

Notes from Ireland.

IRISH HARVEST PROSPECTS.

Irish crop prospects are bright. As I write, I have before me a cheering series of reports by practical farmers, and thoroughly representative of the country. The picture which these reports present is far more encouraging than could have been reasonably anticipated some months ago. There have been other years, no doubt, in which some crops may have been more favorably spoken of, but, taken all in all, there has seldom been such a uniformly satisfactory promise. Of no crop is the general condition represented as materially under the average, while the great majority are described as well up to, and, in many cases, well above. The season, from a climatic standpoint, has been a somewhat peculiar one. The spring was unseasonably cold, and, consequently, backward until June. With the advent of genial weather, then the appearance of the country underwent a marked improvement, which has continued right along. Of meadows and pastures, which occupy the great bulk of our land, most pleasing reports are given; the hay being saved in good condition, and proving, in the majority of cases, heavy and nutritive. Pastures also have been well covered, and grazing stock have been amply supplied. An amount of hay has still to be cut, and if fine weather prevails for the work, a good return is expected for winter use. Among the cereals oats have, in some of the northern districts, been retarded by the absence of heat in spring, and are, consequently, not filling well, but in other parts of the country the crop is bulking most satisfactorily, and our staple grain crop promises a full average yield; wheat and barley, which are not so extensively grown as oats, are both expected to turn out better than last year. Potatoes have been comparatively free from blight and disease, and there are indications of luxuriant growth and abundant yield of this most important crop. Turnips are the most variable of all, and appear to be better in the South than the North, but there are very few unsatisfactory reports of the mangel crop, which, as a rule, looks healthy; and of flax, which is principally confined to the northern counties, the reports leave little cause for complaint.

COMPULSORY SHEEP DIPPING.

During the past few years many public men interested in the sheep industry have pleaded for the adoption of a measure in Ireland under which every farmer would be compelled to dip his sheep. It would seem that the day is not far distant when the desire will become realized. Though coercive measures, as a rule, do not appeal to the average Irish mind, still there are some matters in which compulsion is advisable, and, indeed, in which resort to it is fraught with advantages which all competent to judge without bias are bound to admit. It must not be supposed that all Irish flockmasters neglect the washing of their sheep, for such is by no means the case, but the difficulty is that quite a number neglect to do so, and the inevitable consequence is that sheep scab and other parasitic troubles continue prevalent throughout the country, and this, notwithstanding the frequent pleas that these diseases could be exterminated (as they have been in Australia and elsewhere) by approved systems of dipping.

The story of how the compulsory measures have now been brought into operation is soon told. For a long time past the authorities in England and Scotland have been expending large sums of money, framing elaborate orders, and in other ways making a determined effort to get rid of that troublesome ovine pest, sheep scab, on their side of the Channel. This year they came to the conclusion that all their endeavors would fail to be completely successful, unless a similar attempt was made in Ireland, for, as they rightly argued, it was useless trying to free England from the disease so long as there was a constant import traffic of Irish sheep, whose immunity from infection was in no way guaranteed. Representations to this effect were accordingly made by the English Board of Agriculture to the Irish Department of Agriculture, and the latter were informed that after November 1st, 1906, no Irish sheep would be admitted to English ports, unless accompanied by certificates that they had been properly dipped within a certain period before the date of shipment. This, of course, meant one of two alternatives: (1) Universal dipping, or (2) partial paralysis of our pretty extensive sheep trade with England. These facts were brought before the various local county councils by the Department of Agriculture, in the form of an order for compulsory dipping, which the former bodies, having the statutory powers, were requested to put in operation. Explanations were necessary, however, and officials of the Veterinary Branch have been busy travelling about the country, meeting the local councils, and making the details clear to them. It is most satisfactory to find that in the vast majority of cases the order is to be put in force, and that schemes framed according to local conditions have been drawn up. These vary, of course, in different parts of the country, but they all tend in the one direction, and their effect is certain to be productive of immense benefit to our sheep industry, which is, at present, probably the most remunerative ranch of Irish stock-breeding.

IRISH RAILWAYS ON TRIAL.

Some months ago I wrote in "The Farmer's Advocate" regarding the very grave dissatisfaction that exists in this country with the railway authorities, on account of what can only be described as the unsym-

pathetic attitude of the latter towards the development of the agricultural resources of the Island. Indeed, so acute has the question become that, as I formerly pointed out, there are some among us who contend that until an improved state of affairs is brought about with regard to railway rates, etc., it is a hopeless task to try to revive and develop to the fullest extent the industries of the country. Instead of leading and furthering in every way the advancement of agriculture—as their own business instincts alone might have induced them to do—the railway companies, as a rule, in Ireland have, it is to be feared, played quite a different role, and while our foreign competitors have had the advantage of rapid, cheap and safe transit, we have been greatly handicapped by unreasonably, and, indeed, fatally high rates, and not always the most expeditious railway facilities. The matter has forced itself into special prominence, which may be taken as indicative of its vital importance to the country's best interests. Quite recently an influential deputation waited on a conference of Irish railway managers, and discussed the various details of the matters in dispute, but, apparently without any definite result. Hardly had the echoes of the meeting died away, however, than the announcement came last week of the appointment of Vice-regal Commission to enquire into the working of Irish railways generally. The terms of reference are comprehensive, and indicate that the inquiry will be both wide and practical in its scope. They read as follows:

"To inquire into the present working of railways in Ireland, including light railways, and to report how far they afford adequate facilities for the cheap and rapid transit of goods and passengers within the Island and to Great Britain; what causes have retarded the expansion of traffic upon the Irish lines, and their full utilization for the development of the agricultural and industrial resources of the country; and, generally, by what methods the economical, efficient and harmonious working of the Irish railways can best be secured."

A PROFITABLE INDUSTRY.

Assuming that the breeding of all classes of animals possesses an interest for farmers, it may not be out of place to mention a branch of breeding which is proving distinctly remunerative to a certain restricted class in Ireland, but which, unfortunately, from its nature does not lend itself to very much development. I refer to the breeding of lions, which is carried on with wonderful success by the Royal Zoological Society of Ireland, at their picturesque, instructive and popular gardens in the celebrated Phoenix Park, Dublin. While up at the Zoological Gardens last week, on a spare afternoon, I learned that lions bred in the Gardens are in great demand, and enjoy much popularity in different parts of the world. Since commencing to breed them the society has exported quite a large number. Only last week a lioness was despatched to Scotland, and a fortnight previous a wee cub was taken away to Paris; still a third recent deal with the society has been transacted by the proprietors of an English travelling menagerie, and specimens have also been sent to Germany, America and Burmah. Needless to say, the competition in this particular business is not keen, and, consequently, prices are pretty much as the sellers care to dictate.

EMERALD ISLE.

P. E. Island.

At date of writing crops are suffering from extreme drouth. There has been no rain of any consequence for over three weeks. Hay has been about an average crop, and has been saved in the best condition. A large percentage of the hay crop is clover, and will make excellent stock food. It was no trouble to make the hay this season, the weather was so dry and hot. A very large percentage of the wheat crop along the north side of the Island has been destroyed by the joint-worm; some of it is being cut down for hay, but a great deal of it is so short as to be useless even for that. There was a little of this trouble in this section last year on a few farms, but this year it has become general, and has utterly destroyed the crop in many cases. The later sown wheat seems to have suffered most. Where this pest has been so bad this year, many farmers will not attempt to grow wheat next year, but will wait for a year or two, in hopes that the insect that causes it may pass. It is causing great loss this year, as the wheat is always sown on the very best land. The oat crop is light in the straw for lack of moisture, and as it is filling in very hot weather, we fear the grain will also be light. The root crop is doing well, and will likely come up to the average. Potatoes have missed to a great extent. We think the principal cause has been lack of vitality in the seed, which was too weak to germinate in the unfavorable conditions caused by our extremely cold spring season. Where good, strong, sound seed was planted at a proper depth, about three inches, it has grown well. We never saw potato bugs so plentiful here before, and it has required a lot of Paris green to keep them down. Pastures are getting pretty dry. After-grass is not making much growth, and the stockman who has plenty of green feed to supplement the pastures is the only one who will rejoice in full milk pails and thriving animals.

The dairy business is coming up again. Two years of good prices are encouraging many who were getting careless about milking stock to take more interest in them. The cheese and butter factories, as a conse-

quence, are doing a larger business than during the last two years.

We enjoyed a very pleasant call from a representative of the old-reliable "Farmer's Advocate" a short time ago, and were pleased to know that he was successful in placing that excellent journal in many farm homes. We feel safe in saying that wherever "The Farmer's Advocate" is taken and carefully read there will follow an improvement in agricultural methods. Too many of our farmers are yet without an agricultural paper, and so are missing much that would be helpful to them in their business. W. S.

Awake to the Chances at Home.

Editor "The Farmer's Advocate":

As the son of a subscriber, I thought I would write a few lines, which you may publish if you see fit. As your paper is open to practical or beneficial suggestions, I might say the encouragement of correspondence between young farmers' sons or daughters would be beneficial. Correspondence carried on in a respectful way would, I think, increase the number of subscribers among the young farmers, as well as others, and be of an educational as well as a practical benefit.

Many farmers' sons in Ontario are leaving fair chances and going West to look for better, which some may find, and many may not. Many young men abandon the farm for which the father has worked so long, and which has good buildings and home, for a few acres on a wide and dreary prairie where there are neither, and there spend a good share of their lives dragging out an existence all alone. When they get tired of single life, they pick up all the farmers' daughters who will go West, and there live a life which, to a certain extent, is filled with privation. This may not be in every case, but it is in a good many. Farmers' daughters do not yet have to go West to find bachelors who are well off, for in some of the middle and western counties bachelors are so thick that in one place the school is closed. No doubt if correspondence was encouraged it would be to their benefit and comfort, as well as that of others.

Then, again, when the farmers' sons go West it leaves the farm without sufficient help, and the only road out is to pay big wages to hired help, or else not work all the farm. It seems to me that farmers could well afford to provide some inducements to help their sons at home, and thus work all the farm in the proper way, and to best advantage; for when they are given an interest in the work they will willingly do more than a hired man, and this also saves the breaking up of the home. There are many farms in Ontario that could be worked to better advantage, and if one of the sons who has worked at home wished to farm for himself, his father might give him a start, and the rest would work in all right. Here correspondence is a benefit; for when one sees how others are making a success it encourages him to put forth greater effort.

Farmers' daughters also might be benefited by their correspondence, or with farmers' sons. This is the day of progress, so speak up and let people know you are living. YOUNG FARMER.

Quebec.

Seed Selection Pays.

(Ottawa correspondence.)

Many farmers of Eastern Ontario are giving considerable attention to experimental plots in hand selection of seed, and a large majority of them have achieved good results. George Boyce, of Nepean, has such a plot in four acres of evenly-lying land. He has been at the work for several seasons, and, as a result, has nearly 60 acres from improved seed. He has made a specialty of Banner oats. His oat fields this year gave splendid promise of banner crops.

Working in Red Fife wheat in a similar way, Robert Patterson, of Northcote, near Renfrew, has achieved good results. He has a breeding plot of $\frac{1}{2}$ acre, and an improved seed plot of 8 acres. Last year his field of 10 acres, sown with improved seed, yielded 25 bushels per acre. He had, according to the best of authority, sufficient offers at \$1.50 per bushel for seed to sell the whole crop. He refused to part with it for this purpose, in spite of the high price, because he had failed to treat the crop for smut, and thought it might be the means of propagating the disease. His plots this year have given every appearance of good results.

One of the finest breeding plots visited this year by the official of the Seed Division is in the vicinity of Maxville, on the farm of Robert McKay. This is the fifth year Mr. McKay has been selecting Red Fife wheat, and his plot showed the results of careful attention. The heads a short time ago were well filled with plump grain of the highest quality. The mean length of heads also was above the average.

Among others of this part of the Province engaged in the work are: D. G. Thompson, Cumming's Bridge, experimenting with Compton's Early corn; Mr. Sissons, of Dunrobin, experimenting with oats. Last year Mr. Sissons' improved seed plot of two acres yielded within a very small fraction of 70 bushels to the acre.