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EDITORIAL.

Hats off to the hen!

Judging by the steadily increasing correspondence on the subject, the plank-frame barn is coming decidedly into vogue.

A lot of human nature comes out in a man when confronted with the possibility that his dog has been killing sheep.

Many a farmer, while pulling his corn shocks out of the snow this winter with a team and a logging chain, has quietly resolved to have a silo by the time his next corn crop is ready for harvesting. Now is the time to get out the gravel.

That was a splendid article on "Vegetable Culture," by Prof. Blair, in our Garden and Orchard Department last week. The subject was covered from hotbeds to cultivation. Read carefully and inwardly digest—and don't ask us any questions already covered in the article.

One of the most satisfactory improvements installed at Weldwood is the litter carrier. It saves not a little time, and has converted a dirty, laborious job into a pleasure. It was sixty dollars well invested.

The correspondent who tells of having poisoned in his own field one of those dogs "that never left home," suggests a rather effective way of weeding out sly curs and enforcing upon dog-owners in general a much-needed lesson to confine even good dogs at night.

In connection with Hon. Martin Burrell's recent announcement concerning an anticipated division of work at the Central Experimental Farm, it is understood that there will be two men appointed to succeed Director Grisdale as Dominion Agriculturist. One will be a Dominion Field Husbandman and the other a Dominion Animal Husbandman. It is also expected that an officer will be appointed for work in connection with the breeding of plants.

H. R. McMillan, of the Forestry Branch, Department of Agriculture, Ottawa, in a recent paper, took the ground that the expenditure of money for trained men in research work and in forest preservation and culture was a profitable investment for the state. All-the-year-round patrol, the use of 'phones, the proper disposal of slash, and other preventive measures, were advised, such as the use of oil fuel, instead of coal, through forest ranges, or else compelling railway companies to patrol their lines.

Archdeacon Robert J. Renison, of Moose Factory, who has lived for some fifteen years in the Hudson's Bay country, dropped a pebble in the placid proceedings of the recent convention of the Dominion Forestry Association at Ottawa, by the suggestion that it would be well to send out men as fire rangers who knew the difference between a frying pan and a paddle. Though not objecting to university students, he made a strong plea, backed up in discussion by several good men, for the employment of the Indians and other post-graduates of the school of nature in this important service.

Orchard Facts.

Fruit-growers recently assembled at Ottawa showed no little surprise when the actual condition of fruit-growing in Canada was brought before them by figures obtained from the recent census. The total acreage of orchard and vineyard in Canada showed an increase in the past decade of 21,000 acres, only 5.9 per cent. Apple trees have decreased 212,562 since the last census. This should not prove any cause for alarm. It should rather be considered satisfactory, because it must be remembered that the decrease has been in bearing trees, the number of non-bearing trees showing a substantial increase. This shows that the improvement in orchard methods is having its effect. Old, useless trees of nondescript variety, enumerated in the former census, have fallen before the invincible onslaught of desirable varieties, and recognized scientific, practical methods of orchard management, and thus the bearing trees are numerically less, though in actual value worth more than ten years ago, owing to the improved conditions.

A matter causing much more comment was the fact that in 1901 Canada produced 18,624,128 bushels of apples, and in 1911 only 10,384,985 bushels, a falling off of forty-four per cent. A decline of only fourteen per cent. in the number of trees, and of upwards of forty per cent. in output, seems a serious matter. Some part of the decrease must have been caused by difference in seasons, and we have no hesitancy in believing that, in a comparative season, the returns from the orchards, under careful management, would compare very favorably with those of the same orchards ten years ago. However, these figures should prove an incentive to apple-growers to further improve their methods, and to put forth every effort to increase production.

The total number of fruit trees of all kinds in Canada decreased during the last ten years by 315,641. This, together with the preceding statement of output, does not look much as though we would be threatened with overproduction in the very near future, taking also into consideration the rapidly-growing home market. The demand for good fruit is increasing, and will increase as people become educated to its use and its wholesomeness. There is little fear of the supply being so great as to drug the market, provided the required attention is given to insure the best class of fruit. When one drives through the country and sees the number of neglected orchards, he does not wonder that the production is not greater. More orchards are being cared for than ever before, but there are many still in a deplorable condition. It takes time to extend the education to all. The estimated value of the fruit investment in Ontario alone has been placed by a well-known grower at \$78,621,800, and this man believed that, under proper management, an annual income of 20 per cent. on the investment was not beyond the reach of all. Value your orchard investment. How many of the orchards are paying this twenty per cent.? Not a large number, yet it is possible, for several have paid more. There is always room for improvement. It is to be hoped that, before the next Dominion Conference of fruit-growers convenes, hundreds more orchards will be placed on a paying basis as a result of a little extra care and attention.

Live Stock and Agriculture.

"A poor year or a good year in agriculture either makes or shakes the prosperity of a country." These words, falling from the lips of no less a personage than the Hon. Martin Burrell, Dominion Minister of Agriculture, should instil into the mind of those engaged in agricultural work the necessity of the utmost effort to make each and every year a "good year."

Are we making the most of our opportunities? Judging from the tenor of many of the addresses delivered at the National Live-stock Convention, recently held in Ottawa, the live-stock industry, a branch of agriculture the fostering of which is perhaps more imperative than any other of the various divisions of the great work on the land to its ultimate, unqualified success, is not in the flourishing, healthy condition it should be in a country such as ours, with climate, soil and other conditions most favorable to animal husbandry.

"Good years" may come to those on new land for a short time, without returning much of the fertility of the soil, but sooner or later soil exhaustion is reached, and crops yield less and less, until the expenses are greater than the returns, and the "bad years" are a reality. It is impossible to get something from nothing, and it is equally foolish to expect to draw on the soil's plant food continuously without returning some of this material for the use of later crops. We must fertilize the soil, and there is no method of accomplishing this like the feeding of live stock. Artificial fertilizers give far better returns when used as a supplement to farmyard manure, which, for best results should, with legumes, form the basis of all soil replenishing.

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In what classes of live stock are we especially weak to-day? While all of these show plenty of room for improvement, the present state of the beef cattle and sheep industry is most grave, at least from a consumer's point of view. Canada has a rapidly-increasing population, the increase being largely urban. The demand for meat for the home market increases yearly. Is the supply keeping pace with these conditions? Decidedly not. Where should our live-stock products come from? There is no doubt but that the best place to produce them is on our own Canadian farms. In the Maritime Provinces the dairy cow is pushing to the fore, and during the past few years the beef breeds have barely held their own, while the sheep industry is not thriving. Even Ontario, the so-called banner live-stock district of the North American continent, made an increase in beef cattle in ten years of only 50,000 head, and her exports to Great Britain fell off in five years over 106,718 head, while there are now over 800,000 fewer sheep in the Province than in 1906. In the Western Provinces, "King Wheat" has driven the rancher out of business, and all the average farmer seems to think about is his cereal crop. The West is short of cattle, having 10,000,000 less than a decade ago, and the cattle of the future must of necessity be raised on the farms now devoted almost entirely, if not exclusively, to grain-growing. Alberta has reached that low ebb of beef production so characteristic of countries changing from ranching to grain-growing. How long will she remain so? Quebec reports beef cattle almost entirely crowded out by the rapid advance of dairying, and British Columbia continues to be a large consumer, rather than a great producer of live-stock products. Even the hog industry, especially in the West, is not in the most progressive condition. Such is the state of