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RURAL NOTES.

A VESSEL holding 100 pounds of water, will hold 108 pounds of milk.

OCEAN freight rates have improved with the prospect of a large surplus of wheat, and the average is fifty per cent. higher than six months ago.

THE recent rains will greatly improve the root crops, and will also leave the ground in fine condition for promoting the growth of the new crop of wheat.

IN fattening stock our best breeders go upon the principle that, the steadier and evenner the grain, the better and more remunerative is the result of feeding.

IT is estimated that the wheat crop of Manitoba and the Northwest territories this year occupies an area of 400,000 acres, and that the product will average 20 bushels per acre. This will give a surplus for export of five or six millions, the bulk of which will doubtless find its way to the Minnesota and Ontario flouring mills.

THE exhibition season is now upon us, and we shall look for a fine display of the country's products, whether of grain, live stock, manufactures or the arts. The Industrial and the Provincial Societies will endeavour to surpass themselves this year, and with a season so exceptionally favourable we shall be surprised if they do not.

THE plan of pasturing clover fields intended for a seed crop to the middle of June seems to be the only sure way of escaping the ravages of the clover midge, and it seems a pity that it is not more extensively adopted where a grass crop is to be fed on the farm—as the bulk of it always should be—it matters very little in respect of gain or loss whether a portion of it be fed at one time or another. There is as much profit in January feeding.

THE milling business is in a bad way in the Province, and millers are anxious to have some change made in the scale of duties on flour and wheat. At a convention held in this city a short time ago it was pointed out that whereas the duty on flour was 50 cents per barrel, the duty on its equivalent in wheat is 71½ cents, and it is proposed to request the Government to make such alteration in the tariff as will put the Canadian miller on even terms with the American. Patent process flours are being imported from Minneapolis and retailed in the Provincial markets at \$2.40 per 100 pounds, and our millers complain that this competition is ruining them.

THE high prices at which stall fed cattle were bought by shippers in this Province last winter, and the tumble which took place in prices before the cattle reached the English markets, have resulted unfortunately for several of the leading dealers. One Montreal man is reported to have lost a quarter of a million, and almost without exception the shippers are worse off now than they were six months ago. In a few instances, however, where purchases were carefully made, fair profits have been realized and the trade is by no means discouraging. One thing is certain, that at a price considerably under the ruling one of last winter cattle-feeding will pay better than wheat-growing in this Ontario of ours.

THE hearts of Ontario's farmers were made glad by the rich promise of the wheat fields, and business men as well as farmers were encouraged to believe that the harvest would greatly help to tide over the depression in trade. But in almost every other part of the agricultural world, as well as in Ontario, the wheat harvest has been remarkably good, and within a month the prices have dropped from 15c. to 20c. per bushel. Taking our surplus at 20,000,000 bushels, this means a loss of about \$4,000,000—a sum which if realized would go far to give tone to the pulse of commerce. We are less sanguine than we were one month ago of the benefits of a good harvest.

PLEURO-PNEUMONIA has broken out in several localities in the Western States, more especially in Illinois and Iowa. Hitherto it has been pretty closely confined to localities on the Atlantic coast, and for lack of energetic action on the part of the authorities it has survived there for several years. Its progress westward is said to be due to the recent sale of Jersey cattle by an Ohio breeder, and fears are entertained that it will prove very destructive among the large herds of the prairies. The Texas fever has also been making progress northward recently, and between the two diseases cattle men are likely to suffer serious loss. We trust that the officers in charge of our own quarantine stations will exercise the utmost diligence, and see that the regulations are rigidly enforced. The proposal to allow Wyoming cattle to be shipped through Canada to England ought not to be entertained for a moment.

THE district of which Owen Sound is the centre has for several years enjoyed an excellent reputation for fruit culture, but the facts have recently gone against it. Pear and plum trees especially have been overtaken with disaster, and thousands of them are dying or dead. About a year ago some form of blight appeared in the orchards of Bruce and Gray; the fruit and leaves were

seen to wither and drop off; and the trees were evidently in a low state of vitality. It was hoped that spring time would show that the blight was only temporary in its character, and that the trees would give evidence of re-established health and energy; but instead of that the malady has been increasing in intensity, and the scientific horticulturists are unable either to understand it or to account for it. In one orchard in Owen Sound, where a year ago there were 1,100 plum trees healthy and laden with fruit, there are now only two living trees.

PROF. THOMAS TAYLOR, of the United States Department of Agriculture, has recently made an interesting report of a series of microscopic observations on butter and fats, and he furnishes the following simple test for discerning the genuine and the bogus article: "Combine a few drops of sulphuric acid with a small quantity of pure butter, and the butter will assume first an opaque whitish-yellow colour, and after a lapse of ten minutes it will change to a brick red. Oleomargarine made of beef fat, when treated in the same manner, changes at first to clear amber, and after the lapse of about twenty minutes to a deep crimson." It is possible that more bogus butter is consumed in Canada than the public suspect. Toronto men are sometimes accused of importing considerable quantities from Chicago, and possibly it is a home product—but if the latter, the fact is very carefully concealed. All dairymen as well as all consumers are interested in suppressing the oleomargarine trade, and Prof. Taylor's test may be found a valuable aid to that end.

WITHIN the short period of ten years the value of India's annual exports of wheat has risen from \$800,000 to \$15,000,000, and the bulk of the product has come into competition with American wheat in England. British capital has been used to build railways into the heart of the wheat-growing district of India, and these railways are now delivering grain at the seaports cheaply and expeditiously. How much it costs to produce a bushel of wheat in that country as compared with America may be comprehended when we say that the wage of a farm labourer in India is ten cents per day. India is America's coming rival for the supply of breadstuffs to the British consumer; and the decline in prices this year, when harvests are bountiful everywhere, is an indication of what the future has in store. It is not improbable that ten years hence India will have so enlarged her wheat-growing area as to produce a sufficiency for the British markets, and we may rest assured that the country which takes British manufactures in exchange for breadstuffs is the country which is going to take the lead in this particular trade.