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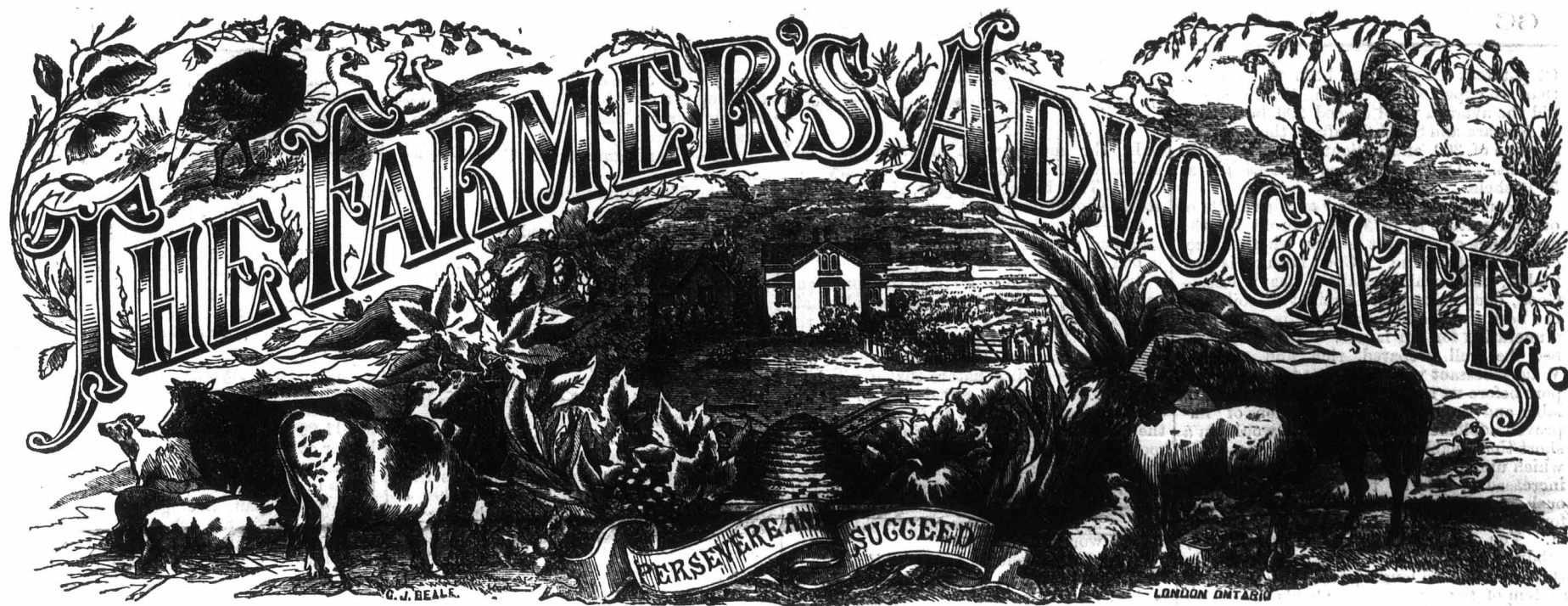
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VOL. IX. { WILLIAM WELD, Editor & Proprietor. }

LONDON, ONT., MAY, 1874.

{ \$1 Per Annum, Postage Prepaid. } NO. 5

Prize Essays.

We will give two prizes for essays this month: One on the Summer Management of Bees; one on the Best Plan for Packing and Keeping Eggs over Winter. Essays must be in by the 20th of May.

Crop Prospects—The Fall Wheat.

The reports we have received of the prospects of the fall grain are generally unfavorable. One exchange says: "The changing weather is hard on fall wheat, which has been badly winter killed." Another exchange says: "We fear that in consequence of the want of a snow covering, and the repeated thawing and freezing—that the fall wheat has been seriously injured, and that not more than half a crop may be expected. We believe many farmers will be under the necessity of plowing it up and re-sowing, as in that case it can be raked up without breaking a root." Another says: "From almost every quarter we hear bad reports of the wheat crop." Another, not so discouraging, says: "The reports of the condition of fall wheat are, as usual, conflicting. The rye is represented as being both good and bad, and we are not in a position to decide which is which. We are inclined, however, to credit some discouraging rumors." The replies to our own inquiries have been similar to the reports of our exchanges—generally discouraging.

From the personal observation of the Editor of the ADVOCATE, our own reports must be unfavorable. The fall wheat has in many places been badly winter killed. This has especially been the case in low-lying lands, while on high ridges the crop has stood the season well; and a most trying season it certainly has been—incessant changes throughout the winter, and, except for a very brief season, the ground was without its needed covering of snow. In Essex and Kent, and in the west there are some good fields of wheat. Eastward the crop does not give so favorable promise. Clover is in the same condition as fall wheat, especially the clover that has already stood one or two seasons.

While such is the generally unfavorable character of the reports of our fall crops, there are still grounds for hoping that the wheat may turn out better than present prospects. The lateness of the spring is itself in our favor, as a late spring is always considered an omen of good crops; and much that is now bleak and unpromising may, as the spring opens, do better than is now anticipated.

In anticipation of a scarcity of fodder, much can now be done to provide for wintering stock. A few acres of Millet or Hungarian Grass sown as soon as all risks of a June frost are past, and pro-

perly saved, will give a welcome supply of good hay, that, added to the roots, of which every succeeding year more fully demonstrates the necessity, will tide the stock in good condition over winter.—Should there even be some tons of hay left when the spring opens, it will be no loss. Farmers know the worth of the old proverb—"Old hay is old gold."

The Ontario Agricultural College.

This institution will be opened on the 1st day of May. The pupils are nominated by the various township councils, and pass an examination similar to that for our high schools.

Nothing could show better how little the College was desired by our farmers than the fact that the Government Commission have deemed it necessary to offer a bonus for scholars. Pupils are to be fed and taught and lodged for a year at the public expense, and then presented with fifty dollars.

Who is to pay all these expenses for the sake of the favored few. The poor, struggling farmer of the backwoods, who has all he can do to keep body and soul together, will have to pay his share toward supporting and bonussing the son of some wealthy man who has sufficient influence with the council to gain a nomination, and who could afford to give that son the education to fit him for it.

Two-Year-Old Beef.

In the columns of the present number of the ADVOCATE we publish from the Mark Lane Express a paper on this very important subject. The very high price of meat in England makes the early maturity of cattle a question of the greatest importance there, not only to the grazier, but to all classes.—To us, also, is the subject one of great moment. No little of the superior value of well bred stock is in this early maturity. The general introduction of improved breeds has been a source of great profit to the stock breeder and feeder. The long-legged, large-boned, ill-shaped cattle that were everywhere met with, have given place to well-shaped animals, with fine limbs, that mature early and pay a profit for the feeding. The paper read by Mr. Hayward, though more especially applicable to the high farming and the prices of England, is replete with good advice for us. The Canadian markets, for beef as well as the products of the dairy, are every year improving, and we must study the best means of feeding stock with the greatest economy and of the best quality. The beef and mutton of Canada will, we have no doubt, soon be competing with the rich sirloin of English beef and the loin of Southdown, in the capital of the Empire.

The bran meal and oil cake of Canada will at no distant date, be added to our roots and grain to finish our fat cattle for the Smith-

field market. "The rapid increase of population and consequently increased demand upon the supply" in the home country, will have its effect here, too. Let us go on improving our stock if we are to have our lands yield the full profit of what they are capable. And—improved stock necessitates improved agriculture. —S.

Annual Report of the Commissioner of Agriculture and Public Works for 1873.

In our notice of this work we can only select from its four hundred pages some brief extracts with a few remarks. The narrow limits of the space we can give to it forbid us doing more. The statistics it embraces are not the least valuable part of its contents, but much of the statistical information we have already given to our readers—obtained from other sources. Surely the Bureau of Agriculture might move less tardily.

The Commissioner is "fortunately" able to congratulate the country on its continued prosperity. "In the spring of the past year the prospects of the farmer, in consequence of the prevailing drought, were of a gloomy character, threatening a serious failure to the crops. The welcome rains in June came providentially in time to avert so direful a calamity, and vegetation in most parts of this Province took a start which may be said to have been marvellous."

To what extent a failure such as here spoken of might have been guarded against, or if any timely caution might have been of avail, we are not told. Now, we hold that while the blessings of favorable seasons, of a propitious seed time and harvest, are in the hands of a higher Power than the tillers of the soil or the Board of Agriculture, yet much may be done to avert so direful a calamity as a failure of the crops of the country. Though we cannot cause the refreshing showers to visit our fields, or the parching drought to withhold its too long continuance, we can, by improved agriculture, guard against the failure of crops by excessive drought or moisture, and that in a great measure. The lesson taught us last spring should not be lost on us. Who has not observed betimes, and especially in a season of prevailing drought, the growing crops of the farmer who had spared no labor or expense in the tillage of his soil, with their dark green hue and strong stem, giving promise of abundant yield, even in the driest season, while the fields of his neighbor, with their shrivelled, stunted crops, told in unmistakable language of shallow plowing and impoverished soil. The necessity of thoroughly good culture, deepening and enriching the soil, is a lesson often, though not too often repeated. The absolute necessity of its being more habitually practised is proved by the low average of grain compiled from the returns of Electoral Division Societies, to the Bureau of Agriculture.

Estimated average for the year 1873:

Table with 2 columns: Crop Name and Bushels per Acre. Includes Fall wheat (22), Spring wheat (15), Oats (39), Rye (19), Barley (27), Peas (26).

The difference of the yield of the several divisions is, as was to be expected, very great. Of the sixty-two divisions, there are only three—North Bruce, Dundas and Prescott—that give an average yield of fall wheat of thirty-five bushels; seventeen give an average under thirty-five, but not lower than twenty-five bushels; twenty-five divisions average from twenty to twenty-five bushels, and an average under twenty is returned by seven divisions. This very low average may in some instances be owing to causes over which the farmer has no control, but much of it may be traced to unsuitableness of soil, or its bad cultivation, and, not unfrequently, to badly selected seed. Such poor returns must be a serious loss to farmers. If a given number of bushels per acre—say 20—will fairly remunerate the farmer for his expenditure of time and money, every bushel over that number is so much clear profit, and by as much as there is a deficiency from that yield, by so much is there a positive loss.

Farmers should make it a rule to till no more ground than they can till thoroughly, and to sow wheat only where they have reasonable grounds to expect a remunerative crop. Coarse grains, even if fed to stock, will be found to give a profit, when a poor wheat crop would entail a loss.

"In some sections of the country many of the crops were no doubt more or less permanently injured * though the general results of the grain harvest came but little short of an average."—Report. In spring wheat there is a lower average yield than in any of the other cereals. Only in one section—North Bruce—has there been a return as high as thirty-five bushels, while the very low yield in some sections brings the average of the Province down to the low figure of fifteen and a half.

The average yield of oats has been, of one division, 60 bushels; of eleven divisions, 50 bushels, and of fifty divisions, less than 50 bushels. The low yield of peas in some parts of the country has, as in the case of spring wheat, brought the general average low, though there was in many places a good crop. Rye is but little grown, and its culture little attended to. To the growth of corn the same remark is applicable.

The spring drought has more seriously affected the root crop than any other. Turnips in many parts of the country have been a light crop, though in other parts the return was pretty good. In Haldimand the general average was 1000 bushels; in several divisions the average ranged from 800 to 300 bushels. Of Mangel Wurzel, the returns were from 1200 bushels in Haldimand and 1000 bushels in Glengarry, to 200 in Welland. Carrots from 1000 bushels to 100