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EDITORIAL.

If you keep no other book at all, keep a diary, and keep it in a good-sized, stiff-backed book.

The Toronto Globe is conducting a very serious discussion upon the subject of Canadian humor.

If we face the naked truth of what things actually cost to-day, are we not likely to do better to-morrow, and to be sure that such outlays are needed and profitable?

The New York Independent suggests that Congress give to agriculture the \$300,000,000 that now goes to war preparations, and to war the \$30,000,000 that goes to agriculture.

An average of half a day at a farm is the 1911 report of a Middlesex thresherman whose jobs ordinarily average about one day. No wonder straw is eight and ten dollars a ton on Provincial markets.

In 1900, cattle constituted about 48 per cent. of the value of all live stock on United States farms, but in ten years there was a decrease to 30 per cent., or, in numbers, 7,000,000 head. In spite of motor cars and power machinery, the value of horses increased about 131 per cent. in the decade.

Clover and leguminous plants are the chief assistants of the farmer in converting nitrogen, one of the elements of nature, into an available plant food. Clover seed is high in price, but do not let this deter you from buying it in sufficient quantity to insure a good stand on the land seeded, and it is advisable to buy early, as the demand for good seed is great.

One of the most serious problems confronting the new China is a financial debt of over \$700,000,000, all owed to foreign creditors. About \$60,000,000 represents railway investments, but the balance was mainly incurred through the war with Japan and the Boxer rebellion. And now it is reported that 3,750,000 of the people are starving in the famine areas, and millions are needed, also, to develop the natural resources on which the country's future depends.

One of the assets of your business should be your business experience. A proper system of records would make each year's work and results a foundation for future improvement, where improvement is possible, and for maintaining or approximating the standard of achievement in those respects in which high-water mark has already been reached. In order that the experience may be reliably helpful, it must be definitely known. What are you doing to ascertain and record the results of each successive year's work?

Some issues ago, in outlining a number of improvements desirable in the Department of Agriculture at Ottawa, "The Farmer's Advocate" incidentally suggested that the time was ripe for giving the preservation of the health of the people (as distinct from health of animals) a much larger and more defined public service than it had hitherto received in Canada. Advices from the Capital indicate that the creation of a Department of Public Health, probably attached to the portfolio of Secretary of State, is now under serious consideration.

Cost of Farm Improvements.

Few farmers know fully what their improvements stand them. Many seem afraid to know. They fear the totals would stagger them, and make talk in the neighborhood. They hear that So-and-So has built a barn or a pigpen for so much, and they don't like economy of their work to suffer by comparison. Particularly in the case of a new improvement which one is pioneering in the neighborhood is he likely to be sensitive to the subtle influence which makes him feel in the air his neighbors' disapproval. We asked a friend not long ago how much his silo cost him. "Oh, I don't know; I'm almost afraid to figure it up," he admitted, candidly. "I guess it would run up to two hundred dollars," he added, reflectively. Although his silo had neither chute nor roof, we were quite certain he underestimated the cost. "Did you count the doors, the rings and bolts you imbedded, the board of the men, all your own time, and the work of the horse on the hoist?" we asked. "No, I have been trying to forget those things," he replied, with a sense of humor, and then proceeded to justify his expenditure by expatiating upon the advantages of the silo and silage. In this we could quite agree. In fact, we would consider his silo a sound investment at twice two hundred dollars, providing, of course, that it could not be built for less.

Now, our 14 x 40 cement silo, with chute, roof, and all, complete, cost us \$488.95, and, excepting the roof, the cost was not excessive. But we count the whole cost. We have no purpose to serve, no axe to grind, in making it out one dollar less or more than it actually was. Every day's time has to be paid for, and every horse's time is charged up. Everything is kept track of on a strict business basis.

"But," someone protests, "are you not afraid of deterring your readers from making improvements by publishing complete figures of cost?" Not at all. Anyone who can be discouraged by accurate knowledge ought to be deterred. We have no sympathy with any scheme to inveigle people into making improvements by misrepresenting the cost. Far too much of that kind of thing has been done in agriculture, and the recoil effect is detrimental to progress. Face facts fearlessly, and work in the light of exact knowledge.

It is quite consistent with this position to point out that one should not run away with the idea that he must have four or five hundred dollars in cash in order to build a silo. All the cash he needs is enough to buy the material and pay the contractor, if one is employed. The teaming and much of the subsequent work he can easily do himself at slack times, thus converting the value of such time into dividend-earning capital.

It is a significant fact that the men who are least businesslike in their methods of calculating cost are also least businesslike in the matter of utilizing their time. They are usually the one who do most sitting around in the post office or kitchen, and have most to say about the prohibitive cost of making this, that or the other improvement.

"But," we hear from another quarter, "if I figure things that way, I will soon have a capital cost on which I can never earn interest." Not if you invest wisely. Every dollar should be spent with a view to earning interest and sinking-fund charges. Investments which will not do this ought not to be made, unless for purely ornamental purposes, and charged to living account. It

is just this loose way of figuring cost that leads to many dubious investments being made.

"But," we hear again, "there are many little improvements made around a farm which merely replace other things falling to pieces." That, of course, is another matter. Such expenditures are properly charged to maintenance account. But the important, brand-new improvements should be estimated at what they cost. If, after arriving at the total, one chooses, for purposes of conservative calculation, to discount the value and write the asset down on his books for a fraction of its value, charging the rest to current expenses, well and good, providing the annual revenue has been sufficient to defray the difference. Otherwise, he has no option but to carry the investment on to capital account.

Our advice is to keep account of everything, including time, and govern one's operations in the light of that information. Meanwhile, utilize spare time in making improvements, for that is how they may be most economically effected. Charge the labor, if you like, at slack-time wages, but do not work for yourself more cheaply than you would do similar work for a neighbor under similar conditions of residence and the like. Businesslike methods of accounting are usually somewhat disquieting at the start, and consequently profitable in the end.

Sheep and Dogs.

To the editorial inquiry, are there any adequate reasons why there could not be more sheep kept in your district, a correspondent replies, "Just Dog."

If "dog" is the only reason why sheep are not kept, it would seem that farmers are laying too much stress on the danger of loss from this cause. It is true that there is a danger, but, if properly managed, this is about the only cause from which there is a likelihood of sheep dying. Their ailments are few, indeed, compared with those of the horse or the ox, and the dog nuisance, while it exists, is not really as bad as many who are not in the sheep business imagine. A flock of sheep is only attacked about once in fifteen years, under ordinary conditions. Cases are known where flocks have been worried more frequently, but they are not the rule. There are usually only one or two dogs in the neighborhood which are responsible for the trouble, perhaps by leading other dogs astray, or doing the entire damage themselves, and when these are finally caught and subjected to the execution which they deserve for taking the life of so inoffensive an animal as the sheep, the trouble is usually over for a decade or so. The sheep business, like all other branches of animal husbandry, requires a certain degree of stick-to-itiveness, and, where precautions are taken to keep the sheep as much as possible near the buildings at night during the summer months, and shut in during the winter nights, there is comparatively little danger from this cause. A few open bells on the sheep's necks have also been found a good preventive.

It is not usually the farm dog that is responsible for the dastardly conduct, but rather some poor, half-starved cur which nobody seems to own, and which is forced to subsist upon the meagre allowance which he obtains by scouring all the back-door yards of the neighboring village or town. Driven by the pangs of hunger when this scant supply is not sufficient to satisfy his needs, he goes on a rampage, and the old wolfish instinct gives him the thirst for blood and the desire to kill. In his wanderings, he usually picks up a