Correspondence.

The Ontario School of Agriculture.

SIR,—I notice some strictures on the above-named Institution in the last number of the ADVOCATE. Being a recent graduate of the School, with your kind permission, Mr. Editor, I take the liberty of saying a few words on the subject.

Although the Institution is not yet the acme of perfection, as some seem to think it should be, yet I venture to say that the best of our farmers can learn something, and our ordinary ones much, from the *modus operandi* there carried on—"political shuttlecocks" to the contrary notwithstanding. As regards the expenditure, at which many grumble, I much doubt if there is more rigorous economy observed at any public institution in the country than at the Model Farm. This is especially true in regard to the current expense. The expenditure on permanent improvements is absolutely necessary, and should in time prove a good investment, even for the cautious farmers of Ontario.

The money yearly granted to the Farm by the Legislature is large, yet small when compared with the immense sums voted to other objects too numerous to mention and not always worthy. Taxes may be heavy and retrenchment demanded somewhere, but it is surely short-sighted policy to refuse to foster an institution which aims to benefit the most important interest and business in the country, viz.: the agricultural. It is much to be feared that many condemn without duly sifting the evidence (which can be easily got), and without properly considering the facts of the matter.

However, there is no doubt that more careful inspection is needed; and this should be looked into by the farmers themselves, who at present neither scrutinize nor patronize the concern enough for their own best interests and that of the Farm. Before closing, I may say that there ought to be a change in *one* of the staff, and for the good of the whole community it should be so.

I now close, though much more might be said.

D. McK. McK.

May 9, '77. Inverness, Lakeside, P. Q.

The Royce Reaper.

I am pestered with agents. I want a reaping machine, and everyone claims to have the best. I am inclined to try a Royce Harvester. Have you ever seen it at work? and what is your opinion about it? A reply would oblige.

READER, Brucefield.

[We have not seen the Royce Harvester at work, but are very favorably impressed with its appearance. The lightness, simplicity of its works, and the price, are much in its favor. Some manufacturers of other machines say they will not last as long as heavier machines, nor work so well in heavy grain, but those that have tried them appear satisfied with them. Messrs. Haggert Bros. of Brampton are among our first-class implement makers, and have 140 men employed at the present time in making the Royce Reaper only. There are two other firms manufacturing them; imitations of this machine are also made. We should have no hesitation in purchasing one; and we believe there will be more of these machines sold this season in Ontario than any other kind.—ED.]

The Best Kind of Posts.

Seeing the enquiry of F. M. E., of Porter Hill, about building wire fences, and having built and used one of about the same make as he enquires about, and finding it to be so economical, neat and efficient, after ten years' trial, I can recommend it as answering the full purpose of any fence.

Being in a straight line (as all fences should be) and taking up little room, it, is easily kept clear of foul growth, does not obstruct a landscape view, is a sure preventive against snow-drifts, will be more durable than wood, and can be built cheaper; all these advantages going to make it a very desirable fence if only constructed well. The principal failure in a wire fence is in the slackening of the wires; this is not the fault of the fence, but of the builder, and is easily remedied. I always keep the strands tight on my fence, and I notice that it elicits a good deal of enquiry as to how I do it, so I will attempt to describe it here.

I had common-sized fence-posts slit in two, using half-sized ones, two to the rod, and large, solid posts at the end, set very firm and deep, and well braced back to the next one; a bottom board 8 by 1¼ inches, and top rail 2 by 4 (but 3 by 4 would be better), and be sure to have it end up against the end posts to help to brace them; then fill in between these five strands No. 7 galvanized wire, gauging from the bottom board, the first space 4 in., the second 5, third and fourth 6, and five and sixth 7 in., the wires being secured by staples driven into the posts just enough to allow the wire to be drawn through in tightening them. The end posts may be 20 to 45 and 60 rods apart; be sure to plant them very firm, then bore holes at the proper gauge for each wire, those at one end drawn through and looped, putting in a little iron pin and draw it up to the post; for the other end get a blacksmith to prepare five rollers of about inch iron six inches long, square down one end so as to put a crank on (one from the grindstone or fanning mill will answer the purpose), and near the centre have two quarter-inch holes drilled through an inch apart; a strand is run through the post and one hole of the roller, the crank put on and the wire stretched, and when sufficiently tight the waste is cut off and the end inserted into the second hole of the roller and secured by a nail or iron pin, which keeps it from untwisting; and so with each strand till the fence is complete. To keep the wires always tight, apply the crank once or twice a year to draw them up if needed, but after a year or so it is seldom necessary.

As for cost, I find it the cheapest fence I can build. The No. 9 common wire is now five cents per pound; and as it takes just one pound to the rod, so the five strands cost 25c, or eight strands would cost 40c. But I prefer a larger wire, say No. 8 or 7, and I believe that by using a larger number of strands I can dispense with the top and bottom boards. In that case, a post every two rods would be enough, with a small slat every six or eight feet to staple the wires to.

I am now trying another plan, which, if it works well, will give a fence that will last a hundred years. I have planted a nice, straight row of elm trees twelve feet apart, two feet inside my wire fence, and intend, when the posts of this fence fail, to transfer the wires to these trees and staple them on as before; then once in a year or two draw out the staples a little and not let them grow into the tree or become fast to it, so that the wire can slide in the staple as the tree sways; using heavy end posts as before. So I believe one may have a fence of live posts and iron strands to last forever, as far as the builder of it is concerned, and be rather an ornament to my premises.

H. IVES, Batavia, N.Y.

[We thank our N.Y. correspondent for his reply. The plan of planting a row of trees to nail the wires to is one that commends itself to everyone. We feel safe in advising our readers to make a note of this, and to put it in practice. A row of young saplings can be easily procured from the woodland near by; poplar is of very rapid growth and is raised from cuttings, or can be procured at very little cost from nurserymen. There are many other trees more ornamental and more useful, but would cost more and are of slower growth. We might mention the sweet chestnut as a suitable tree, which makes a very handsome ornament, a good shade, useful wood, and produces a good fruit. The time is coming when some of our farmers will make money from nuts; why not begin at once—fruit, fence, shade and ornament?—ED.]

The Timber of Britsh Columbia.

In writing on the above subject it is necessary to explain that this is no scientific letter, but one written by a farmer to guide (as far as the writer's ability goes) those who wish for information on this country. This letter will contain nothing more than any person living here can see, and I distinctly wish to state that all that is written by me is from my own personal observation.

The first of all is the Douglas Fir or Oregon Pine, which grows to a height of 150 to 200 feet, is often eight feet through at the stump, and carrying its thickness well up. The wood is hard and chips badly; the greater part of the trees split tough, although a few here and there split freely. Ten-foot rails are worth 2c each at the stump; fir cordwood is $3 a cord delivered on the river bank, or $1.25 at the stump. Fir rails make a better fence than cedar. The land upon which these firs grow is also covered with underbrush, and is the poorest and dryest we have; consequently bush fires are very frequent, which accounts for the small quantity of vegetable matter contained in the soil. The trees that fall down rot so slowly that the cultivation of these lands is very expensive. I have seen trees which must have been down twenty years, and were as sound as the day they fell. It is not known how long it takes a fir stump to rot, for a number of them around New Westminster, cut in 1862, are still sound, and seem likely to remain so for years to come. Sawed fir lumber is from $12.50 to $15 per thousand at the mills. There is a kind of fir which grows in swamps, and to distinguish it from the Douglass Red Fir it is called Black Fir. This kind of timber is scarce and rarely over eighteen inches through. It is hard and will not rot in water.

The Cedar (Thuga Gigantea) is certainly the most useful kind of timber the farmers have here. It grows to a great size, for I have seen some twelve feet through. It is very plentiful, and on this account is generally used for house timbers and fences. It is very easily split, and a man can get out about 150 12-foot rails in a day. Cedar shingles are worth $2.50 to $3 per thousand delivered, and rails 1½c each at the stump.

There is but little Oak growing, and that only in some parts of Vancouver Island.

The Spruce grows principally in swamps and on the banks of rivers. Some of it splits very well, but it is not much used as it is more liable to rot than fir or cedar. A spruce stump takes about six or eight years to rot. The average size of spruce is three feet through.

Hemlock grows on fir lands, and makes very good piles for salt water, as the worms do not readily attack it if the bark is left on. It is softer than Canadian hemlock; the average size is two feet through. No hemlock and but very little spruce is sawed into lumber, and there is no sale for the bark. Barrels are made of red fir and butter kegs of spruce.

The Willow or Poplar is soft and too brittle for basket work. There is a large tree growing on the banks of the Frazer called Cottonwood, but I think it is a kind of willow.

There is a sort of Balsam, but the growth is limited. The trees are sometimes four feet through; the wood is soft, splits easily, and is used for rails.

Maple is plentiful. The wood is not so hard as the Canadian variety. Carts and other agricultural implements are made from it. No doubt, if greater means of intercommunication existed between here and Ontario, we should import all our agricultural implements from there. No maple sugar is made here, owing to the mildness of our winters.

We have White Pine in small quantities, and the wood is similar to that of the Canadian variety. This lumber is worth $25 per thousand at the mills.

The Alder grows on low laying lands, and is on an average one foot through. Valuable for firewood, charcoal and furniture. This kind of firewood is often $4 per cord delivered. The alders grow very thickly; sometimes as many as one hundred trees are found on an acre of ground. The stumps rot out in four years, and these alder bottoms are our very best agricultural lands. It is necessary to mention that very little cultivation can be done on them until the stumps rot.

Birch is not plentiful in the lower country; the bark is not so tough or the wood so hard as the Canadian.

Beach and Hickory do not grow here at all.

That finishes the trees; and all the common sorts a farmer is likely to notice are mentioned, I think. Now the underbrush, and first is

The Crab Apple, and very plentiful it is. It is never more than one foot through, and very rarely that. We use it for many purposes where hardwood is required; as axe-handles, mauls, spokes of wheels, etc.

The Vine Maple grows in great abundance, and is not often as large as the crab apple. It makes good axe-handles, as it is tough and springy.

We have also lots of berry bushes, such as Red and Blue Huckleberries, Wild Raspberries, Wild Gooseberries, Wild Black Currants, Salmonberries, Blackberries (two kinds), Wild Plums, Sall-lallberries, and a lot more I cannot remember. I almost forgot the Wild Cherry, which grows on a tree the same size as the Alder. There are Bearberries and Dogwood.

The thermometer stands at 50° in the shade most days, and 10 lower at night. Beautiful winter; everything is lovely, and hay $25 a ton!