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EDITORIAL.

The waste of manure is one of the greatest leaks on thousands of farms. The special letters we are publishing on this subject will well repay perusal.

Experience is the great teacher, and if classroom theories do not harmonize with practice, the fault is with the theory. Sound theory and sound practice must be in accord.

Questions and answers on wintering sheep are continued in this issue and present the well-matured knowledge of men who have made a lifework of this branch of stock raising.

Mr. Joseph Yuill's vigorous paper, given in another column, treats in double-barrelled fashion a most important subject. If any reader is not concerned in the enrichment of an impoverished farm, he certainly will be in preventing a fertile farm from becoming impoverished. Mr. Yuill's suggestions are based on practical experience.

The letter by Mr. John I. Hobson on the management of farmyard manure will deservedly command widespread attention. His own success and long experience as a farmer and his varied opportunities in Canada and elsewhere, particularly for years as a judge of Ontario prize farms, in observing the practice of others gives his observations especial force and value. The prominence we are giving this subject is more than justified by the importance he attaches to the subject in the introductory sentences of his letter.

The following telegram has been received from Washington: "The United States Collectors of Customs along the Canadian border have a practice of requiring importers of animals brought into this country for breeding purposes to make a separate affidavit for each animal, that it is intended for the purpose named, thus securing it free entry. A fee of ten cents is charged in each case. Secretary Carlisle has ordered collectors to discontinue the practice and directed them to require separate oaths only for each class of animals, and in the case of sheep, one oath for each invoice."

The Western Dairy School.

A member of our staff recently visited the Western Dairy School which was opened about twelve months ago by the Ontario Government at the town of Strathroy, in Middlesex County. As little advertising was done previous to its opening in 1896, a crowded session was not expected. However, some thirty-two students attended two weeks or more each, ten of whom were awarded certificates by passing the prescribed examinations. While this may be considered a fairly successful opening season, it shows clearly that there was not an overpowering demand in the western part of the Province for a dairy school. This is especially evident when it is remembered that it costs a student next to nothing above his or her board to take the course, with all the splendid advantages offered. During our visit we learned that the probability of there being a full class this season is very slim, there being less than half a dozen in attendance on the day in question. It is expected, however, that the courses later will be much better attended.

Knowing these facts, the question arises, Is the Government justified in carrying on such an institution as at present nine or ten weeks in the year with so little return? It will be remembered that the building and equipment lack little or nothing in excellence, nor could a more energetic or better qualified instruction staff be readily procured; in fact, there seems to be nothing lacking except the demand for knowledge in the manufacture of dairy products. This fact is indeed lamentable when we

remember the need of such knowledge on many dairy farms.

While it may appear to have been a misdirected effort to have built the school in the first place, we believe that it is entirely within the range of possibility to conduct it upon a plan that will make it a great benefit to the dairy industry. The institution is there; the practical question is, How can the best use be made of it?

The plan that suggests itself is that it be run the year around on the basis of a regular cheese factory or creamery, or a combination of the two. While this would render the institution in a large sense self-supporting, it would also fit its instructors the better to teach how to overcome the difficulties met with in summer dairying and which never appear in the winter season. For instance, gassy curds and grassy flavors, which only exist in summer, cannot be understood when they are not met with in practice. As an advantage to students, which was the primary object of the institution, the twelve months' system has much in its favor; it also has its advantages from the standpoint of economy. This latter is especially worthy of consideration when it is pointed out that the building and equipment cost some \$14,000, and the running expenses, including salaries for the nine weeks in which it was run last year, was something like \$800. To allow this expensive building and plant to lie idle five-sixths of the year seems absurd, to put it very mildly.

There can be no question as to the incidental advantages of the year-round plan, as then a series of experiments could be conducted, by which many questions could be solved that cannot receive attention in the present system of winter schools. This would be an everyday educator to farmers in the immediate neighborhood, by sight and contact, and to the country at large, through the press and otherwise. It would thus help to keep the most approved methods and latest researches always before the public.

Develop the dairy industry and prepare products properly for the British market is being constantly dinned in the public ear, and we believe some useful work may yet be done in experimental butter shipments by cold storage to different markets to determine the best system and ascertain exactly what is needed. Were this school to run under skilled directors, as we have endeavored to point out, it could soon be ascertained by a few shipments—surely a justifiable return for public money.

To show that the farmers of the Strathroy district are prepared to patronize a creamery or cheese factory it is only necessary to refer to this and last winter's experience. When the school opened it was difficult to procure sufficient milk within reasonable distance at 21 cents per pound of butter-fat, while this winter the farmers were prepared for the demand, and now enough can be procured comparatively near the school at 19 cents per pound of butter-fat to supply four or five such institutions. During our visit one of the patrons who came for his cheque offered more milk than could be accepted, and expressed a wish that he could supply the factory the year around.

However, enough has been said to demonstrate the need for reform in the general plan of running the institution and to indicate one way in which reform might be effected.

The Wisdom of Observing the Lessons of Experience.

One often hears it said of a man, "He would be a very good servant, but will never succeed in business for himself." When we hear that remark we understand it to mean that the man in question has to be shown or told what is best to do. It is surprising how many persons there are of that sort—good men, perhaps—who work hard and try to get along, but have little foresight, and indeed have little discernment between right and wrong

methods in doing things. Then, again, how few will change their old ways before they are forced to. That there are superior means of doing farm work and feeding stock is proved by the success of one man and the failure of his neighbor living on the next lot. Almost any neighborhood will furnish a proof of this. We publish in this issue letters from men who rank among the most successful in sheep raising, beef raising, and general farming, upon subjects of vital importance to thousands of readers along the very lines taken up. As will be seen, the letters are nothing more nor less than an epitome of the experience of these men in achieving success in their occupation. While many believe this, and after reading what is written will modify their practice somewhat for the better, too many will drift along with old methods and receive no benefit from the evidence given.

With regard to the sheep letters, there can be no question as to whether the general plan given is practicable, as in almost every instance the practices of the different contributors agree in the main, though differing on minor points. The inexperienced need have no trouble in deciding what is the proper course to pursue. Notwithstanding this, many will possibly be found, a month after reading, allowing lambs and older sheep to run together. Others will keep them continuously housed, or too much exposed, or leave them to get their drink by eating snow, just as though they were satisfied with the poor returns that such treatment will afford.

The group of letters on winter feeding and fattening young cattle is worth a great deal to almost every one who will pay any attention to their teaching. Not one of the contributors but has made a success of that line of farming, and yet there will be those who will say they cannot afford to feed their yearlings any grain, but will continue to winter them on straw and leave them out six hours a day—just the very method to hinder them ever becoming able to feed better. If the writers of those letters had waited until they had made money before commencing to do well for the young things they would always have found it impossible to enter upon a profitable line of stock feeding, so far as cattle were concerned.

And then the lessons from the letters on saving and applying manure. What a wealth of information they contain. There is not a man among them but knows that he cannot afford to lose the liquid manure. The old plank floors are as unprofitable as the mousehole in the granary floor; but how many will act as though they believed it? Every one cannot tear out their old floors and put down cement, but there are few who cannot relay the loose-fitting planks, making them tight, and by using chaff, sawdust, or the manure from the horse stable, absorb all the liquid from the cattle before it runs away. And then after the manure is saved and mixed, our duty to our pockets has not terminated in regard to its final deposit in the soil. Mr. Tillson and others have, after careful study and observation, found that there is no profit in allowing the manure to steam up or rot in piles and leach away with every rain for months, but now follow the plan of spreading it fresh right on the ground to be enriched next season. In this way it is applied in its very fullness and at a time when neither man nor horse labor is at a premium.

In conclusion, we are led to wonder what sort of an individual the farmer is who claims that he cannot afford to subscribe to a good practical agricultural paper. Of all follies, this does appear one of the most glaring, because he is simply depriving himself of a regular and frequent source of information about a most difficult business, in which, by the contribution and publication of experience, so much can be done to help each other to succeed. Our readers appreciate the service of the paper to themselves in this respect, and we think we may fairly ask them, by words of commendation and a little personal effort, to induce others, by becoming subscribers, to share in the general benefit.