

## Timely Notes for February—No. 2.

## "RUNNING WITH THE HARE, ETC."

I see by the Tribune that the Massey-Harris Company have, by a delegation, been interviewing the Cabinet to induce them to keep the duty on agricultural implements. They assert so innocently that the American makers have allowed implements to be placed on the free list, thinking to compel Canada to reciprocate and thus capture the Canadian market. Now, do these gentlemen imagine the public will believe this statement? Is it worth the while of the American manufacturers to jeopardize the market of 65,000,000 people, which they have at present in the United States, for the chance of capturing the trade of 5,000,000 Canadians? Again, it has been contended by the same company that the Canadian trade was so small that if they did not export largely they could not run their factories continuously. How is it that they require high tariff duties to enable them to hold a market in their own country, when they can, as they claim, compete against the world in the markets of Australia, New Zealand and England. Then they must either lose money, which is not at all likely—"they are not built that way"—when they pay long freight and customs duties to compete in other countries, or they must be charging their Canadian fellow-countrymen altogether too high a price.

If their machines, as they claim, are so superior to those of other countries that they can beat them in open trials, and they also have the advantage of proximity to customers, and an intimate acquaintance—very often too intimate an acquaintance—with their financial status, which no foreign firms could hope to acquire, why is it they are afraid to compete with them without the help of an exorbitant tariff? Do these firms build a superior machine for their foreign trade, and let us have the culls? Or if their machines for the home trade are the same quality as for their foreign business, what have they to fear from inferior machines, which would have a distance to pay freight for? No, gentlemen, you can't pull the wool over our eyes in that style; we know perfectly well that we are charged far too much for our machinery, and we also know that when we pay \$30 to \$50 more for some other make of binders we are getting better value for our money. We don't do it just through a desire to spite the home makers—"we are not built that way."

## WEATHER FORECASTS.

In common with many others, I have been greatly amused by the weather forecasts printed in the Winnipeg papers for a whole week ahead, and they are generally so very far astray. Thirteen below zero is prophesied, and it turns out forty-two below. Eighteen below is foretold, and it is sleeting and thawing fast. Of course, no one can rely on such forecasts. To give timely notice of a storm travelling east or west by telegraph is practical and useful, but to print these forecasts is simply waste of ink and paper.

## THE OUTLOOK FOR BEEF IN MANITOBA.

I have been making inquiries and find that there is every probability of beef cattle being a good price in spring. Last year the prices were disappointing, and this winter the price has been ruinous in many markets, and this, added to the small yield of grain and low prices, has left many farmers short of funds and feed. A great many sacrificed fat stock early in the season rather than feed all winter, or on account of being pressed for money. In my own district I know of very few cattle being fed for spring markets, and from every butcher or buyer I have spoken to I hear the same tale, so those of us who have ventured to feed a few through the winter will be better paid than usual for our labor.

## MORE SPECIALTY FARMING.

In conversation with a practical cheesemaker living a few miles away, I was struck by the way in which he had avoided the pitfalls that most of us fall into who have come from older countries. He first went to work at a salary as cheesemaker, for two years, saving his money, though tempted often to start a large factory of his own. He then bought a farm near a factory and offered to make cheese for his neighbors on various terms in said factory, provided a certain amount of milk could be guaranteed. This failing he made cheese for himself, and his neighbors, finding he was really making more than he claimed to be able to do, were only too eager to supply milk. He is now—during the summer months—making cheese for several of them, hauling the milk with his own team, and having several cows of his own supplying milk also. He pays an average of 75 cents per hundred pounds for milk from June to October, inclusive, hauled to the farm, where he has improvised a factory. He is making money, and is sure that Manitoba is a good country for dairying.

## COST OF MARKETING.

Have you ever reckoned up what it costs you to market your produce? If you allow yourself \$2.50 per day for man and team—and can you hire a team for less?—and take 50 bushels of wheat at a load, and are away from home all day, that costs you 5 cents a bushel to market that wheat. If you are away two days it costs you 10 cents. Now, 10 cents off 40 leaves 30 net for all the expense of growing, threshing, etc. Would it not be better to concentrate our produce and let it walk off to

market, or take it in the form of meat, butter, cheese or eggs. Fifty bushels of wheat, or 3,000 pounds weigh just the same as 3,000 pounds of meat or 3,000 pounds of cheese. It will take the same time to deliver it in the market, but your expenses will be ever so much less per pound and per dollar received. Five cents a bushel is 12½ cents on the dollar, or 1-12 cent per pound, while 1-12 cent per pound on cheese, at 19 cents per pound, is only 5-6 cent on the dollar gone in marketing. Think it over, and try to reduce this expense.

## GENERAL.

Don't rear that grade bull calf. Sell him for veal or steer him.

Have you read the report of the Brandon Experimental Farm? Can you not improve your yield of crops to somewhere near their figures? Send for some seed to them, and then give it a fair chance.

Will someone in Manitoba give the cost of their silo and how it answered? Did the ensilage freeze in it? How was it built so as to escape freezing? Ensilage is the coming feed for economical wintering of cattle, and I feel sure many will be glad to get all the particulars possible of a Manitoba silo.

## "INVICTA."

## Application of Manure.

The following, taken from the report of Prof. Shutt, Ottawa Experimental Farm, before the select committee of the House of Commons, upon the application of manures, will be of interest to many. In answer to an enquiry as to the best mode of applying manure, whether top-dressing or ploughing under lightly, he gives the following answer:—

That is a difficult question to answer in a word or two. The right application of manure depends largely on the character of the soil and the class of crop which you intend to grow. Most certainly it is no use burying manure so deeply that the roots of the growing crop do not reach it. Shallow feeding crops respond best to a top dressing of a well-rotted or soluble manure. For the majority of crops, however, it is perhaps best to plough the manure in—though not at too great a depth. The physical condition of the soil or tilth is usually very much improved by the presence of the ploughed-in manure.

In answer to the question, Do you recommend drawing the manure directly from the stables and spreading it out upon the land, or piling it, as most of us do, in small heaps? Would you recommend that it should be drawn out during the winter and then ploughed in in the spring? A.—This question of the economic fermentation of the manure and the application of it is an exceedingly difficult and lengthy one to answer. Manure should be managed according to circumstances. We must understand this, that the plant food in manure goes through certain stages of fermentation before its constituents are available for plant food, therefore we wish to induce fermentation either before the manure enters the soil, or after it has been mixed with the soil. With some soils and crops this fermentation should take place partially, at least, before the manure is applied; with other crops and soils, the manure is best ploughed in while fresh.

Q.—Is it not better after being mixed with the soil; is the soil not benefited by it? A.—Yes, with certain soils, such as heavy clay soils. I think that not only on account of the mechanical effect, due to the presence of unrotted manure, but also to the fact that the soil itself is of a retentive character, it is often a wise plan to apply the manure quite fresh and allow it to ferment in such soils. But in dealing with light soils which easily leach, and with crops which have a short season of growth, and consequently must have food supplied to them in a readily soluble form, I think it would be better economy to apply the manure in at least a semi-rotted condition. Then, again, with very light soils, I would aim rather to manure for the coming crop than to permanently improve the soil. With regard to the application of manure to the field, we may say that it is well, in the majority of cases, that the manure should be partially rotted before it is applied, and to that end it is often most economical of labor to pile it up in the fields in tolerably large piles previous to ploughing. If placed in small heaps during the winter, and the field is subject to floods in the spring, by which large quantities of water are carried off from the surface of the field, undoubtedly there is a great loss of fertilizing material due to the washing out action of the melted snow and the spring rains. Much plant food is thus carried off the surface of the soil before the frost has left the ground. If, in such a case, the manure has been kept in the pile till just before ploughing, the fertilizing material would have been retained.

Q.—This is a vexed question, and if we could give instructions to our farmers in regard to the best use of manures, it will be of great benefit to them? A.—I do not think it will be possible to advocate any one system which is going to be of equal value to all our people. We shall have to educate them in the principles that underlie the care, manufacture and application of manure. When these principles are understood, they will then be able to apply the manure with the greatest advantage to themselves according to the character of the soil and the crops to be raised.

## The Advantages of Farmers' Institutes.

A PAPER READ BEFORE THE NIVERVILLE INSTITUTE, BY THE PRESIDENT, WM. WALLACE.

The subject is an appropriate one for our first winter meeting. It is one that requires to be kept before the farmer. With wheat so low, it behoves him to consider well how he can hold his own in the markets of the world.

It is sometimes said that times are so bad that farmers won't trouble themselves to attend institute meetings. The hard times are, I think, a strong argument in favor of the institute. The margin between the cost of production and the price realized for the products of the farm has been gradually diminishing, and now runs the risk of disappearing altogether. The farmer cannot raise prices, but he may by improved methods produce larger crops, and thus lessen the cost of production.

Farming is no longer the haphazard occupation of two or three generations ago, and the farmer who does not keep himself abreast of the times is likely soon to go to the wall. You have heard of the artist, famous for the beautiful coloring of his pictures, who when asked how he mixed his paints replied, "with brains, sir." The farmer must be like this successful painter; he must work with his brains as well as his hands. To be a successful farmer, not merely in the money-making sense, but in every sense of the word, he should know something of mechanics, chemistry, botany and geology, as all these sciences come within the scope of his calling. He should form a high ideal of his occupation, and strive to live up to it. Experience is a great teacher, in farming as in everyday life, but knowledge thus gained is often very dearly bought. If the farmer can profit by the experience of a dozen or a score of his neighbors in addition to his own, he is placed at a great advantage. He has this opportunity at the institute meetings. The institutes are not organized to furnish audience to a few ready writers or eloquent speakers, but to encourage and enable the farmers in their respective districts to meet together to exchange views, and relate their experience in the cultivation of their land, the raising of live stock, and kindred subjects. Some men go through the world with their eyes closed to the beauties of nature. Mrs. Browning says of the observant eye and reverent attitude:—

"Earth's crammed with Heaven,  
"And every burning bush a fire with God,  
"But only he who sees takes off his shoes."

In the practical sphere of the farmer's daily operations, I am afraid many of us lack the observant eye. We are not quick to notice the subtle changes that are ever taking place in the growing crops and animal life on the farm, and to mark how these are influenced by our treatment of the soil in which the crops grow, and the food with which we supply the livestock. The great object of the institute is to foster the habit of observation, of tracing effects to their producing causes, and to encourage the farmer to communicate the results of his experience and observation to his neighbors at the institute meetings. I would here say that the institute should be of special advantage to the young men of the district, who should be encouraged to become members, to be regular in attendance, and to take part in the proceedings.

Not the least of the advantages of the institute is the opportunity we frequently enjoy of hearing addresses by lecturers from the Central Institute on subjects of practical importance to the farmer, and those of us who have had the pleasure of listening to Mr. Bedford, and other competent men, can appreciate this benefit. An advantage which we in Niverville are beginning to experience is the addition of an agricultural department to our local library, of which we hope soon to reap the fuller benefit, as we add further to our list of books.

The opportunity afforded for social intercourse during the winter months is also an advantage not to be overlooked, especially in a somewhat thinly settled district. I might point out other advantages, but I trust I have said enough to induce every member of this institute to do his utmost to add to its membership and to increase its efficiency.

The farming community, who are the ones mainly interested in the law relating to exemptions and chattel mortgages, are very much at variance in their opinions on this subject, judging from the resolutions passed by many of the local Institutes, and from the letters that have appeared in the press for the past few weeks, some favoring absolute exemptions and others the abolition of exemptions entirely, while some favor wiping out all credit by providing no legal method of collecting for debt.

We concur, in the main, with the arguments in favor of absolute exemptions, as set forth in the article taken from the Melita Enterprise, and which appears in another column, believing that to be of any use an exemption act must be made absolute.

We think all, however, are agreed that lien notes should only legally cover the article for which they are given.