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## EDITORIAL.

### Start Right in Dairying.

The possibilities of the future dairy cow all lie in embryo in the heifer calf. Breeding determines the first of these, feeding and general management the rest. Success or failure, profit or loss in the dairy have their beginnings in the calf, and the first year of its life is the most important. How to raise the heifer-calf is, therefore, a vital question to the dairy farmer. At this time of the year the subject is especially seasonable, and we give elsewhere letters which embody the practical experience of men who have made it a life study, and will be glad to hear from others who have points of value to add or whose advice may vary from that given.

### A Warning.

The attention of our readers is especially drawn to the letter elsewhere in this issue from Dr. Lintner, New York State Entomologist, calling attention to the serious danger that would arise from "igniting" carbon bisulphide, as inadvertently recommended by a correspondent in our last issue, for the destruction of pea bugs. To accomplish the latter, it is not necessary to run the risk of an explosion or a conflagration. The heavy vapor of the chemical penetrating the peas will destroy the insect. Mr. Raynor probably had, fortunately, never tried the plan he suggested, and we trust this warning will prevent any misfortune arising.

### Pleuro-pneumonia in England.

The following, from the *Mark Lane Express* (London, Eng.) of February 15th, shows the wisdom of maintaining the ninety days' quarantine against cattle from Great Britain, as is the case in the new Canadian regulations:—

"By order of the Board of Agriculture, the first batch of seventy-one bullocks, cows, and steers, which have been condemned in consequence of the prevalence of pleuro-pneumonia, were slaughtered on Tuesday on Norton Hall Farm, Purleigh, Essex. In addition to these over 100 animals have been slaughtered on other farms in the immediate locality during the past few weeks. It is believed that the outbreak originated by the introduction into the district of a cow which was brought from Ireland to Romford market, where it was purchased by a Purleigh dealer."

For years some British journals and parliamentarians have been clamoring against the admission of Canadian "store" cattle, and finally managed to get their "embargo" made permanent in order to shut out "pleuro," but had it been against Ireland instead of Canada it would have been of some practical service. It is no secret that the "embargo" was largely a "sop" to the raisers of Irish and other Old Country store cattle, and it seems like one of the ironies of fate that the Britisher should now be sorely wounded in the house of his friends. Where were the lynx-eyed veterinary experts who in bygone days were continually "discovering" "marbled" lungs and other alarming conditions in Canadian cattle landed at British ports? With the making of a permanent embargo their favorite occupation seems to have departed. Is it possible that these diseased Irish cattle have the run of England without let or hindrance?

### The U. S. Free Seed Scandal.

The U. S. Secretary of Agriculture in Mr. Cleveland's Cabinet excited a great deal of animosity by persistently preaching economy in public expenditures and practicing it in his own department at Washington. This he did in two particulars, free seeds and free publications, upon a large class of which a fixed price has now been set. He has steadily opposed the free seed humbug, which has grown to enormous and wasteful proportions this

year, amounting on a retail valuation to more than \$2,000,000. This year's distribution will fill seventy-seven of the largest U. S. mail cars, and to handle which costs the postal department \$100,000. But after two hours' discussion the U. S. House of Representatives recently, by a vote of 70 to 39, resolved to continue a practice which one of their members characterized as a "shame and disgrace" to the Government. This year the appropriation is increased and an amendment adopted under which, we are told, "there is nothing to prevent a member selecting say two or three varieties of farm or vegetable seeds and having them sent to a few favored constituents, and the importance of this act to the favored ones may be imagined from the statement made by Secretary Morton in his last report, that under last year's distribution each Congressman received enough seed to plant 169½ acres, and that under the prevailing prices the next year's quota would plant nearly 325 acres. With the added appropriation the amount for each Congressman will supply nearly enough for 350 acres."

Mr. Mercer, of Nebraska, offered an amendment that, in addition to seeds, every farmer be furnished by the Government with half a dozen chickens, hogs, horses, and cattle, all thoroughbreds. His motion was looked upon as a joke, and treated as such, notwithstanding his earnest protest that it was offered in the most serious earnestness. And he may well have been in earnest in his efforts to have his constituents given free cattle, for it is no more reprehensible or absurd than the other measure. If it is right for the Government to furnish a man with seeds free with which to stock his farm or garden, it is equally proper to provide him with poultry or cattle. It is exactly in line with the paternalism which appears to be spreading and strengthening day by day. We believe, further, that these gratuities in many instances confer little or no real benefit upon the recipients.

We do not wonder to hear protests from a self-respecting press, and men of independent spirit, against the purchase and free distribution by Government of seeds as a gratuity or form of political bribe, paid for by money raised from all the people and bestowed upon a favored few, and for which the legitimate seedsmen of the country are taxed, in common with others, to support in direct competition with themselves. Originally this was begun for the purpose of introducing "rare, valuable and improved" seeds, "not common in the country," to be distributed for experimental purposes; but this has long since been forgotten, the political manipulator seizing upon it as a nice piece of campaign machinery under the guise of "doing something for the farmer."

Secretary Morton, whatever may have been the merit or otherwise of his general administration, succeeded in reforming the system very materially, but the real improvement needed is the total abolition of the promiscuous and gratuitous vote-bribing distribution by governmental agencies of seed. In this enlightened age the seed business may well be left to the progressive seedsmen of the country.

We, in Canada, have the free seed business in its incipient stages—probably at about the commendable point where it began in the United States. A dispatch from Ottawa in the daily papers lately announced that 6,717 three-pound parcels of grain (more than ten tons) had been mailed free up to the middle of February. It is therefore attaining considerable proportions already, and under the "fostering care" of some future politician may be developed after the manner of its Yankee prototype. Our authorities should see that it is kept strictly within proper bounds, and any tendencies to expand the bud into a flourishing political green bay tree should be promptly nipped unless we are to inaugurate Bellamyism and have the Government to take over the seed business and other leading industries of the country.

### How to Help the Farmer.

Mr. R. C. Allan, of Northumberland Co., Ont., writes as follows: "The whole subject (Mr. Macpherson's letter) is well worthy consideration by all the older portion of our farming population. I think an editorial in the *ADVOCATE* discussing the feasibility of any schemes for the advancement of Canadian farming would have much influence."

As we understand it, the plan suggested by Mr. Macpherson is for the Government, after a preliminary trial, to advance funds—in the form of a loan, we presume—for proper equipment and stock, and to assume oversight of the impoverished, nonpaying farms till properly running. We might frankly state that we cannot regard this as a feasible plan for general adoption, nor one in which the Government should embark. To our mind there is already too much of the spirit of paternalism abroad. Taking advantage of complaints of diminished farm profits, office-seekers, contractors and others come to the front with plans to help the farmer, but like the Arkansas jurymen, who returned no verdict till his fees were paid, they "find" for themselves first. They are aching to "help the farmer" by spending his money, and politicians too often are very much more ready to do that than to conduct public affairs upon an economical, businesslike basis.

Mr. Macpherson's own success, as he describes it, may give him faith in his plan, and we do not question the sincerity or the disinterestedness of his motives, but if one farmer is to be assisted, why not all? Who is to determine the needy ones, how is this to be arrived at, and how about those who will not stay right after being started on the pathway to success? Furthermore, if unsuccessful farmers are to be helped this way, why should not the Government go along the streets of Montreal, Toronto, London, or Winnipeg, and set merchants properly agoing who are making a failure of their business? Where, in short, is the limit to be drawn?

In every agricultural township of Canada men can be found whose success in the past and to-day, as farmers, stands out distinctively in spite of adverse conditions, and the same intelligent study of methods and markets, industry and thrift, that makes farming pay with them will do it with others under like natural conditions.

We ought to say here that there is a wide and important field for careful scientific investigation relative to nearly every branch of agriculture, upon which the staffs of our Experimental Farms are now engaged and which is susceptible of still further development in some directions. Apart from this, what the farmer needs from the Government really to-day is a fair field, proper facilities for getting access to the best markets, reasonable transportation charges, and a lightened burden of taxation brought about by tariff adjustment, the cessation of wild-cat public expenditures, and in general a more economical system of managing public business. If this be done he can get along with a little less "governing," "helping" and "spoon-feeding," and the *ADVOCATE* has confidence enough in his self-reliant independence and his ability to think that he will be well able to hold his own in the battle of life.

Assemblyman Brennan, of N. Y., has introduced at Albany a bill providing for the appropriation of \$500,000 from the State treasury for a system of new State roads and the improvement of the old ones. The bill provides that the Governor shall appoint three citizens of the State of New York to act in conjunction with the Superintendent of Public Works and the State Engineer and Surveyor in drawing up a plan for a system of roads throughout the State of New York, which plan, when submitted to the Superintendent of Public Works, shall be used by him in carrying out the purposes of this Act. Ten thousand dollars are appropriated for the expenses of the commission. "A commission and an appropriation" seems now to be the order of the day.