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EDITORIAL.

The Canadian Breed Societies.

To one having had the privilege of attending the annual meetings of the members of the various Canadian associations of breeders of pure-bred stock, a brief summary of the proceedings of which appeared in the last issue of "The Farmer's Advocate," a striking feature of these gatherings is the outstanding intelligence and acquired ability displayed by so large a proportion of those who take active part in the business and discussions. It is probably safe to say that in no other country in the world could a similar call to a farmers' or any other business men's association summon a gathering of its members displaying a higher average of mental calibre and facility of expression than is found in the meetings of these breed societies. This result is doubtless largely the result of organization and the educational propaganda of the press, the agricultural colleges, the farmers' institutes and kindred agencies, serving to impart information, and to bring out and develop latent talent, to the mutual advantage of both those who speak and those who hear.

The immense area and magnificent distances of the Dominion, while evoking the pride of our people, are features which hinder and prevent the attendance at these national conventions of many of the most intelligent and able members, owing to the cost of transportation and incidental expenses. This is regrettable, as it is well known that much of the best talent in the fraternity is found in the outlying Provinces; but the problem of securing general representation from the fields distant from the center where the majority of members are found, is one not easily solved, and can only be met in part and by a spirit of liberality on the part of the majority who hold the power to select the meeting-place, and naturally choose to have it easily accessible to themselves. But since, owing to the question of expense, a general attendance of individual members in impracticable, it would appear to be no more than justice that provision be made for payment of the expenses incident to attendance of one or more representatives from the Provincial associations of breeders, in order that their wants may be stated, their circumstances considered and provided for in such a manner as will best advance the interests of breeders and the breed.

The National Live-stock Association, and the National system of pedigree records having been accepted by nearly all the Canadian breed societies, is on probation, and its ultimate success will depend largely upon the loyalty of the breed societies to the central organization, and this loyalty will hinge upon the fairness and generosity of the management in dealing with the Provinces in the matter of representation.

The financial statements of the executives of the various associations under the National Record system show a very considerable reduction in the expenses of conducting the office work and the printing of the pedigree records, leaving substantial balances in most cases, to be used for the advancement of the interests of the breeds; and, while the clean sweeping of the new broom is proverbial, let us hope this improvement may continue, and that the management may be such as to promote cordial relations and avoid friction or cause for complaint.

The Dairy Shorthorn.

The recent discussion in our columns of the points suggested on page 167 of our issue, Feb. 1st, reveals a pleasing harmony of opinion that the dual (milk and beef) function of the grand old cosmopolitan breed of Shorthorns should be maintained and developed. In "The Farmer's Advocate" of February 15th, Prof. Day holds that there is room in this country for the purely beef-producing Shorthorn, and this type should not be sacrificed; at the same time, he realizes there is a field for the dual-purpose Shorthorn. This view was strongly urged, also, by A. W. Smith, and in our current issue is a letter from Principal Cumming, of the Nova Scotia Agricultural College, containing a trenchant plea for more attention to the milking quality of the breed. In the issue of Feb. 8th, however, W. D. Cargill asserts that purchasers, while they may ask about milking qualities, will accept nothing not of an entirely beef type. Heavy milkers do not look so well as females of the purely beef type, and are consequently ignored by visitors to the herd. He suggests education of purchasers, to allow due credit for milking qualities. Mr. Cargill's experience in this respect has been that of other breeders. He certainly touches the difficulty when he says milking Shorthorns do not look so well as those of the beef type; but as to his remedy, we are not so sure. Because a deep milker is liable to be rather spare-fleshed and somewhat approaching the dairy breeds in conformation, it does not follow that every cow of this appearance is a good milker. As a matter of fact, it often puzzles expert judges to pick out the good dairy Shorthorns from the inferior specimens that are neither one thing nor the other. There is a type of Shorthorn, though, which combines most of the cardinal qualities of both beef and dairy types, which types, after all, need not be so diametrically opposite as extremists would have us believe. Such is the old-fashioned stamp, with size, constitution and capacity of barrel and udder—cows which will milk well for nine or ten months a year, but which, when dry, flesh up readily, and have the broad, level backs on which to lay the flesh so as to make acceptable carcasses. Their steers are growthy and excellent doers, and, while not, perhaps, so tidy or early-maturing as those out of the more compact, parallelogramic beef cows, are nevertheless capable of giving a first-class account of themselves in the feed-lot, and they do not have to wipe out the cost of their dams' keep for a year in order to strike themselves an even balance on the ledger. Such a cow as we have indicated might be conceived as something between a modern Shorthorn and a large, smooth type of Holstein in conformation and attributes. She is not a myth, but a profitable reality, though of late years she has seemed in grave danger of extinction. How can we perpetuate and develop this type? Prof. Day suggests a way in the advanced-registry scheme. To establish a distinct and separate herdbook would be a pity, for more reasons than one. What is needed is an appendix in the present herdbook, containing the names, numbers, pedigrees and milk records of Shorthorns that have exceeded a certain minimum milk and butter-fat production in official yearly test, as advocated in these columns recently for the dairy breeds; if the test includes two or more successive years, all the better. These animals would then be starred, and the appearance of their names in any pedigree would enhance the value of a given animal, even if bought by a man in search of the beef type. A plan like the above would credit every Shorthorn breeder trying to

improve the milking qualities of his cattle, and would be a valuable guide to the purchaser in steering clear of the "old skates" which too often are given credit for dairy quality because they manifestly are not beef. Keeping all the animals recorded in the one herdbook would also have this advantage—it would enable the beef men to draw upon the dairy Shorthorns to replenish milking quality, a degree of which is necessary even in a beef herd, and, on the other hand, it would leave the way open for the introduction of any individuals into the Dairy Shorthorn ranks which, in official test, distinguished themselves at the pail, and it would also allow dairy Shorthorn men to use a bull of the beef type, if desirable, to give his cows more substance, and correct a too radical departure from the beef type. The advanced-registry appendix affords every advantage of a separate herdbook, while obviating the disadvantages, and must appeal to breeders as the surest and best means of building up a splendid strain of dairy Shorthorns.

The Capital in the Soil.

Gold in the Klondike is an idea that appeals to the imaginative; wealth in the soil is a fact that concerns the husbandman. It concerns all the world as well, but it is of more direct import to those who live by the products of the field. Fertility is the farmer's capital; some of it is locked up in inconvertible forms, other portion is not inconvertible, but is difficult to realize on; some is like cash lying around loose—it is in danger of being lost to the atmosphere or to leaching rainwater; while a further portion needs only good cultivation and rotation to loosen it up, and then care in husbanding it when it is rendered available, to make the farm a perpetual source of revenue and a means to comfort, if not affluence. In order that one may utilize his capital to the best advantage, he must know how much he has, understand something of the forms in which it exists, know what proportion may be expected to be available each year, and ascertain whether, by the addition of certain kinds of plant food, he can make more economical use of the various elements which constitute the sum total of his soil fertility. There are light sandy lands in this country that would respond to a few dollars' worth of potash in the form of ashes or muriate, with greatly increased yields, especially of clover, which in time would augment the nitrogen supply. There are other lands which, with more phosphoric acid, would grow better crops of grain and clover; there are many soils, no doubt, on which a moderate dressing of potash and of phosphates or bone meal would be all that was necessary to insure a vigorous growth of that invaluable nitrogen-gatherer, clover. In fact, the great secret of economical manuring, where the barnyard supply requires to be supplemented, is to add to the soil moderate amounts of the mineral fertilizers—potash, phosphoric acid, and occasionally lime—thereby making conditions favorable for the growth of clover, alfalfa and peas, to take from the atmosphere the third important element, nitrogen, which, purchased in commercial fertilizers, would cost about 14 cents a pound, but which the general farmer need not buy, since in legumes he has a means of getting unlimited quantities for nothing. Potash and phosphoric acid in commercial fertilizers cost, approximately, 6 cents a pound. By buying these, where necessary, and sowing clover, we get cheap humus and nitrogen.

There are many lands, also, that are unproductive for lack of lime; they are sour, and no vegetation will thrive thereon. There is an important class of swamp soils, in the study of which Prof. R. Harcourt, Chemist of the Ontario