

The Farmer's Advocate and Home Magazine

Persevere and
Succeed

Established
1866

Vol. XLII.

REGISTERED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE COPYRIGHT ACT OF 1875
LONDON, ONTARIO, DECEMBER 26, 1907.

No. 796

EDITORIAL.

LESSONS FROM THE WINTER FAIR.

Of all the thousands who were fortunate enough to witness the fine display of live stock of the various classes at the Winter Fair, at Guelph, few, we presume, were disappointed, while the great majority were delighted to see so many fine specimens so well brought out; and yet, without being hypercritical, one who has been privileged to see the great fat-stock shows of England and the United States, cannot but feel that there is much room for improvement in our exhibitions of a similar sort, and that, with the facilities they have, our stockmen are capable of far greater achievements than they have yet reached. While we have brought out in very limited numbers home-grown animals capable of wresting the highest honors from our neighbors of the adjoining country, there is no reason why we should not do the trick more frequently and more generally. We have men and breeding stock, soil and feed, qualified to produce the best in all lines of live stock, and we are confident that were sufficient inducement, in the way of liberal prizes, provided, many more of our farmers would lay their plans to produce and prepare for exhibition, in much larger numbers, animals of a higher average of excellence than we have been accustomed to seeing at our Winter Fairs. What is needed in order to the attainment of this desirable condition is more money placed at the disposal of the management, in order that more prizes, and more liberal prizes, may be offered for young stock, in order to encourage the emasculation of a larger number of the male increase of the herd or flock, and prepare the best of such for the show-ring. The present is an unusually opportune time to adopt this policy, owing to the low prices ruling for pure-bred bulls, prices which, in the case of the plainer class, leave no margin of profit, and in many instances mean a decided loss. Far better, from all points of view, to bring up a good steer, rather than an inferior bull, or, as someone has tersely put it, "spoil a possible good steer to raise a mean bull," for it is a fact that an unpromising calf unsexed, owing to the quieter nature resulting, not infrequently makes a high-class bullock and a profitable proposition, which, if left in his natural condition, would probably have been a decided failure. The same argument applies in the case of sheep and pigs, and it is safe to say that, if the pruning-knife were more freely used on male animals, pure-bred as well as grade, it would be far better for the breeders and for the general stock of the country. The practice of offering prizes for cows over three years old, prizes which in years past have been largely picked up by breeders in the near neighborhood of the show with patchy old matrons carrying calves, is too absurd to be continued longer, and the money so wasted would certainly be much better expended in augmented prizes for young stock and for car-load lots of commercial cattle, and groups of wethers and barrows, which would much more sensibly occupy the space in the exhibition building.

The demand for increased building space for the accommodation of visitors and stock is reasonable, and, if a horse show and an extended dairy cow department are to be added, is an urgent necessity, which it is pleasing to know will, in all probability, be provided for in the coming year. Much larger judging-rings and seating accommodation are required, if the people are to see the stock to advantage; the lecture-room needs enlarging, if visitors are to be accommodated with seating room to avail themselves

of the helpful addresses and demonstrations provided in that department; and many other features may be improved in order to insure convenience to exhibitors and comfort to visitors. The Winter Fair has come to stay. It is the most interesting and educative to the greatest number of all our live-stock exhibitors, and should receive generous consideration at the hands of the Department of Agriculture, the breeders' associations, and the city in which it is held, and is worthy of the liberal patronage of the farming community generally.

A PROPOSED STALLION-LICENSE ACT.

In the autumn of 1906, the Ontario Department of Agriculture sent out some sixteen horsemen through the countryside to ascertain and report upon the condition of the horse-breeding industry, with a view to obtaining information that would serve as a reliable guide in framing a progressive Departmental policy. During the summer of 1907, these reports have been collated, summarized, and published. They show that there are in the Province 1,182 imported stallions serviceably sound, and 117 unsound; 433 registered Canadian-bred stallions serviceably sound, and 52 unsound; 740 grade stallions serviceably sound, and 163 unsound. To the 117 unsound imported stallions, 8,137 mares were bred (presumably in one year); to the 52 unsound Canadian-bred registered stallions, 3,988 mares were bred; to the 740 serviceably-sound grade stallions, 35,202 mares were bred, while the 163 unsound grades were permitted to perpetuate their undesirabilities by matings with 7,127 mares.

These facts denote a condition of affairs which is hardly creditable to a progressive Province like Ontario, and the question has been earnestly considered whether a stallion-enrollment or stallion-license law, such as those in force out in the three Prairie Provinces of Canada, and in Iowa, Wisconsin, and other States, might not tend to better things, by discriminating against the use of stallions afflicted with hereditary unsoundness, and also preventing the manufacture and use of bogus pedigrees gotten up to deceive prospective patrons, often leading them to think a horse is better bred than he is, and not infrequently representing him as pure-bred and registered when he is nothing of the kind. For, notwithstanding occasional claims for grade sires, it is significant that nearly every stallioner likes the word "pure-bred" on his route bill.

As a means of focusing intelligent discussion upon a definite proposition, the directors of the Ontario Horse-breeders' Association met recently and formulated a set of resolutions setting forth the points which they deemed it wise for the Provincial Legislature to enact into a law. On Thursday afternoon, December 12th, these recommendations, distributed in leaflet form, were discussed by a large audience in the lecture-room of the Ontario Winter Fair, at Guelph, the Provincial Minister of Agriculture, Hon. Nelson Monteith, presiding. Discussion was wide open and frank. Everyone who wished it was given a fair hearing, and some took pretty frequent advantage of the opportunity. It resulted in the meeting's endorsement, by a large majority, of the principle of licensing, and also of practically every detail of the resolutions submitted. The full text of the resolutions, as amended and passed by the meeting, will be found on page 2014 of our issue of December 19th, under the heading, "The Lectures and Discussions." Of course, these resolutions are not law. They will, as the Minister remarked, have to pass through possibly a finer crucible still before they are crystallized into legal enactment. What was wanted was an ex-

pression of opinion, and this is all the endorsement amounts to.

Epitomized, the resolutions would require that all stallions standing for public service must be inspected annually by a county inspector or inspectors appointed by the Government, and, if complying with the other requirements of the Act, given a license, it being provided that no person should be allowed to accept a service fee for an unlicensed stallion. The requirements for a license should be that only pure-bred and registered stallions, free from hereditary unsoundness, and complying reasonably well with the standard of conformation for the breed, should be allowed to stand, "except that, owing to one-third of the stallions in the Province being found by the inspectors to be unregistered, that for three years, grade stallions known to be good sires, and, upon inspection, found to be of good conformation and free from hereditary unsoundness, should be granted a license, to be known as Class 2," the license for the pure-breds being called Class 1. All printed matter advertising any stallion must include a copy of his license certificate. The fee for securing a license would be ten dollars, out of which the expenses of the inspector should be paid, any surplus collected from each county being returned to the county, to be used for the encouragement of spring horse shows, not more than two of which should be held in any electoral district. It was further held that the practice of "syndicating" stallions, as generally done, should be discouraged, and some legislation passed to control it.

The strong point of these recommendations is their moderation. It would probably be impossible to propose an effective Act that would not bear a little hard on somebody, but it would seem that we have embodied in these proposals the principle of maximum benefit with minimum hardship. It might, however, be well to reproduce the gist of the discussion. The question was raised, "How could one know that a horse was free from hereditary unsoundness, if his conformation was good?" to which the reply was that any unsoundness would be manifest; it was not proposed to determine whether the horse were free from a tendency to hereditary unsoundness, as that would be impracticable.

Mr. Cooke, of Halton County, objected to the distinction of "Class 1" (or "Grade 1," as it was originally proposed) for pure-breds, and "Class 2" (or "Grade 2") for unregistered horses. He didn't want a horse that was a good stock-getter to be labelled "Grade 2." It was spreading a mantle of tinsel over the registered horse, and of straw over the other. He claimed they had better horses in Halton County years ago, when there was scarcely a registered sire in the County. He was afraid there was some object among the importers in promoting this legislation. In reply, Arthur Johnson recalled that he had imported from Kentucky one of the sires mentioned by Mr. Cooke, and that he was a pure-bred, though his pedigree had been lost. John Bright remarked that, as a general principle, the use of grade sires was bad, and if there is any district that has had better results from grade stallions than from pure-breds, they must have had a very poor class of pure-breds. The question was raised whether or not it was necessary to distinguish between grades and pure-breds as "Class 1" and "Class 2." Would not the registration number of the pure-bred serve to indicate his pure breeding? In reply to this, it was pointed out that there are horses now traveling with numbers in obsolete studbooks, such as the draft-horse record at Goderich, and to allow such numbers to be used would be deceptive.