

## THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE AND HOME MAGAZINE.

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DOMINION.

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### Land Speculation.

The exposures in connection with the Foster-Montague, et al., land deals, brings up a question that is of vital interest to the West. The C. P. R. turned over 200,000 acres of their land to a syndicate, at \$3.50 per acre; the syndicate turned it over to another at \$4.50; the latter passed the good thing along to another company at \$5.00. This concern will probably retail the land at from \$8.00 to \$12.00 per acre. At the latter price the farmer may possibly come on the scene.

This simply means that about \$6.00 an acre has to be paid by the actual producer over and above the sum received by the original owners of the land. It means \$1,200,000 that must be produced from the land and returned to the scalpers in this land deal. It means that much in wheat or the products of the West going to non-producers before the farmer gets his share. Oats are worth a little over 30c. a bushel in Winnipeg. It will take fully 4,000,000 bushels of oats to satisfy the handlers of this game. In terms of No. 1 Hard, it would take about 1,600,000 bushels, at Winnipeg prices. This is the drain the West pays for development; it is the curse of a land system gone wrong.

The world has seen in past ages continual returns of eras of commercial depression. The chances are that these periods will come again, and one factor that is bound to hasten their coming is the tendency to sweep land values above the price at which production is profitable. Should prices get too high, there will be a check in production; when that time comes there will be a shock communicated to the business world. That will come hesitancy and caution. Money that should be used in commercial activity will be locked in the safe of prudence. We have no objection to increase of values that comes naturally from the productive and legitimately added value of the land, but, then, upward ringing of prices

by the speculation of outsiders is not to be condoned.

Strikes in industrial enterprises are bad enough, but the advance in land values, if carried too far, is a lockout of capital and labor from the opportunities that should be open to all.

These things are strengthening the growing tide of socialism. We need to turn back to a purer democracy. There is too much of the shadow of truth in the cry that the rich are getting richer and the poor poorer. There is a high ideal ahead of us; we must get back to the fundamental principles of freedom and integrity.—[The Farmer's Advocate, Winnipeg.]

### The 1906 Christmas Number Will Be a Gem.

We expect the 1906 Christmas number of "The Farmer's Advocate" will eclipse any holiday number we have yet turned out. Those who have followed our efforts in the past will appreciate what this means. It will be unique in its way, richly embellished with a choice variety of specially attractive illustrations, and full of the most interesting reading from cover to cover. Every department of farm work will be represented by something extra good, and the index will include many exceptionally strong features. Readers should call the attention of their friends to the fact that those subscribing now will get the balance of 1906 free, including this special number, which alone would be good value at 25 cents per copy.

## HORSES.

### Lien and Stallion-license Act Contemplated.

As already announced through these columns, the Ontario Government has appointed sixteen commissioners to travel about, in pairs, through eight districts respectively assigned, and investigate the horse industry, with a view to obtaining information helpful in formulating a policy to encourage more extensive breeding of a better class of horses. The work is directed by A. P. Westervelt, of the Live-stock Branch of the Department of Agriculture, who has arranged with the secretaries of the Farmers' Institutes in each district to locate the stallions and drive the Commissioners about when they come. After covering each county in this way, the investigators hold a central meeting, which the horsemen of the county are invited to attend, making known their views, as to what, if anything, the Government could do for the benefit of the horse business. The result of the stallion canvass and of the meeting is reported confidentially to the Department at Toronto.

Statistics are thus being collected about:

1. The number, breed, type, quality and value of the stallions in the Province; also approximate information of the same nature about the mares.
2. What conditions have affected or are affecting the quality and number of stallions and brood mares in the various sections of the Province, and if the effect is for good; whether or not the same conditions could be applied in other sections; and, if the conditions have not a good effect, what could be done to remove them.
3. What class of horses can most profitably be raised in different sections of the Province under the natural conditions found in those sections.
4. The system of owning horses by a syndicate, and any other plan at present adopted in Ontario, other than private ownership.
5. The views of horsemen generally as to the advisability of a Stallion Inspection Act.
6. Suggestions from those interested in the horse business as to what can be done to improve conditions of the horse business generally.

Perhaps the most important question to get at is whether the Province would be in favor of a Stallion Inspection Act. Such a law would probably comprehend provision for optional, or more likely, for compulsory inspection and licensing of all stallions stood or travelled for service, including probably the payment of a nominal inspection fee of, say, twenty-five dollars, the inspection to be renewed once a year, or perhaps once in two years. The qualifications for a license would be freedom from certain diseases

unsoundness, registration in some recognized stud-book of unimpeachable standard, and a reasonable degree of merit. The Act would also, no doubt, contain a clause giving the stallion a lien on foal, mare, or mare and foal, as security for service fee.

Regarding the wisdom of such legislation, there seems to be little dispute among the better class of horsemen. Something of the kind is in force in several States of the American Union and also in Manitoba, the latter Province adopting it last spring, following the example of an ordinance previously in force in the Northwest Territories. The need is just as great in this Province, and there is a general voice of commendation for Hon. Nelson Monteith, Minister of Agriculture, in having taken the question up.

It is admitted by wide-awake horsemen that less progress has been made in improving the horses of the Province than the other classes of stock. Probably one reason is that horses are raised almost entirely by individual farmers who own a mare or two each, but no sire. Hence, they are the prey of suave managers who travel the country with all kinds of horses—good, bad and indifferent—soliciting patronage wherever possible, often cutting one another's throats, in a business sense, and each getting a mare wherever possible, whether suited for the horse or not. The amount of business done depends first on the fee, then on the manager, and, last of all, on the horse. As a consequence, there has not been the consistency or wisdom exercised in horse-breeding that has been devoted to cattle, where a man applies his intelligent and unhampered judgment in the selection of a breed, and is then left to stick to it if he will. In horse-breeding we have been floundering, and the results are many unsound horses, many nondescripts, and few top-notch individuals of any particular class—draft, carriage or saddle.

What is to be done? Shall the State step in and regulate our breeding operations, as it has done in Germany and other European countries? We are scarcely prepared for that. Rather a few moderate restrictions and regulations, framed cautiously in the general interest and for the general welfare.

There are a great many unsound stallions travelling through the country, some of them with defects of wind, etc., not recognized even by good horsemen when the stallion is presented between shafts. There are also a number of scrub or grade stallions. One importer estimates that ten per cent. of our stallions are unregistered. Some of them are travelling on bogus pedigrees, forged in back rooms of hotels, or made to order by enterprising registry firms, some of which have done an extensive faking business. Particularly has this been the case in Standard-breds, many of which are the produce of noted sires out of any old kind of mares. The plausible groom dwells alluringly on the record of the sire, as if the male parentage were all that counted in a pedigree. Then, again, in all the breeds there are some individuals—some imported ones, even—which are distinctly substandard in merit, or, in the case of the Clydesdales, not up to the registration standard of our studbook, but admitted through the Scottish book, which has allowed them to be recorded if possessing two or three crosses. Such horses are brought out sometimes, and sold to men who would not pay the price of a Number One, straight-pedigreed animal. A strict license act would exclude them, and nobody would welcome it more heartily than the importer.

If the unsound, unregistered, inferior horses were shut out, it would increase the business of those who keep first-class horses and stand them at a fee commensurate with their value. At present there are many splendid stallions doing little or nothing because they are cut out by miserable scrubs standing at a bagatelle. Such horses are a curse to all who breed to them, and also to the horse industry at large. The owners of these stallions realize that they are now about to be brought up against it, and have little to say, so far as we have heard, in opposition to the proposed law, while the good horsemen welcome it.

So far as the hypothetical right of the Government to interfere with private enterprise is concerned, it was very well pointed out by an M. P. at London that the Government regulates our own children in the matter of smallpox vaccination, compulsory attendance at school, etc., while it puts criminals behind the bars. Surely it is just as legitimate to interfere with horse-breeding, if it can be shown to be in the general interest so to do.

As for the lien clause, there is this to be said: All horsemen suffer loss through failure to collect fees. Sometimes a man who gets a colt sells it and moves away, leaving the stallion man to whistle for his money. One such victim told us of having, at a sale, informed the auctioneer that the mare being sold was bred, and if she foaled successfully there would be a service fee against her. Subsequently the purchaser was sued, but the court held that the auctioneer had no right to make such a bargain, and the suit was lost. What is