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EDITORIAL.

Plank-frame Barns.

A saving of 50 per cent. in material, and the same in work of framing and raising, is the claim made for the plank-frame, as compared with the timber-frame, in barn-construction. Besides this, there are other not inconsiderable advantages, notably, increased strength, and open mow space, facilitating free settling of whatever may be stored therein. The plank-frame is adapted to either side-drive or end-drive plans, and is especially suitable and economical for the building of wooden-basement barns. In some cases the plank-frame has been faulted for a tendency to bulge at the ends, but, with the principle of construction recommended in Mr. McIntyre's instructive article, this tendency has been overcome.

The plank-frame principle of construction is radically different from the timber-frame. In years past, some so-called plank-frames have been put up by merely nailing plank together, so as to form square timbers, and then building according to the old-fashioned plan of construction. This lacks many advantages of the modern plank-frame.

One very considerable saving in the plank-frame is that, while good sound plank are called for, material can be used which is not fit for a timber frame. The increasing scarcity and cost of barn timber is bound to turn attention strongly to the advantages of the plank-frame, and our readers are fortunate in being able to study such illuminating descriptions as those which have been appearing in these columns during the past twelve months.

Three-thousand-pound Cow.

We do not mean the cow that weighs a ton and a half, but the animal whose udder exudes, under pressure, during her yearly producing period, some 3,000 pounds of milk. Over twenty years ago, on dairy platforms from one end of the country to the other, she was held up to derision as a delusion and a snare, an unprofitable boarder that was eating her own head off and bankrupting her owner. He was enjoined to "breed, weed and feed," with special emphasis on the breeding end of the business. And yet, after all these years, and all the effort, Governmental and otherwise, we have, in a recent issue of "The Farmer's Advocate," the report of the Chief Dairy Instructor of Eastern Ontario, showing an average milk yield per cow of only 2,700 pounds in the six months, May to October. Now, allowing for home use and after-season milk, the return would be little, if any, over the disheartening 3,000-pound limit. It is hard to conceive what might have been the showing had no efforts towards improvement been made! Factorymen, in some sections, at least, are viewing with alarm the waning summer milk-flow, and exporters the lessened output of cheese. What's to be done? is the crucial matter now. On the line of weeding out the low producers, the cow-testing movement is a real step in the direction of progress, and the campaign, generalised by Mr. Whitley, of the Department of Agriculture, Ottawa, deserves hearty co-operation everywhere, though it ought to be followed by daily weighing and record of the milk of every cow in the herd. But that is not enough. The crux of the situation yet remains in the food supply and feeding. The silo and corn silage has been a saving factor, chiefly in the production of winter milk, though there remains yet to be done. With corn should be joined the more extensive growing and feeding of clover and alfalfa. The cheese-factory herd should be made independent of failing pastures, and

alfalfa, corn and other special forage crops will mark the pathway of deliverance.

"The Farmer's Advocate" has little hesitation in declaring that in the past too much reliance has been placed on the color of the cow's skin, and too little upon what is put within it.

"As the Twig is Bent."

A stream started down the mountain side, wearing out a channel, and gathering force and volume as it proceeds, soon becomes an irresistible torrent, which cannot easily be turned aside by the most expert engineering skill. But had the rivulet been early diverted at its source, the direction of a river might have been changed, perhaps by the placing of a stone.

So with the aspirations and mental development of man. Fix them in youth, and they are in a great many cases directed and radically influenced for life. "As the twig is bent, so is the tree inclined," runs the familiar proverb. It epitomizes a vast truth. Gas is a shapeless thing, which readily adapts itself to any space it occupies. Cooled to a liquid condition, it still fills the containing vessel, and may be molded or run out at will. Solidifying, it takes the shape thus given it while in a fluid state.

An infant's mind and purpose is much like a gas, with certain latent, hereditary inclinations, of course, but still quite plastic—very adaptable. To a large extent, its shape is taken from the containing vessel, which is to say, environment, impressions and training. As it advances towards maturity its mind shows increasing tendency to fixedness, or crystallization, so to speak. It is thus in the early years that its "bent," its taste, inclination and line of development are most readily subject to influence. True, as the child grows he develops individuality of taste, aptitude and preference; nevertheless, if we analyze, it will generally be found that, consciously, or subconsciously, these have been, to a far greater extent than most of us realize, modified by the environment and training of youth.

This goes a good way to explain why only a small fraction of one per cent. of our young men avail themselves of the magnificent privileges of our agricultural colleges, why the Farmers' Institute is not more largely patronized, why so many farmers fail to take a first-class agricultural journal or farm paper of any kind, and, in short, why the movement of agricultural progress is not swifter than it is. The interests of our young people have not been properly aroused in their future occupation. They do not perceive that there is much in it worthy of interest or study. They are vocational somnambulists. Not having been properly interested in agriculture, their ambitions are readily centered on less substantial and less desirable occupations; while of those who do remain on the land, a large proportion are readily attracted by frivolity, to the exclusion or comparative neglect of more serious concerns. They have time for the card-party, the dance, the sleighride, the glee club, but not for the Institute meeting or for solid, beneficial reading.

Now, this is not the fault of the young people. It is the result of the training given them. Our schools have aroused their interest and directed their ambitions toward anything except agriculture, and the home influence has seldom counteracted that of the school. Then, in later years, governments spend thousands of dollars sending agricultural speakers to address half-filled halls, and maintain hundred-thousand-dollar agricultural colleges, which only a few hundred students attend.

The fact of the matter is, our rural public schools have been turning our people away from agriculture faster and more effectually than all the agencies in later life can win them back. The trouble lies not in the fact that we have rural schools, but in the unbalanced and irrational nature of the influence to which they subject their pupils' minds. The time to interest children in agriculture is childhood, and the way to do it is not to teach agriculture as a subject in the schools, but to introduce school-gardening and nature study, at the same time relating the general work of the curriculum to this outdoor work, and giving it a flavor of and a bearing on the farm and country life.

Incidentally, some good can be accomplished by such means as specially-conducted excursions of school children to the Agricultural College, as described in another column. We would like to see such excursions arranged next year from scores of districts. The experience of the teachers is that it does not seriously interfere with the regular school work, but rather inspires fresh interest, broadening the conceptions of the pupils, and lending realistic force to various lessons and tasks. The outing is good in itself, the experience is helpful, and the effect in stimulating a deeper interest in and respect for agriculture cannot be foretold. Let the child go to the agricultural college this year, instead of the parent, for the child is father of the man, and his future is the greatest concern of the state.

Farmers' Institute Clubs.

The adaptation of papers and discourses to suit the locality in which a farmers' meeting is held, is most important. In this regard, the organization of Farmers' Institute clubs is fast becoming a most valuable feature of agricultural education in Ontario. A means is furnished whereby farmers have a systematic and attractive method of studying their own business in their own way. A comparison of methods and results from neighboring farms is of great value to a community. An outsider may have studied any problem in relation to soils or crops, but unless he knows local conditions thoroughly, he is not in a position to give absolutely reliable advice.

There are many features of local clubs of any nature that make them commendable for rural districts. Their efficiency depends on local effort. As a rule, one, or two, or perhaps half a dozen, men, within a given, limited radius, can be found with enthusiasm and the necessary initiative to make any educational work a success. But this small number cannot develop the usefulness that is wanted. While they labor as leaders, others should be willing helpers. There is no district in which local talent cannot provide all the agricultural instruction that is required, provided the ratepayers read and study, and meet together regularly to discuss the problems that are met from year to year, though the introduction of competent men from a distance is of great value.

Those who study problems, and take part in the discussion of them, derive much more benefit than those who continually keep their seats, either through modesty or indifference. To many, it is a most difficult feat to take part in discussions, but a start can be made by asking questions. After a time, it will be found comparatively easy to answer queries from others. To those who are conversant with the problems under consideration, it soon becomes a pleasure to take part. It is a great opportunity for self-improvement.

Many of Canada's leading men in agricultural work attribute much of their success to benefits derived at debating clubs and literary societies. Canada needs more men to represent agricultural