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EDITORIAL.

How much anxious thought we give to the weather, and how little we know what is best! Work takes less energy than worry, and puts one farther ahead.

There is a Railway Commission to regulate express and freight rates. Why not a Bank Commission to regulate rates of interest and discount, or, at least, to supervise the chartered institutions that hold the people's savings in trust? Sooner or later we must have a Bank Commission. Why not now?

The Record of Performance idea, though lately adopted by the Dominion Shorthorn Breeders' Association, is rapidly commending itself to breeders. Just what was needed to discover, prove and develop deep-milking strains of good dual-purpose type throughout the breed. The standard of admission was wisely made moderate on the start, but can be and should be raised.

It would be easy enough to farm if the rain and everything else came always just to one's wishes. Good management implies foresight and capacity to so shape things that favorable conditions may be taken full advantage of, while the effect of unfavorable ones may be minimized. When it doesn't rain, aim to have a dust mulch conserving moisture. When it rains excessively have tile or, at least, open ditches to carry the water away. Foresight and forehandedness, with an eye open for the possible, are in order.

On part of a field this year where we dragged a section of light smoothing harrow behind the two-furrow plow, the land afterwards disked up two or three times as well as where the furrows lay untouched for three days. So much good will a little touch at the right time accomplish! Where the harrow increases the draft enough to make hard work for the team, it is better to plow first and harrow afterwards in the evening, but do it promptly at any rate.

Brick-making is a good enough business in its way, but a very poor industry to practice in a corn field. Plowing a field on the west side and then letting it bake for days before harrowing or disking, is the worst kind of bad practice. Even when the furrow slice does not bake it dries out excessively, wasting precious moisture and delaying decomposition of the inverted turf. Follow the plow promptly with roller, and then with harrow or disk. This should be done every day or every second day at most. It will delay the plowing a little, but will gain time in the end and make for a bigger crop.

Removal of the duty from traction ditching machines for farm use will greatly increase the number of men who can conveniently arrange to finance their purchase. Previously, any one buying a ditcher had to raise cash to make an initial payment, then enough to pay the freight, and five or six hundred dollars duty on top of that. Now all he has to raise is enough to make one payment and the freight. This throws the opportunity open to many additional men, while, at the same time, reducing interest and depreciation charges to a point at which the machines can compete easily with hand labor, even in sections where this is still available.

Duty-Free Ditching Machines.

In removing the tariff from traction ditching machines, up to a value of \$3,000, Hon. W. T. White, Dominion Minister of Finance, has wisely acceded to an earnest desire on the part of Canadian farmers, and is to be commended heartily. The reduction in taxation thus secured by the agricultural community is in itself trifling. The main advantage is, that by reducing the cost of these useful instruments by five or six hundred dollars apiece, they should be brought down to a price where many men will be ready to invest in them; thus giving a great impetus to tile drainage, with all its attendant train of advantages. Those ditching machines which are already at work in Canada are fairly swamped with orders, and their operators can scarcely be attracted to a new locality by contracts of less than ten or fifteen miles of drain on a single farm, with assurance of subsequent large orders in the same locality. The usual charge, we believe, runs from 35 to 40 cents a rod, with board for the operators. At such prices there is money in the business for a competent mechanic who chooses to invest in a machine. The employment is constant throughout the season, the work is healthful, and there is plenty of call for the operator to exercise his brains. In these respects, particularly the two former ones, it is better than threshing, silo-filling, buzz-sawing, and such jobs as that. These lines of work are chiefly prosecuted by men with a mechanical aptitude, who follow them in conjunction with farming. Why should not the same class of men now turn their attention to ditching machines? There will be plenty of steady employment, and an expanding future for the business is assured. We would like to see two or three traction ditchers in pretty nearly every county of Eastern Canada. Let farmers' sons, with a bent for machinery, invest their capital in ditching machines, and get into business for themselves instead of drifting into town. The agriculture of the future will present many opportunities for rural engineering. This is one.

A Stable Tariff Policy.

Public men come in for a great deal of criticism, some of which is fair and based on principle, while some is unfair and based on prejudice that nothing can satisfy. If they make changes in established policies they are criticised for that; if they do not make changes they are criticised for having no new ones of their own. In our view it is altogether more creditable that a statesman should conserve whatever may be good in a predecessor's policy, than that he should plunge into change for the sake of change. It denotes a greater calibre. Tariff stability is much more to be desired than frequent alterations. In the interests of agriculture we should like to see substantial reductions on things the farmer has to buy, but the nature of the last appeal to the electorate resulted in no special mandate for general tariff reduction. Neither of Mr. White's two budgets has substantially increased it. His last one makes a few minor increases with three or four very satisfactory reductions, one being the placing of traction ditchers on the free list, one the lowering of sugar duties, while another is the reduction of two and a half cents per cwt. in the duty on cement. All things considered, we believe the budget is deserving of praise.

Nature's Diary.

By A. B. Kluge, M. A.

One of the familiar sounds of spring is a loud "kee-er-kee-er" descending to us from above. We look up and see a large hawk sailing high in the air. It is the red-shouldered hawk, one of the commonest large hawks in Southern and Central Ontario. It is often called "hen hawk" but the name is a sad mistake, for these large hawks are not the thieves of the farmers' chickens, but are, on the other hand, among his best friends. A pair of these hawks nested for several successive years within a few hundred yards of a poultry farm containing eight hundred young chickens and four hundred ducks, and the owner never saw them attempt to catch a fowl. We have in Ontario in summer several large hawks, and they are all highly beneficial because of the meadow mice which they destroy, and since they also do no damage to poultry they should be rigidly protected. In localities where the birds of prey have been almost exterminated plagues of mice have occurred, for instance, the plagues in Scotland and Austria-Hungary.

The hawks which commit depredations in the hen-yard are very seldom seen. They are not birds of the open country or given to sailing in the air, but make a sudden descent from the cover of the woods and a sudden return with a chicken. They are two comparatively small hawks, known as the sharp-shinned hawk and Cooper's hawk, and have short, rounded wings and long tails.

Another hawk which is common in Ontario is the American sparrow hawk, a small species, about a foot in length, frequently seen along the roadside. It has long wings and a tail of medium length. It feeds almost exclusively on insects, and hence is beneficial.

The hawks are a group of birds which have, in the past, been misunderstood. They have, one and all, been regarded as robbers. Bounties have been offered for their heads. One township clerk in Ohio issued 46 certificates for sparrow hawks, he examined the stomachs and found 45 to contain the remains of grasshoppers and beetles, and the remaining one the fur and bones of a meadow mouse. The N. S. biological survey has carefully investigated the food habits of all the birds of prey, and this work has shown exclusively that only three out of all the hawks and owls can be regarded as injurious. These are the goshawk, a rather rare winter visitor to settled localities, Cooper's hawk and the sharp-shinned hawk. Therefore, unless one knows these three species on sight the safest rule to follow is: Never shoot a hawk unless it is caught visiting the hen-yard.

Spring has arrived this year "with a rush." One day the leafless branches—in three days time the half-expanded leaves. Around Toronto on May 8th the poplars were in nearly full leaf, and the beeches bore leaves over half out. Trillium and mayflower, spring beauty and meadow rue, cohosh and bloodroot have sprung from out mother earth and burst into full flower. How is it that these flowers appear so early? It is because none of them appear in the spring from seed, but from underground stems in which plenty of food is stored during the previous year. Again why are nearly all our plants growing in the deckduous woods (in the maple-beech "bush") spring bloomers? Because at this season they