

Wintry Weather.

BY PETER MCARTHUR.

In a recent interview one of our weather experts stated emphatically that the climate of Ontario is not changing. Well, if it isn't something is happening to it. It may give the same general averages for the year, but it has occasional obstreperous fits that our oldest inhabitants agree in saying are distinctly unusual. High winds swoop down on us as they never did before. Besides, it used to be a firmly grounded belief that the wind always dies down at sunset, but if it was ever true it holds good no longer. The winds we get now-a-days pay no attention to either the setting or the rising of the sun. The winds just start blowing and keep right at it until they blow themselves out. Only the second growth trees in the wood-lots seem able to stand up against them. Every big wind uproots a few of the trees that remain of the original forest and it looks as if they would all be gone before long. And the winds seem to come with surprising suddenness. Last night when we started to do the chores everything was comparatively quiet, but a big wind suddenly swooped down on us with a howl and almost blew the feathers off the chickens. A boy who was carrying a forkful of hay from a stack to the stable suddenly found that the whole forkful was sailing away with the wind, and according to his story he came near going with the hay. And the wind blew all night without slackening. Although the weather was mild when the wind started to blow, it brought the winter with it. This morning when I went into the stable to milk, the weather was clear but blustery, but when I had finished milking and started for the house there was a blinding smother of snow that hid the apple trees ten rods away. Half an hour later the sun was shining. Perhaps we are getting the same old weather as we used to get but it doesn't seem the same to me. Brrrrr! but it is cold! I guess my blood must be getting thinner.

One of the mysteries of the country is the present price of hay and straw. The packers are paying only from seven dollars and a half to eight dollars for hay, but they are offering five dollars a ton for wheat straw and not getting much of it at that price. These prices cannot be based on the feeding values of hay and straw. There must be some unusual demand for straw for other purposes when such prices are offered. Of course the country is over-stocked with hay and that helps to keep the price down, but many farmers are holding their hay in the hope that prices will be higher before spring. They argue that grain and rough feed are so scarce that an unusual amount of hay will be fed this winter and that it may prove to be scarce before spring. In quite a number of cases I have heard of hay being traded for straw at the rate of two loads of straw for

one of hay and that brings out another peculiarity of prices. I am told that it is impossible to pile more than half the weight of straw on a load that you can of hay. This system of exchange would make the hay and the straw of the same price and it follows that the man who has plenty of hay but is short of straw for bedding might as well use his hay for that purpose and save himself the trouble of hauling.

For the past week I have been waiting to make a little nature study of the muskrats in the government drain but have not been able to manage it. The sharp frost froze a thick layer of clear ice on the puddles and the little trickle of water in the ditch and the children have been skating. Every day they have come home to me with excited stories about seeing muskrats swimming under the ice, but though I have tried again and again I have failed to see any. They have runs in all the shallow parts of the ditch and I can see through the clear ice that the water in them is roily so the muskrats must be passing through them but I never happen along at the right time. Probably they hear my clumping footsteps on the frozen ground before I reach the drain, and take to their holes in terror. What I particularly want to observe is the muskrat's method of breathing when under the ice. I have been told that when a muskrat has to swim a long distance and wants to breathe he stops, places his nose against the ice and carefully empties his lungs in such a way that his breath forms a bubble under the ice. In a few seconds the air becomes purified, Mr. Muskrat breathes it in again and proceeds on his way. Though I have often heard of this trick I have never seen it performed, and judging from my experience during the past week I must continue to take the story on faith. By the way, the muskrats seem unusually plentiful this year. One day the children reported seeing eleven under the ice, all within the limits of the farm and they are looking forward to a successful trapping season as soon as it is legal for them to begin. As I tried to trap muskrats in my hopeful youth and never succeeded, I am a little doubtful of this coming wave of prosperity and refuse to advance any cash on the strength of it. Besides being in the ditch, I am suspicious that some muskrats are preparing to pass the winter in the hay stacks. A few days ago while scraping up some loose hay between two stacks a tunnel fully six inches in diameter was uncovered. It seemed altogether too large to be made by ordinary rats and, moreover, no ordinary rats have been seen about the place for several years. I seem to remember hearing of muskrats being found in haystacks and as I cannot explain that extensive tunnel in any other way I am inclined to think that some of them have established winter quarters in the blue-grass. If they have we shall have a better chance to catch them when the stacks are being fed than by placing ordinary rat traps in the government drain.

Inter-County Live Stock Judging Contest.

EDITOR "THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE":

The District Representatives throughout Western Ontario have been devoting considerable attention to the training of their respective teams for the Inter-County Live Stock Judging Competition to be held in connection with the Guelph Winter Fair, and judging from present indications the Competition will be one of the special attractions at the Fair this year. Twenty-one counties will be represented in the contest and the judges will undoubtedly have hard work in awarding the prizes.

The Competition in Eastern Ontario, to be held at the Ottawa Winter Fair will prove equally interesting. It has been the desire of the Department for some time to bring together the winning Teams of Eastern and Western Ontario to compete for a Provincial championship, and I am pleased to announce that the Ontario packers and the Union Stock Yards Company of Toronto have agreed to donate a handsome trophy and pay the expenses of the competing Teams to Toronto for the Competition during the week of the Breeders' Meetings in February next.

This contest should prove of special interest to live-stock breeders and it is hoped that those attending the breeders' meetings will make a special effort to attend the contest and assist in every way in making it a success.

C. F. BAILEY.

Asst. Deputy Minister of Agriculture.

Maybe two Years' War Yet.

The Right Rev. Monsignor A. E. Burke, of Toronto, now Lieut.-Col., for several years a greatly appreciated correspondent in Prince Edward Island, for "The Farmer's Advocate", on agricultural and horticultural subjects, has lately returned to Canada from France where he was in strenuous and worthy service as a principal Roman Catholic chaplain with Canadian troops. He will take advantage of his brief furlough before returning to the war front to help further recruiting. Confident in the triumph of the Allies he forecasts that the war may last another two years, hence the need for proper recruiting methods which, in his judgment, have not been followed, mentioning the Province of Quebec. At a time like this conscription would seem the logical course but he doubted its success in Canada.

Toronto, Montreal, Buffalo, and Other Leading Markets.

Toronto.

Receipts of live stock at the Union Stock Yards, West Toronto on Monday, November 27, numbered 281 cars, 6,000 cattle, 263 calves, 1,584 hogs, 2,835 sheep. Choice butcher steers and heifers strong, and twenty-five cents higher. Balance of cattle steady. Sheep, lambs and hogs steady. Calves active, slightly higher.

The total receipts of live stock at the City and Union Stock Yards for the past week were:

	City	Union	Total
Cars.....	84	781	865
Cattle.....	1,619	10,886	12,505
Calves.....	78	1,119	1,197
Hogs.....	706	16,291	16,997
Sheep.....	1,419	6,891	8,310
Horses.....	28	936	964

The total receipts of live stock at the two markets for the corresponding week of 1915 were:

	City	Union	Total
Cars.....	34	585	619
Cattle.....	505	8,120	8,625
Calves.....	6	512	518
Hogs.....	376	8,782	9,158
Sheep.....	240	6,409	6,649
Horses.....		1,276	1,276

The combined receipts of live stock at the two markets for the past week show an increase of 246 cars, 3,880 cattle, 679 calves, 7,839 hogs, 1,661 sheep, but a decrease of 312 horses.

Trade was strong and active at the Union Stock Yards on Monday. Nearly six thousand cattle were on sale, the bulk of which were of the common to medium class. There were, however, several loads of good to choice animals. Two Durham steers, 1,400 lbs. sold at \$9; one load of steers, 1,360 lbs., sold at \$8.65; another load, 1,130 lbs., at \$8.38, while several more sold at from \$7.25 to \$8. Few, if any, good to choice heavy steers arrived

on the market after Monday. During the week good to choice butcher steers and heifers were always in demand, but only a few loads were on the market; three loads sold at from \$7.65 to \$7.85, while several more brought \$7 to \$7.50. Fat cows were active and sold at from \$6 to \$6.75, while common cows brought \$4.50 to \$5.25 each. The bulk of the offering each day consisted of canners and cutters, which met an active trade at steady values. Canners sold at \$3.85 to \$4.25, and cutters \$4.50 to \$5. Bulls were firm at \$6.50 to \$7.50 for good to choice, and \$4.75 to \$5.50 for common to medium. Stockers and feeders were active and steady in price, only a limited number of the good kind arriving, good to choice sold at from \$6.50 to \$7.50. Milkers and springers were steady with the previous week. The lamb market on Monday at prices steady with the close of the previous week; good to choice selling at from \$10.65 to \$11.15. During the balance of the week receipts were quite light and prices advanced. On Thursday one deck of choice Blackfaces, average weight 90 lbs., sold at \$11.50, while two more decks sold at \$11.40. Sheep were strong and active throughout the week, light handy selling at \$8.50 to \$9; calves, choice veal were steady to firm at \$10.50 to \$11.75. Hogs.—Packers again tried to lower the price of hogs but failed once more, with only some 250 on sale on Monday. Fed and watered brought \$10.75 to \$11; on Thursday, with 3,208 on sale, fed and watered sold at from \$11 to \$11.20.

Live Stock Quotations.—Steers, choice heavy, \$8.50 to \$8.75; good heavy, \$8 to \$8.25. Butcher steers and heifers, choice, \$7.65 to \$8; good, \$7.15 to \$7.40; medium, \$6.75 to \$7; common, \$5.50 to \$6.25. Cows, choice, \$6.40 to \$6.65; good, \$6 to \$6.25; medium, \$5.50 to \$5.75; common, \$4.85 to \$5.25; canners, \$3.85 to \$4.25; cutters, \$4.50 to \$5. Bulls, choice, \$7 to \$7.50; good, \$6.25 to \$6.50; medium, \$5.75 to \$6; common, \$4.50 to

\$5.25. Stockers and feeders, choice, \$6.50 to \$7.50; common to medium, \$5 to \$6. Milkers and springers, best, \$85 to \$115; medium, \$60 to \$75; common, \$45 to \$55. Lambs, \$10.75 to \$11.40. Sheep, light handy, \$8.50 to \$9; heavy, \$6.50 to \$8. Calves, choice, \$10.50 to \$11.75; medium, \$8 to \$10; heavy fat, \$6 to \$8; grassers, \$5 to \$6.50. Hogs, fed and watered at \$11 to \$11.20; weighed off cars at \$11.25 to \$11.40.

Breadstuffs.

Wheat.—Ontario, according to freights outside—No. 2 winter, new, per lot, \$1.84 to \$1.86; No. 3 winter, per car lot, \$1.82 to \$1.84. Manitoba wheat (track, bay ports)—No. 1 northern, new \$2.14½; No. 2 northern, new, \$2.09¾; No. 3 northern, new, \$2.04¾; No. 4 wheat, new, \$1.87; old crop trading 3c. above new crop.

Oats.—Ontario, according to freights outside: No. 2 white, 66c. to 68c., nominal; No. 3 white, 65c. to 67c., nominal. Manitoba oats (track, bay ports)—No. 2 C. W., 72½c., according to freights outside; No. 3 C. W., 71½c.; extra No. 1 feed, 71½c.; No. 1 feed, 71c.

Peas.—According to freights outside; No. 2, \$2.50.

Rye.—According to freights outside, No. 2, \$1.40 to \$1.42.

Buckwheat.—According to freights outside, per bushel, nominal, \$1.30.

Barley.—Ontario, malting, \$1.18 to \$1.20, nominal; feed barley, nominal.

American Corn.—No. 3 yellow, \$1.08, track, Toronto, immediate shipment.

Flour.—Ontario, winter, new, according to sample, \$8.10 to \$8.25, in bags, track, Toronto. Manitoba flour prices at Toronto were: first patents, \$10.20; second patents, \$9.70, in jute; strong bakers', \$9.50, in jute, in cotton, 10c. more.

Hay and Millfeed.

Hay.—New, car lots, track, Toronto: No. 1 per ton, \$13 to \$14; No. 2 per ton, \$11 to \$12.

Straw.—Baled, car lots, \$9 to \$9.50. Bran.—\$31 to \$32, Montreal freights; shorts, per ton, \$36 to \$37; middlings, \$38 to \$40 per ton, Montreal freights; good feed flour, per bag, \$2.70 to \$2.80, Montreal freights.

Country Produce.

Butter.—Butter again advanced on the wholesales during the past week. Creamery, fresh-made pound squares selling at 46c. to 48c. per lb.; creamery solids, 44c. per lb.; dairy, 40c. to 41c. per lb.; separator dairy, 41c. to 42c. per lb.

Eggs.—Eggs also advanced, wholesale, new-laid in cartons bringing 60c. per doz.; fresh eggs, selects in case lots bringing 50c. to 55c. per doz.; cold-storage, selects, 43c. per doz.; fresh, case lots, 41c. per doz.

Poultry.—Live weight prices—chickens, 13c. per lb.; ducks, 12c. per lb. turkeys, 22c. per lb.; fowl, 4 lbs. and over, 14c. per lb.; fowl, under 4 lbs. 10c. per lb.; geese, 11c. per lb.; squabs dressed, \$3.50 to \$4 per doz.

Beans.—Hand-picked, \$6 per bushel; prime white, \$5.40 per bushel.

Cheese.—June, 26c. per lb.; new, 25c. per lb.; twins, 25½c. per lb.

Honey.—Sixty-lb. tins selling at 12c. per lb.; glass jars, \$1 to \$2 per dozen; combs, \$2.50 to \$3 per dozen.

Hides and Skins.

City hides, flat 22c.; country hides, cured, 22c.; country hides, part cured, 20c.; country hides, green, 18c.; calf skins, 35c. per lb.; kip skins, 30c. per lb.; sheep skins, city, \$2.50 to \$3.50; sheep skins, country, \$1.50 to \$3; lamb skins, and pelts, \$1 to \$1.50; horse hair, per lb., 38c.; horse hides, No. 1, \$7 to \$8; No. 2, \$6 to \$7; wool, washed, 42c. to 46c. per lb.; wool, rejections, 35c. to 38c. per lb.; unwashed, 32c. to 33c. per lb.; tallow, No. 1, 8c. to 9c.; solids, 7c. to 8c.

Wholesale Fruits and Vegetables.

Although the potato market held quite