. Ayrshires are also to be seen, while here and there a brindle color denotes a dash of Channel Island blood.

It does one's heart good to see the silos adjoining the end of barn after barn. Enormous structures they are—thirty, thirty-five and forty feet deep, by twelve to sixteen feet across. Along in the forenoon of the second day we began keeping track of the proportion of barns which had silos. In a drive from Currie's Crossing, via Holbrook, along the Norwich gravel road, to Burgessville, and back to Woodstock, via Oxford Centre, out of 81 barns, situated within convenient distance along the highway, 44, or somewhat over half, were observed to have silos. Of these, at least 9 were round cement, 22 were seen to be wooden silos, and of the remaining 13, quite a number seemed to have an exterior application of galvanized iron. No doubt, a few barns had silos not visible from the road, but the proportion observed to be so equipped was much larger than is found in the majority of districts. And the rapid increase in number was one of the points on which almost every cheesemaker approvingly commented. Silage remaining over from winter feeding helps out the pastures in summer, while a certain area of green crops is also grown for the purpose.

And such crops! In the whole sixty-five-mile drive not one failure was noticed. Some fields, of course, are better than others, but uniform excellence appeared to be the rule. Haying was well advanced, although some fields of timothy still standing showed heavy crops. Corn was in many cases rather backward, but coming on nicely. Quite a few fields of peas were in evidence, and here and there alfalfa was to be seen.

The one fly in the ointment was the apple orchards, for, out of probably fifty passed on the same trip, only three or four were seen which bore evidence of proper care and attention. The majority were in sod, quite a number being pastured by one class of stock or another, while one young orchard was seen with wheat sown close up to the trees, and the crop, in head, was almost as high as the trees. Thus, for a few dollars of pasture, grain or hay, fifty, a hundred or two hundred dollars is sacrificed on quality and quantity of fruit. We understand that at Burgessville a co-operative shipping association has been formed, but, taking it generally, Oxford County needs to wake up on orcharding.

The county system of good roads seems to have been at last placed on a basis that commands the confidence of most of the ratepayers, after an initial era of ill-judged expenditure and severe criticism. A large mileage is being gravelled and tiled. The bottom layer of gravel is surfaced with fine material, and the whole well compacted with a ten-ton road roller. But the investment which most appealed to us as productive of permanent results was the tile strung along mile after mile. These are placed, in some places, under the ditches, and again beneath the shoulder of the crown. We venture to say that the money spent on tiling and good bridges will yield the people of Oxford best returns of all the money being spent upon their roads. Gravel, with the best of care, sinks out of sight. Drains work increasing improvement for generations.

Revolution is the only word to characterize the improvement in cheese-factory methods. At not one of the factories visited was any condition or practice observed which would make one disinclined to include cheese in his diet, which, we submit with all deference, but with practical knowledge of the subject, is more than can yet be said for the average milker. Perhaps, if the individual producer had received as much attention and help from our superb system of dairy instruction as the makers have had, he might be doing his part as well, or better, but we are speaking of conditions as they exist. Marked improvement is noticeable, however, not only in cleanliness, but in cooling of the night's milk, and, with the general adoption of this practice, together with erection of cooling rooms at the factories, still better things for Canadian dairying are plainly in sight.

Immediately upon their arrival in England, the Commission appointed by the Canadian Government to investigate the swine industry in Great Britain and Ireland, and Denmark, called upon Lord Strathcona, at the Canadian offices in London. Subsequently, the Secretary of the office, W. L. Griffith, introduced them to Sir Thomas Elliott, who, on behalf of the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries, promised to afford them every facility and assistance to their work.