

Start the Rural Mail Delivery.

The Toronto Globe, after referring to the successful extension of the free rural mail delivery system in the States, for which there are now 11,650 routes, concedes that it renders a material service to farmers, of which they had hitherto been deprived, and also that it tends to become self-supporting from the increasing revenues derived. The Globe, however, adds:

"In Canada the distribution of population may not, as yet, be favorable to any extensive employment of a rural free delivery system. Free city delivery is defended on the score that as much is charged for a letter which is not carried on the railways at all as for one that is carried hundreds, perhaps thousands, of miles before reaching the addressee. Some persons point out that there is a special stamp by which one can have a letter delivered by a special messenger. A further application, they say, might be made of that principle, which would entitle a letter to be delivered to an address in the country. The difficulties to be solved in connection with this proposal are not small, although not insuperable. Increased population is the best solution, even though it may be a slow one."

The special stamp delivery would not fill the bill, in lieu of regular rural mail delivery, and we cannot think the suggestion is seriously put forward. We question if the United States rural delivery has been inaugurated in districts any more densely populated than is Canada. We believe that in this respect the agricultural districts of Canada compare very favorably with those of the States, if, indeed, the advantage is not in our favor. To grant this boon to the business and social interests of the country will mean outlay, of course, but it should not be denied for that reason. The country's foundation industry in many localities badly needs such a service, as many of our correspondents have pointed out. Sparse population is rather an argument in its favor, because giving farmers privileges now in the possession of city people is one of the very best ways of encouraging more people to live in the country. Let a beginning only be made, and the difficulties will soon be overcome by the vigorous businesslike methods of the Canadian Postmaster General. A full-fledged system is not expected to spring into existence in a day. It will be a matter of development like those other new things, the rural telephone and the rural electric car.

The Food Value of Oats.

A great deal of misapprehension exists regarding the selection of oats as food. The characteristics of a good oat are (1) its condition which is denoted by its sweetness and hardness of the kernel; (2) the strength of its husk, whether it is thick or thin; (3) the weight per bushel and purity, by which we mean freedom from material of any other kind, whether dirt or seeds. It is scarcely necessary to say that there is more food in a bushel of hard oats than in a bushel of the same variety which is softer in the kernel—the one contains less moisture than the other, and consequently more food.

In judging a sample, if we take the apparently thinnest and lightest grains and find kernels within we may rest assured that all the oats contain food; but it constantly happens that many grains in the handful are nothing but husk. Sometimes the oat is harvested before the last formed grains are filled with kernels. It is usually safe, therefore, to examine the thin kernels in estimating the value of a sample. Next, the husk may be examined, and we shall often find that in a heavy and more costly oat this is thick, so that the buyer pays rather for worthless fodder in the husk than for additional food as compared with a lighter oat with a thinner husk.

To those who are able to pay close attention to this matter we would suggest a simple experiment. Two samples may be selected, a heavy home-grown oat and a lighter and cheaper oat with a comparatively thin skin or jacket. In each case the husks may be removed from a hundred grains and weighed on a delicate balance. It will probably be found that in one case the husks will weigh considerably more than in the other, and if the figures are worked out as applicable to a bushel or a quarter, the full measure of the difference will be better understood. This plan has been adopted in comparing the values of different oats, and sometimes with most extraordinary results. Again, if we take a clean sample at a higher price than a second sample of apparently equally good oats, and from a given weight, which may be 1 ounce to 10 ounces, collect all the waste material, including the empty husks or kernelless grains, we shall find that by weighing we are paying, in all probability, a good deal more for the cheaper sample than for the more costly one, which after all may be the most economical.

Suppose we take two samples at present market prices, and having decided the weight of husk in each case, and subsequently by testing the samples the relative proportions of dirt and other

impurities, we arrive at the conclusion that the more costly sample provides a smaller weight per bushel of feeding matter than the cheaper sample, it follows that we shall not only be saving several shillings, as between the respective weights per quarter, but still more owing to the difference in the proportions of food present.—[Farmers' Gazette.]

Large Farms and Their Management.

Six miles north and four east of Carberry, Manitoba, will be found the homestead of W. P. McRae, where for the last 19 years he has farmed successfully.

During that time, with one exception, the yearly average of his wheat crop never went below 18 bus. per acre, his highest average being 40 bus., and that year 50 acres averaged 45½. Of the 480 acres composing this farm, 400 were under cultivation this season. Last year \$4,112 worth of wheat was sold, besides other grain, and the good quality of the product is evident when it is known that almost invariably the price received for the wheat was equal to that paid for No. 1 hard.

The rotation practiced on this farm is three wheat crops followed by one of oats, and then summer-fallowing or seeding to grass.

Mr. McRae believes in only cutting one crop of timothy and that early, plowing soon after and again sowing to wheat. By this method he claims that a better sample is produced, with less straw. Regarding summer-fallowing, plowing once and cultivating frequently is preferred, but of course where the land is very weedy it becomes necessary to plow twice.

This year's crop was put in with 9 horses and two seeders; one a 22-shoe drill and the other a

Save the Wood Ashes.

From the fact that large quantities of wood ashes are annually bought in Canada, to be sold to New England farmers and gardeners, it is quite evident that their true value is not appreciated in this country. In a New York State farm paper at the present time, the best grades are quoted as high as \$14.00 per ton, and while they find it economical to apply this essential constituent of plants at that price, we, with a soil also becoming depleted in potash, allow ashes to leave our shore for little more in most cases than \$4.00 per ton. Why this should be is hard to explain. The answer lies altogether with the Canadian farmer.

According to a number of analyses of ashes, which have been made in an official way, the average composition has been placed as follows:—Potash 5, phosphoric acid 1.5 and lime 32.5 per cent. Estimating according to the prices which are paid in this country for other fertilizers, we find they are worth about 25 cents per bushel when applied to the soil. Some have the idea that ashes from soft wood is comparatively valueless, but this is a mistake. While they do not weigh as much, bulk for bulk, yet, when equal weights are examined, little difference in composition will be noticed.

There is probably not a farm in the older settled sections of Canada that has not an orchard or garden or some corner where wood ashes could be profitably applied, and it therefore becomes those who burn wood in any form to see that not one pound of this valuable fertilizer is wasted by exposure to rain, or sold for a mere trifle to the dealer who may come that way.

Contents considered, the "Farmer's Advocate" is now the cheapest agricultural paper available for the Canadian farmer.



FARM HOME OF WM. McRAE, KERFOOT, MANITOBA.

23. It was harvested with two binders and three relays of horses, thus keeping the machines running steady. Mr. McRae advocates fall plowing for wheat, but spring plowing gives him good results with oats. He has tried pure-bred cattle on a small scale and finds them very profitable, yet he bends most of his energies to wheat raising, and in that line, as will be seen, has been very successful.

His advice to newcomers is: Mind your own affairs, do your work well, keep down expenses, and then even should you have little to start with, riches will come in this country.

Value of Marl as a Fertilizer.

In reporting upon the value of marl as a fertilizer, Prof. Shutt, Ottawa, states: It can be used to advantage on all soils deficient in lime, of which it is really a carbonate, ranging in purity from 40 to 90 per cent. On heavy clays it flocculates the particles and renders the soil mellow, warmer and better adapted to root extension. In peaty and muck soils it neutralizes acidity, and is thus a corrector of sourness, and in sand it improves the tilth by cementing the grains and overcoming excessive openness and looseness.

Of the various samples analyzed, that from the Georgian Bay district, although of excellent quality, was not superior to that from other parts of the Dominion.

Marl can be applied to the soil in much larger quantities than lime, owing to its milder action. On most soils a good dressing of the latter would be one to two tons per acre, but marl may be beneficially applied in twice that quantity. Since all lime compounds have a tendency to work down beneath the reach of the roots of ordinary farm crops, it should be put on frequently, say every third or fourth year.

Fencing Highways.

To the Editor "Farmer's Advocate":

Sir,—I see by a recent number of the "Advocate" that a correspondent questions the correctness of my statement in re fences or no fences along the public highway. The statement is quite within facts. There is no statutory law requiring farmers to fence between the highway and their adjacent fields. I could, if necessary, refer to numerous test cases where the trial judges have clearly set forth this fact. And when municipal councils enact that certain animals may run at large without attendants, on public highways, it must be observed that such enactments limit the stock to the public highway. No council on earth can by by-law authorize the running of a neighbor's stock upon a farmer's unfenced land. The moment such animals leave the public domain they become trespassers and may be dealt with accordingly, and their owners are liable for damages sustained, fence or no fence. There are hundreds of acres of unfenced crops in Lambton and other sections. Our own by-laws are very clear on these points.

E. J. YORKE.

Lambton Co.

Another Canadian Sugar Beet Factory.

According to the Sugar Beet Gazette, a concern known as the Knight Sugar Company has been organized at Raymond, Alberta, in the Canadian Northwest, and has awarded the contract for the construction of a 400-ton sugar-house to E. H. Dyer & Co., of Cleveland, Ohio. The preliminary work for the buildings has already been commenced, and the plant is to be of complete fireproof construction. Mr. Jesse Knight, president of the company, is financing the project, and Mr. E. P. Ellison is the manager. Contracts are being made for acreage at a flat price of \$5.00 per ton for beets above 14 per cent. in sugar content, and the railroads have agreed to haul beets from distances not exceeding twenty miles from the factory at twenty-five cents per ton.