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Note and Comment

Agricultural conditions in Eastern Canada show little change from last winter, excepting it be in the progress of the harvest. Haying in Ontario and Quebec has been completed and the crop gathered in very good condition. The average yield will be below that of last year and in many sections, notably in Quebec, where farmers depend upon the hay crop for feed, live stock are likely to suffer the coming winter. Where farmers have other sources of feed, such as corn and the silo, the shortage in the hay crop will not be so serious. The experience of 1907 should induce many farmers to get away from the one crop idea. It is very seldom that all crops fail in any one season.

The review of the crop situation in the West in this issue is of special importance just now, when so many unreliable reports are being published. That the West will not have the big yield of other years is conceded, but that anything like a crop failure is the portion of that part of Canada this year is very far from being correct. Given suitable weather for six weeks longer the Canadian West will give a good account of itself. More recent reports from Alberta place the prospective yield for that Province at 25 bushels per acre, while information from Saskatchewan indicates a thirty bushel per acre yield in many places.

The report of the special investigation of horse breeding in Ontario, just published by the Ontario Department of Agriculture, makes interesting reading. This report is based upon information obtained by special commissioners in the fall of 1906. The Province was divided into eight districts, and two inspectors, one representing light horses and another representing heavy horses, did the work for each district. That they did the work well in the limited time allowed is shown by the fund of information obtained on several important

phases of horse breeding in this Province. Tables are given showing the conditions in counties, with a special report by the inspectors covering the district. We can only give a brief summary of the report in this issue. A more detailed and comprehensive review will appear next issue.

In the whole Province the number of registered stallions serviceably sound in 1906 was 1,615 and the number of mares bred to these 108,109. The number of registered stallions not serviceably sound was 169 and the number of mares bred to these was 11,225. The number of grade stallions serviceably sound was 740 and the number of mares bred to these was 35,202, while the number of grade stallions not serviceably sound was 163 and the number of mares bred 7,127. In other words the percentage of serviceably sound registered stallions in the Province in 1906 was 60 and of mares bred to these 67. In registered stallions not serviceably sound the percentage was 6 and the mares bred to these 7. Serviceably sound grade stallions showed a percentage of 28, with mares bred showing 22 per cent., while unsound grade stallions showed a percentage of 6, with mares bred 4.

Comment upon these figures is, perhaps, unnecessary. It is worth noting, however, that over 42,000 mares were bred last year to grade stallions, or 26 per cent. of all the mares bred. While the grade stallion may be all right as an individual, there is no guarantee as to the kind of stock he is likely to leave behind him. For this reason these figures show a serious condition of affairs in horse breeding in this Province. There were all told 18,352 mares bred to unsound stallions, or over 12 per cent., which should give our farmers more ground for serious reflection. It is gratifying to know, however, that so large a percentage of the horse breeding of this Province is along right lines. Evidently many farmers are waking up to the value of

the pure bred animal in improving the horse industry of this country.

An interesting table in the report is that showing the amount of service fees charged. It varies according to the breed and breeding of the animal. The average fee for imported Clydesdales, sound or unsound, in 1906 was \$11; for Canadian breds, \$9, and for grades, \$8. The highest average fees, excepting for imported French coach stallions, were paid for standard bred and roadster stallions. For sound imported horses of this breed the average fee for the Province was \$14, and unsound \$12, with the Canadian breed of this class standing at \$11 and \$9 respectively. The largest of the fees reported is none too high for a good sound stallion of the right breeding and type. The average service fee of the Province must be increased if a better class of stallions is to be had.

If we were to make any criticism of the report it would be that not enough detailed information is given in regard to the types of mares used and the kind of horses they were bred to. This is one of the main points in the whole question of horse breeding. Unless proper mating is followed the best results in the offspring need not be expected. In a general way the Commissioners refer to much indiscriminate breeding in many sections and ascribe the inferior condition of the horses met with to this fact.

The fruit crop report for July 30th, just issued by the Fruit Division, Ottawa, shows a general falling off in the condition of the crop as compared with the previous report. The satisfactory feature is that the quality is likely to be very much better than last year. Insect pests have not been so numerous, which accounts for the improved quality over other years. If growers would spray their orchards more and be independent of all pests whether plentiful or not, they would have clean fruit every year.