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RURAL NOTES.

THE longest line of fence in the world is in course of construction across the Texas Panhandle and into New Mexico, to stop cattle from wandering too far northward. The fence will be over 200 miles long.

ANOTHER new grape. This time it is the "Empire State," and of course "the best yet." But wise people will await its full trial before paying fancy prices for it. We have now a long list of thoroughly tested varieties.

HAY-DRYING machines, by means of which hay, damp when stacked, can be so aerated as to prevent its heating and mildewing, are coming into use in England, and should they prove generally practicable, will be a great boon to farmers in that moist climate.

THE prairie landscape has a beauty of its own. Sunrise and sunset are often very beautiful on the prairie. They remind you of sunrise and sunset at sea when the ocean is calm. But, after all, no landscape, however lovely, is complete without trees and water.

SCARCITY of timber is a serious drawback to a prairie country, and settlers are put to many shifts thereby. Even the tourist cannot fail to notice this, and to contrast the advantage of having this necessary of life—for such it is to a greater or less extent—in abundance.

THE *Canadian Farmer* offers a prize of \$10 for the best essay on "Wintering Bees in Canada." It will be a prize hard to award, for only the test of time can show who is the successful competitor. Many individual beekeepers would gladly give \$10 each for a sure method of wintering bees.

THE *Rural New Yorker* contains this orthodox bit of preaching, which it would be well if every minister would occasionally incorporate into a good practical discourse:—"If you sell a day's labour, and perform in the day what you could without extra exertion do in half a day, you have stolen the value of half a day's labour from your employer just as truly as if you had taken the same value in money from his purse."

SOME time since, in a view of the Manitoba Report of Agriculture, we pointed out the fact that from thirty to forty bushels of wheat per acre are exceptionally large crops in that country. The same is true of the Red River Valley and the Dakota wheat fields. It is questionable if,

even the present season, which has been particularly good, the wheat yield of Minnesota and Dakota will exceed an average of twenty bushels per acre.

It is astonishing how many people you meet with in Manitoba and the North-West, who, after "blowing" (as the slang phrase is) about the country generally, will draw you aside and tell you in a confidential whisper that "this is a fine country to make money in, but it is no country to live in." However this piece of honest confession may be interpreted, it should lead those who are "comfortably fixed" in the older provinces to "let well enough alone."

A CORRESPONDENT of the *Iowa Farmer* says he breaks up his prairie land with sheep. A large flock will pasture the wild grasses so closely that the roots will die, and the soil can be broken up with comparative ease. This is the way many meadows are ruined in this country and elsewhere. Sheep are allowed to crop them so closely that they kill the stock. What is good practice on a prairie doomed to the plough, is bad for land set apart for mowing purposes.

In many parts of the great North-West water is hard to find, and indifferent when found. In some cases it is undrinkable, through brackishness or other mineral admixture. Often rain-water would be a welcome recourse, but there are not sufficiently spacious roofs to collect it, nor suitable receptacles in which to keep it. This difficulty will be, to some extent, remedied in course of time. Still, it will always remain a desirable feature in one's lot to dwell in a land abounding in springs, rivers, and lakes.

THE "blizzard" is an institution peculiar to the prairies of the West and North-west. So opaque does the atmosphere become with the blinding snow, that people sometimes lose themselves between their houses and barns. To prevent this, it has become a common precaution in Minnesota to fasten a stretch of clothes-line between the house and barn, along which the way may be felt from one to the other when the air is thick with storm. These "blizzards" often arise with hardly a moment's warning.

In view of the astonishing figures that sometimes appear in connection with Jersey butter tests and records, a correspondent of the *Country Gentleman* suggests that there should be public instead of private trials. A significant hint, that while inquiry is instituted as to the diet of the cows, it is also important to know on what kind of *moral* food the owners have been brought

up. Meantime, he insists that all butter records should be ignored until the subject has been taken in hand by "some one in authority."

THE Huntingdon (Que.) *Gleaner* says:—"The largest cheese factories in the county are the Dundee and LaGuerre, owned by Mr. D. M. Macpherson. Of the latter we have got a few figures. The largest quantity of milk received by it has been 16,500 lbs; on one Monday morning several cans had to be refused. The present daily average is 11,000 lbs., furnished by 51 patrons, who have netted for the season so far 85 cents per 100 lbs. The sales for June were 9½c., 10½c., 11c., giving an average of 90 cents for that month. It has taken 10 pounds of milk to the pound of cheese. The cheese-maker is George Seeley, of Brockville, Ont.

AGAIN and again, during our recent trip to the North-West, we met with people who, pointing to the magnificent crops, and dilating on the wonderful resources of the land, would exclaim, "You can never exhaust the fertility of this soil." Any man who talks like that proclaims himself a fool, and shows his utter ignorance of the first principles of agriculture. There never was, and never will be, a soil on this earth that man cannot impoverish by a series of exhaustive crops. It is only a question of time, and a comparatively short time, too. Rich as the store may be and is, let successive wheat crops draw upon it year after year, and poverty will come upon the land "like an armed man."

In an early number of the *RURAL CANADIAN*, mention was made, in these first-page notes, of certain devices resorted to by farmers in the vicinity of Portage la Prairie to get rid of manure. Well, during the recent Press trip, we saw with our own eyes, and smelt with our own olfactories, during a drive in the suburbs of that town, piles of manure that had been set on fire with a view of getting them out of the way! The hay and straw in these heaps were slowly consuming, and the air was filled with a most unpleasant stench. This precious but despised material would have quietly bided its time, offending no one, if left untouched, and there is land enough to have spared it a resting-place; but the eagerness to get rid of it converted it into a nuisance, and thrust upon the attention of the Press party the reckless and ignorant improvidence with which those rich lands are being robbed of their fertility, while the material that might prolong their fruitfulness is wantonly destroyed. Truly the offence against good farming was "rank," and "smelt to heaven!"