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EDITORIAL.

Why Beef Cattle are Dear.

"People are looking for seven cent cattle" (that is, seven cents per pound live weight), said a Chicago business man who made a call at the FARMER'S ADVOCATE office on his trip to the Toronto Exhibition. Within a day or so the \$6.85 notch had been reached for a bunch of well-finished Shorthorn steers, which was getting pretty close to the magic seven." This general and strong advance in the price of beef has been long and confidently expected. As we pointed out in discussing the depressing condition of our pure-bred live-stock interests in last issue, it rests not upon any fictitious boom, but upon the solid basis of a real and known scarcity of stock over wide areas. Unfortunately, the Dominion Department of Agriculture has never made any proper provision for the collection of agricultural statistics, including the numbers of the stock, but a very good idea of the general condition throughout the continent may be had from the careful reports of the United States Department of Agriculture. The following table shows the number of cattle (milch cows excepted) in the States at the beginning of each year, and their estimated value:

| Jan. 1. | Number of cattle. | Value. |
|---------|-------------------|---------------|
| 1892 | 37,651,239 | \$570,749,155 |
| 1893 | 36,954,136 | 547,882,204 |
| 1894 | 36,608,168 | 536,789,747 |
| 1895 | 34,364,216 | 482,989,129 |
| 1896 | 32,085,409 | 508,922,416 |
| 1897 | 30,508,408 | 507,929,421 |
| 1898 | 29,264,197 | 612,296,634 |
| 1899 | 27,994,225 | 637,931,135 |

Now, the meat-consuming population of the United States has been steadily increasing, while the number of cattle has fallen steadily since 1894, the reduction since 1892 having been 9,650,000 head, or 25 per cent. Naturally the value, based on market prices, has been rising, so that 28,000,000 cattle in 1899 are worth \$100,000,000 more than 600,000 were in 1894. In two years, from 1897 to 1899, the average value per head has advanced nearly 37 per cent. A few short-sighted and ill-informed newspapers—and local butchers—in New York City started a hue and cry that the sharp rise in the wholesale and retail prices of beef there is due to the Western beef "trust" or combination of the big packers of Chicago and Kansas City; but the simple reason is the scarcity of cattle forcing the dressed-meat people to pay more for their raw material, so to speak. In addition to this is an increased demand—more people to feed—and a general prosperity which enables consumers to pay more for their food. To a large extent the same state of affairs prevails in Canada. Owing to the ill-directed effort of our Dominion Minister of Agriculture, Hon. Mr. Fisher, a couple of years ago the obnoxious and useless international cattle quarantine was abolished, so that the States herders have been drawing heavily upon our supplies of young cattle and stockers to fill their empty stalls and feed lots. What surprises us is that beef cattle have advanced as slowly as they have in Canada, and that the rise has not been very much greater.

Agriculture in the Public and High Schools of Ontario.

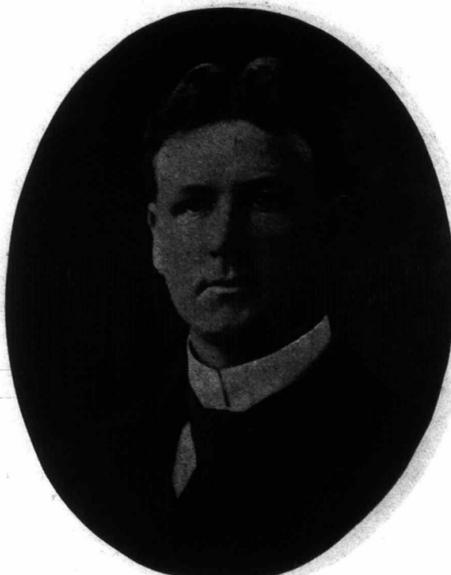
Official announcements and speeches have raised our hopes to see some very substantial progress made in the important subject of Agricultural Education during the school term recently begun. We intend to watch developments and report them to our readers.

We wrote to the Provincial Minister of Education, Hon. Mr. Ross, for information as to the course of study, and in reply he has sent us Circular No. 50, entitled "Amendments to the Regulations." In that circular the following references are made to the subject:

"The public school course of study is amended so as to include Agriculture among the obligatory subjects in all rural schools for Forms IV. and V.; for the latter Form the text-books are to be used by the pupils, but for the former the instruction is to be by conversation only. Agriculture will remain optional for all public schools in urban (town) municipalities." Page 1.

"The high school course of study is amended by making bookkeeping obligatory, and by adding Agriculture and Manual Training to the list of optional subjects." Page 1.

"The subjects prescribed for Part I. of Junior Leaving standing (this includes the former Public School Leaving and High School Form I. examinations) are the following: Reading, drawing, geography, botany (or Agriculture), writing, bookkeeping, grammar, etc. The course in Agriculture will include what is taken up in the authorized text-book as far as page 73. For 1900 no examination will be held in reading, English literature, drawing, bookkeeping, botany or agriculture, but no name



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of a student who has not given due attention to these subjects is to be included in the confidential report of the Principal." Pages 3, 4.

"Regarding drawing, bookkeeping, botany or Agriculture, at least two half-hours per week for each of these subjects are to be given regularly to pupils enrolled in Form I. of the High School or Form V. of the Public School" (that is, for the first year). Page 4.

"Beginning with the examinations of the Model Schools of 1900, an additional paper in methods will be submitted to test the ability of the students-in-training to teach drawing, writing, bookkeeping, and elementary science (botany or Agriculture)." Page 17.

The foregoing are all the references to the subject which we can discover. According to the latest report to hand, less than 5 per cent. of the Public School pupils are in Form V.; hence it may be assumed that the great majority of rural schools have no classes higher than Form IV. The teacher of one of these schools, consulting the circular, learns that she (or he) is to give conversational instruction on Agriculture to her Fourth class. The length or frequency of the conversations is not prescribed.

We have emphasized over and over again the importance—nay, the necessity—of the possession on the part of the teacher of knowledge of the subject, and skill in the art of instructing in it. Beginning next year, Model School students are to write on a paper setting forth, in the limited way a written examination can do, their ability to teach four subjects, one of them being Botany or Agriculture. But where are they to get their knowledge? The only answer we can find, is that they will have an

option of taking forty hours' instruction in the subject of Agriculture in their first year at the high school or in the fifth class in the public school. If this conclusion is incorrect, will some reader who is posted be kind enough to point out the error. In the meantime we shall wait for and hope to see more definite regulations as to the training of the teachers and the instruction of the pupils in this most important subject.

New Superintendent of Farmers' Institutes for Ontario.

Our Ontario readers will be pleased to observe herewith an excellent portrait of Mr. Geo. C. Creelman, B.S.A., a few days ago appointed successor to Mr. F. W. Hodson as Superintendent of Farmers' Institutes for Ontario, the latter having resigned to take a position at Ottawa. Mr. Creelman, who is about 31 years of age, was raised on a farm near Collingwood, in Simcoe Co., Ont., and entered the Agricultural College at Guelph in 1885, graduating as B. S. A. in 1888. He at once received an appointment as scientist on the staff of the Mississippi Agricultural and Mechanical College and Experiment Station, where he remained for nine years, doing excellent practical work in various departments. He served as lecturer on the Institute staff of that State, and was Director of Institutes during 1896 and 1897. Writing of his work there, Mr. A. A. Kincannon, State Superintendent of Education and Trustee of the Agricultural College, says: "Mr. Creelman has always met the highest expectations of the Board as a scientist and teacher. As State Superintendent of Education, I have employed Mr. Creelman in Institute work, and have found him easily the peer of any teacher in Mississippi. He is a gentleman of charming personality, a scholar of superb attainments, and a teacher of remarkable success, and, withal, a Christian gentleman of the highest type."

The foundation of the Farmers' Institute system in Ontario was well and truly laid by President Mills, of the O. A. C., and since Mr. Hodson's appointment as Superintendent, in the fall of 1894, the membership has grown from some 5,000 to 19,000; the number of meetings held, from 134 to 677 per season; and the reported attendance, from 40,000, approximately, to over 119,000; thus showing a gratifying interest and growth in the work. We understand that the retiring Superintendent, being thoroughly conversant with the attainments and record of Mr. Creelman, recommended him as his successor.

Canadian Live Stock Registration.

As a fair indication of the "growing time" in the rearing of pure-bred live stock, which has its secure foundation in the law of supply and demand, Mr. Hy. Wade, Secretary of the Dominion Shorthorn Breeders' Association, and official Registrar of Pedigrees, reports to us that the increase in Shorthorn pedigrees this year over last numbers no less than 1,562, made up of 548 males and 1,014 females. Volume 15, for 1899, will contain the pedigrees of 5,742 animals. The other Canadian pure-bred records are in a correspondingly flourishing condition.

British Agricultural Statistics.

The preliminary report of the British Board of Agriculture, giving the returns collected for 1899, shows over 100,000 acres less under wheat than in 1898, small increases in barley and oats, 100,000 acres less under clover and grasses, with increases in potatoes and hops. Cattle number 6,795,720, an increase of over 170,000, being chiefly heifers and cows in milk or in calf, and calves, though there is a decline in cattle of the grazing age. Sheep increased from 26,743,194 to 27,237,664, and pigs from 2,451,505 to 2,620,813.