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333 Water Street.

## WET POTATOES

**I**N the struggle for existence in the manual strife we are this time at the close of the harvest, and it is interesting as well as profitable to review our activities even though to a superficial extent. By so doing we have a very good opportunity to discover any mistakes in the direction of the past season's energies, and thus learn what modifications are necessary in our methods of working that we may be able to produce better results during the next ensuing season.

With the beginning of seed planting last spring it will be remembered a rather sharp discussion arose in the daily papers as to the cause of wet potatoes and the means of handling them that would produce a cure.

Not only are tubers of this quality unpalatable and undesirable but their degeneration in the direction complained of, and to no great extent, would render them unfit for table use or, at any rate, reduce their consumption to a very marked degree. This, of course, is not the wish or desire of anybody who is anxious for better things in the agricultural capabilities of our country but rather the reverse, and the person or persons then who have discovered a remedy for the evil and given it gratuitously to the public, (unlike their acquisition of the knowledge to water fish in the right way), are entitled at least to a meed of gratitude and commendation on the part of all producers of this great commodity of food.

We followed closely the theories advanced by the different writers who engaged in the discussion last spring, and our experience during the past season especially (and the season previous to that too enables us to confirm with abundant proof that the editor of *The Mail and Advocate* accurately described the necessary change in our process of manuring to produce the desired result.

He claimed or asserted as a positive fact that humus was an essential element in the soil, and in the greatest proportion for the potato's food when growing, and that such an element was provided by the application to the land in the way of manuring it of sods, all fungi growths, decayed leaves and debris, turf, and finely chopped boughs. With these, any one of them of course in sufficient quantity, or several of them in smaller quantities, the editor's contention was that a liberal supply of caplin could be used and the potato would still be dry and mealy, whereas, without the humus-producing constituent, and with the free use of caplin, the potato would be of a nature ready "to jump out of its jacket" when boiled. The idea of course is that the process of decay of these agents completes itself in the trench or furrow, and thus the element of humus is produced which is the chief and proper food for the potato's growth.

Of the sod we used nought else the past two seasons, and though we believe we used it wrongly an observation of the result was very convincing of the truth of *The Mail and Advocate's* argument scattered them promiscuously in the furrows in large and compact slices, and then deposited the sod or came in contact with it we unearthed in the autumn the same sod ready to descend to powder earth and with a liberal supply of potatoes that were dry and mealy when boiled clustered all round it; but where a seed was not placed on or near a sod we had potatoes, few in number, and of very stunted growth, and not at all to be compared with the others for table use.

We said it was our belief that we used the sod wrongly, and this is because we placed it in the trench in lump form, and of large size, and thus too compact. Had we chopped it rather finely, and then made use of a good supply we believe we would have achieved even better results.

The potato in the early stage of its maturity and before the sod had undergone any appreciable degree of decay, must have found some difficulty in extracting its food from the tough mass of almost impenetrable substance in the sod that we made use of, which would not at all have been the case if it had been broken up more finely when applied to the land. In fact it was more of a means to dispose of them rather than from a point of view of manuring the land that we made use of them at all in this way.

Again, part of our small field

contained the location of a barn that had been built on a sodded site. This layer of course rotted underneath the accumulation that took place during the short while the barn covered the site, but it was easily discernable in the beginning of the past spring when we cultivated the part and made it ready for the reception of the tuber seeds. It contained an abundance of the sod element; and both the stalks and potatoes were away in advance of any other part of the patch throughout the summer as well as at the time of unearthing.

And, again, until we, in company with many others, learned from *The Mail and Advocate* the value of sod manure for potatoes we were spending our energy in an endeavour to remove them from the ground with the least amount of clay possible, and for that purpose we would dash them a dozen times or more against some large bowlders remaining in our cultivated area, and then bank the grassy remnant in some secluded corner to decay.

Of course we did not leave all the soil that accumulated round the bowlders remain there; we scattered it till it was of no greater depth at that particular spot than at any other part of the ground. Still, is it not conclusive proof of the right manurial value of the sod for potatoes that around the bowlders where the earth was rich from the grass and soil of the beaten sods that the tubers were double as good as in the surrounding parts of the patch.

We have not seen that any one came forward with any information in proof or otherwise of any of the theories propounded by either of the disputants in last spring's controversy. We remember distinctly when *The Mail and Advocate* stated it possessed the secret of curing the wet potato, but could not speak with a voice of authority as being wholly foreign to the make-up of the agricultural society, which should be the one source qualified to enlighten the people on a subject so kindly allied to the duty for which it was intended.

When then, that paper did speak on the matter and that so effectively as to hit the nail squarely on the head, and without the least hesitation, we admired its effectiveness and genuine worth especially when we said the plain and indisputable demonstration. Of course what is true of the sod element is true also of any other humus producing agent.

This is not written out of brief for any party in the dispute that originated over wet potatoes, but simply in confirmation of what we have proved to be the truth regardless of by whom expressed.

—OBSERVER.  
Hr. Main Dis., Nov. 2, '15.

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## F. Smallwood, The Home of Good Shoes

If you want a Ferro Kerosene Engine call at A. H. MURRAY'S demonstrating room, Bowring's Cove.—Oct 19, 1915

## Misdirected Energy on Our Railroads

(Editor Mail and Advocate)

Dear Sir,—Power may be considered to be directed energy, and we may liken many forms of energy to an excited mob, while the directed forms are likened to a disciplined army. Energy in the form of heat is in the mob form, while in the form of a bent spring, or a raised weight, water moving in one direction, or of electricity, is in the army form.

I said that energy in the form of heat is in the mob form; yes, and energy in the form of locomotives pulling the trains on the Reid system is also in the mob form; for it there was ever misdirected energy it is to be found on the Reid car-path. On this badly managed (shall I say) railroad there are a couple of engines—if they were kept in shape by someone who knew how to do so would be able to handle all traffic the country is likely to give the Company. The engines are not by any means kept in any thing like half-decent repair, they therefore cannot do the work which they were intended to do.

In spite of this, if after the engines were put out on the road, they were directed, or managed by the Dispatching office in a way that would differ a little, but from that of a crowd of men working in a winter slide-path there would not be freight and passengers laying around stations waiting for a train that is perhaps 24 hours, or a week behind.

When freight accumulates at any one particular point, they will rush all the rolling stock they have to that particular place, and as a result they will have a congestion of cars, rather than freight; this is where the Reids burn the most of their coal, shunting cars instead of pulling freight. The Reids have plenty of energy if it was properly directed.

Those who know the entire lack of gray matter behind this woodpath like train-running, are not surprised when they see an editorial complaining about spending two nights on a train getting from Bonavista to Conception Bay.

The Superintendent who is trying to handle this job would be more at home "hammering brass." He did not climb to the position which he now holds, through merit or even seniority, but by consanguineous pull, and the public must suffer because of his inability to handle traffic as it should be handled.

If you can find space, Mr. Editor, I would like to give you an instance of stupidity. Some time ago something went wrong with an engine up on the West coast (that is from Humbermouth West) and the travelling engineer got busy to locate the cause; as he could not find the cause he got after the effect (as the Reids always do) and shifted the engineer (save the mock) but still the engine would only pull half of her train. He again got the engine in the round house, and was again looking for the effect rather than the cause. After the engine came out it still refused to pull its train, so our smart travelling engineer gave up the task after three or four months; all of this time the engine was pulling three and four cars when it should have been pulling 10 cars.

After they could do nothing more with the engine they sent it down to the scrap heap, for that is what every one calls the Bonavista Branch, because all of the old scrap that is of no use on the main line is sent down on the Bonavista Branch, as any thing is good enough for them down there because they are all 'oakerites, so says one of the Reid officials.

When the engine arrived on the Branch, the first couple of exhausts the engine gave, the engineer in charge located the long-looked-for cause and effected a remedy in a few minutes. This one defect cost the company thousands of dollars, and the public a lot of annoyance. So from this you will see how stupid men employed by the Reids are and how the public must suffer.

I am obliged to close as my letter is already growing long, but with space granted me in a future issue of your paper, I am going to get after the Government for paying the Reids for hauling their freight in the manner they do.

Yours truly,  
W. L. BUTLER.  
Shopt. Hr., Nov. 2nd, 1915.

TRY IT HERE?

A method similar to the "punch the clock system" for such members has been inaugurated in a Pittman, N. J. church. Instead of a time clock there is a board with pegs and tags bearing the names of the members. Those who attend turn the tags over to the reverse side and thus their pastor can tell at a glance who the faithful ones are.

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WE desire to draw the attention of our innumerable customers around the Island to the tremendous display of fine Furniture we have in our Show Room. This has just been replenished by some two or three shipments from the best English and American makers.

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