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EDITORIAL.

Steadiness in Stock-rearing.

Canadian farmers will do well, in stock-breeding, to heed the example of the successful breeders of Britain, the home of nearly all the pure breeds we have in this country, whose set policy has been to choose a breed or class of stock that suits their tastes, their land and markets, and stay with it through good or evil report, so long as by good management it improves in their hands and proves reasonably profitable. The evil of the opposite, or spasmodic course, that of rushing from one class of stock to another with the recurring waves of temporary excess of popularity or depression which come in uncertain cycles to practically every class in the course of time, has been strikingly exemplified in the United States, and to a comparative degree in our own country, which, owing to its contiguity and its sharing so largely at times in the trade of our neighbors, is naturally affected by the law of demand and supply.

Those who have had long experience in noting the ebb and flow of popular demand and depression are the most firmly of the opinion that in the long run it pays best to stay with the class of stock that has been doing fairly well for those making a specialty of it, and that the wise course at all times, and especially in a time of depression or general neglect of that class, is to weed out closely the inferior members and strive to improve the character and quality of the herd or flock in the propensity of early maturity and productiveness, with as much uniformity as possible. The wisdom of this course is proven by the fact that even in the dullest of times the best of any class can be sold at a paying price, when those of inferior or medium quality go begging for buyers. And this is emphasized by the fact that the inferior costs quite as much, and often more, to raise than the excellent, because of their being less thrifty and slower feeders.

The dairy breeds are having their innings just now, owing largely to the brilliant market prices for dairy products in the last two or three years, and the prospects, so far as can be foreseen at present, are bright; but dairying has had its ups and downs in this country in the last forty years, and the same experience has come to breeders of the different varieties of dairy cattle, prices having at times run down to a very discouraging and almost hopeless degree, but with surprising rapidity recovered their equilibrium on a turn of the tide. These are halcyon days for the dairy cow, and, while there is no safer branch of farming in the long run, and at present there is scarcely a cloud in the sky of that industry, if everyone starts that way, who will vouch for a continuance of the high prices ruling just now?

Fifteen years ago horses could hardly be given away; farmers quit raising them and sold their best mares because they brought most money, as the best always do. Now, when prices are sky-high, farmers have none to sell, but have to buy work horses at high figures to fill the gaps made by the death of the worn-out supply they had left. If they had weeded out the unsound and old stagers at bone-yard prices, and bred their best mares to the best class of sires, they would be in the swim to-day, but instead they are now buying brood mares at high-tide prices, and have to wait for years for returns from them.

Sheep, which are always profitable stock if given half a chance, have been lamentably neglected in this country in the last ten years, largely because the price of wool—a crop that no

other stock produces—was low in price, hundreds of farmers selling off their entire flocks, the long-wools being especially sacrificed. Now prices for wool and mutton and for sheep of all breeds are up in G. and the country is being scoured for long-wools as well as for medium-wools, but few farmers have any to sell, and many are seeking to buy at the advanced prices going.

Farmers in this country are familiar with the periodical stampedes in hog-raising in the last few years. When prices have gone down low, brood sows of proven excellence as dams have been sacrificed at low prices, and when in a few months prices have gone up to high-water mark farmers have had few or none to sell, a host of immature sows have been rushed into the breeding harem and required to raise two or three litters a year, with overproduction and a lowering of prices to discouraging figures.

Ten years ago beef cattle were booming, after a period of extreme depression, and now, with some indications of a quiet time, the disposition to sell out is apparently growing and prices are toning down. This experience has been noted by observant men as recurring several times in the last thirty years, and the breeders who have stood steady, improving their herds by the use of the best obtainable sires, have found ready sale for their cattle at paying prices in the dullest times and been ready to profit from periods of brisk demand when they came, while mere speculators and adventurers who dip in at such times, and wait for an opportunity to step out when the tide turns, are often left in the lurch. Beef-cattle breeders and raisers have no good reason to fear for the future of their business. People will continue to eat meat as long as grass grows and water runs, mouths to be fed are rapidly increasing as our population is being reinforced by immigration, and our towns and cities are growing, while our export trade continues to call for more. The range lands of the West, the only source of wholesale cheap beef-raising, are fast giving way to the grain-growing farmer, and wheat-raising will be the principal industry in the Prairie Provinces for many years, but gradually stock raising and feeding will be found a necessity for keeping up the fertility of the land, and the Eastern Provinces will be heavily drawn upon for seed stock. Beef will be raised upon higher-priced lands, and the important point for study and practice will be that of economy of cost of production of the finest quality of goods, whether of meat or milk products. To this end, heed must be given to the well-established truth that profit in meat-production lies with the early-maturing sort, as urged in the series of articles by Mr. J. H. Grisdale running in our columns, and also by adding to the herd returns by making the best possible use of an increased milk flow. And economy of cost means cheaper foods grown in a greater quantity on a given area. To this end, the cultivation of corn, for the grain where it will mature, and for ensilage over most of the Dominion, early-maturing varieties being used, together with alfalfa and clover, must have a large place in the solving of the problem, for in the last analysis profitable production and high quality of food products determine animal values.

"Some men will join a dozen societies rather than join the society of their families."—[Dr. Poll.]

There is a mine on every farm better for the farmer than the mines of Cobalt. Are you working it?

Government Not Committed to Stallion License Act.

The spirited correspondence that has been published in the columns of our Horse Department upon the advisability of a stallion license and lien act has given an erroneous impression, it seems, that the Provincial Government is guilty of an aggressive attempt to meddle with the horse industry. Nothing could be farther from the truth. The Government has committed itself to no line of action whatsoever. It started out with no theory of legislation, but merely instituted a candid and thorough inquiry into the horse industry, with a view to obtaining some information that might serve as a guide in the framing of a policy to further the horse business. They went about it in a sensible way, by sending out commissioners to ascertain such statistics and opinions as could be gleaned by canvass. The commissioners have reported, and the next step is to prepare a digest of their reports, after which a meeting of the commissioners may be called.

It is true that one of the questions on which the commissioners were instructed to gather the opinions of horsemen was the advisability of a stallion-inspection act, and it was a fair inference that the Government would consider the question of whether such a law should be passed. This subject was naturally given chief prominence at the meetings held by the commissioners. But the Government has expressed no intention of passing such a law. In giving opportunity for free expression of opinion, they have shown a proper desire to consult the interests of the country. For this they deserve all credit.

As to the advisability of the suggested law, "The Farmer's Advocate" is still open to conviction. There are many good arguments both pro and con. Probably the tendency has been to lay rather too much stress on the objections. Several States of the Union, notably Wisconsin and Iowa, have stallion-enrollment laws, while similar statutory provisions obtain in the Provinces of the Canadian West. So far as we have been able to learn, the legislation in these States and Provinces has been accompanied by no great hardship, and, in the light of their experience, it might be possible for Ontario to frame a beneficial measure. The subject is still debatable in these columns, but we do not care to devote space to mere repetition. If anyone has any new information to impart, let him be heard.

Develop the Dairy Feature of the Winter Fairs.

Last fall a joint committee, representing the Eastern and Western Ontario Dairymen's Associations, investigated and prepared a report upon the advisability of holding a national dairy show in Canada. This month the committee's report was voted on, first by the Eastern dairymen in convention at Ottawa, then by the Western men in London. At Ottawa it was rushed through at the last moment, and passed without being read. At London it came up for discussion. The report recommended the holding of a national dairy show at some point in Ontario, and called attention to similar shows at London, Eng., Chicago, Ill., and in New Zealand. The manufacturers of dairy machinery and breeders of dairy stock were found favorable to the idea, and the committee believed such a show would stimulate a renewed interest in the dairy business and prove educative in many ways, acquainting visitors with all that is latest and best in dairy machinery, dairy stock and dairy investigation; that it would bring Eastern and Western Ontario together, and prove a grand rallying center for