

THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE AND HOME MAGAZINE.

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DOMINION.

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selected for the occasion, who discuss various topics of the day (except political questions).

The gathering on Dominion Day was a large one. The day was fine, although somewhat heavy and threatening in the morning, and it was enjoyed by old and young. We were specially favored this year by having the Provincial Minister of Agriculture, Hon. J. Allard, with us, who gave the address of the day, and referred to the possibility of doing more for our country roadways when the increased subsidy was received. As it was his first visit to this section of the Province, he spoke in glowing terms of the appearance of industry, thrift and intelligence of our farmers.

It was hoped the gold medal, won by our young stockman, R. R. Ness, of Howick, and the other seven silver medals coming to this section in the "Reward of Merit" Provincial-farms competition, would have been presented the successful competitors, but somehow they did not come to hand in time, which was a disappointment. The picnic was held in the beautiful maple grove of Wm. Greig, Cairnside.

Since last writing, we have had copious showers, refreshing all verdure wonderfully, and all vegetation has made marked progress. Hay will be a light crop, but the quality will be excellent; cutting, which usually commences about July 1st, will be ten or twelve days later. Grain is a good color, but at date of writing promises to be short. Corn and roots did not start well, owing to the exceedingly dry, hot weather, and there are a number of misses. Where these have had a good start, they have come ahead quickly. A few fields of corn are now about 15 inches high, but they are the exception, not the rule. Potatoes have come on well. Grass lands are not good, consequently the milk flow is far below what it usually is at this season. Prices for milk products are good, although dropping a little.

W. F. S.

THE INVENTOR OF THE SPLIT-LOG DRAG.

Missouri is the State whose natives are supposed, as the slang phrase goes, "to require to be shown," but in D. Ward King, of Holt Co., the inventor of the split-log drag, she produced a man who has returned the compliment, by showing the rest of America how to make good earth roads without money, or, if the volunteer labor be counted, as it should be, at a cost of four to six dollars per mile per year. Mr. King is a farmer, and has lived on one farm, he says, for twenty-five years. At least, he was living on it till the work of the split-log drag made him famous and created a demand for his services on the lecture platforms. When he went to Holt County, the roads were simply trails over the country. Later they were fenced in and made into highways. This was the starting of bad roads. Rain and travel made them bad. They soon became lower than the adjoining land, and served as ditches. Our friend studied the road question, becoming what he calls a "road crank." He heard of a road machine in the East—a reversible grader. He procured one, but it did not answer the purpose. One spring day in 1896 he hitched to a cheap contrivance made something like a three-rung ladder, and, stepping onto it, drove down the road toward his neighbor's front gate and back, one horse of the team on each side of the right-hand rut, the drag following at an angle of about 45 degrees. The road



D. Ward King.

Inventor of the split-log drag.

had been badly cut up by travel during a spell of wet weather, and was just drying. The drag scraped the surface of the rough road, broke down the edges of the rut and deposited the loose earth in the ruts and other low places, leaving it smooth. The largest clods were moved to the center. The road was better at once. After the next rain he repeated the operation, and has done so, or had his hired man do so, with few exceptions, after every rain, to the present time. The road continued to improve, and became locally famous because it never got very bad, and because it dried and became in fine condition so quickly after the rain ceased. The first drag was made out of an old pump stock and some other stuff. The second season he made a drag out of the trunk of an old box-elder tree. It was very crooked, but he split it, and made a fairly good drag. He used this for five years and made his road famous. Not only was it kept smooth and hard, but it became graded so high that the neighbors objected, and he had to reduce it a little.

The wonderful improvement wrought by the drag was brought to the notice of Secretary Ellis, of the Missouri State Board of Agriculture, who investigated thoroughly, and then arranged with him to go out into the State for the purpose of spreading the information gained by the experi-

ment. Since then he has been more and more occupied in explaining and demonstrating this simple method of roadmaking.

Notwithstanding his self-styled characterization, the inventor of the drag is not a crank. He does not claim that no means of road improvement should be used except the split-log drag. On the contrary, he advises the thorough macadamizing of a small percentage of the leading highways, and argues that "no community can afford to do without stone on its main thoroughfares when land is worth thirty dollars per acre, and rock can be had within three miles." But to macadamize the whole or even the greater part of the road mileage under these conditions is not desirable. On the less-travelled roads, leave the earth surface, and improve it by dragging ten or twelve times a year.

Mr. King is described as a man of splendid physique, as well as mentality, and appears to make a most favorable impression wherever he delivers an address. He is the stamp of citizen of whom we never have enough. A less enterprising man would have vaded through the mire from year to year without cudgelling his brains to find a remedy, and finally have sunk into a seven-by-six-foot grave, leaving his children and neighbors to do the same. A less thoroughgoing man would have been content with improving the road a little, and letting it go at that. Not so with Mr. King. He knew he had hit upon a good thing, and made the most of it. The result was such striking improvement as to attract the attention of the State officials, and since then of the whole continent. There is a lesson in this example for our young men.

A CALL TO STEADY OUR PACE.

For some time past financiers have experienced an unmistakable stringency in the money market. Available capital has been scarce, and rates of interest high. Casting about for an explanation, one's attention is called to the fact that Canada's imports have greatly exceeded her exports, the difference being made up in cash or by borrowing abroad. In so far as the deficiency of exports has been due to delay in moving the wheat crop and other produce to the seaboard, this explanation may hold good, and the conditions will be to that extent relieved when the delayed crop is finally marketed. Another cause of the so-called unfavorable balance of trade is the continued influx of immigrants, most of whom are consumers before they produce much for export. This factor, however, while it partially accounts for an excess of imports over exports, does not explain to an equal extent the financial stringency, for many of the immigrants bring with them a certain amount of money to pay for their living, and this, so long as it lasts, constitutes an increase in the circulating specie.

The main cause of the close money market in Canada is that we have been striking too fast a pace, not only in living higher than we used to do, but in undertaking new enterprises on a gigantic scale, building railroads, towns, cities and manufacturing establishments faster than our means warrant. More settlers, more railroads; more railroads, more settlers, has been the cry, and other forms of constructive and development work have likewise proceeded apace. This has gone on so fast that much of the labor and material have had to be imported, and we have not been reaping the full benefit of the expenditure on development account. Of course, when all these enterprises begin to produce, we may expect easier times, but there is no doubt that the pace has been abnormally fast, and therein lies the trouble. Month after month since the new year opened the normal increase in bank deposits has fallen short of the normal increase in demands on the banks for money and credit, not to undertake new enterprises, but to complete those already undertaken. So it has been necessary to borrow abroad; but here, again, the tremendous economic waste entailed by the Boer and Russo-Japanese wars have absorbed surplus capital, hence we have been unable to borrow as readily as before.

There is nothing really alarming in the Canadian situation; it is more wholesome than alarming. The Dominion is still on a perfectly sound financial basis, but the call is clear to slacken our pace—to steady up, as it were. This is a good thing. Incidentally, it will enable us to reap more benefit from the era of national development now under way.