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EDITORIAL.

LET US TRY THE SPLIT-LOG DRAG.

A great part of the road mileage in Canada is and will be for a considerable time to come, the virgin bosom of Mother Earth. An immediate and important problem is how to keep these earth roads in the best possible condition. It is doubly important because a good earth road is the proper foundation for gravelling or macadamizing when the time for it arrives. There are three primary essentials in the construction and care of good earth roads:

1. Good drainage, both surface and subsoil. In many cases this necessitates underdrains, not only under the ditches, but beneath the center of the roadbed as well. If half the money spent by many townships in gravelling had been employed in properly draining the roadbed, we would have far better roads to-day, and roadbeds which it would be worth while putting gravel on. Drainage demands, also, ditches that will carry the water freely away, instead of holding it to soak under and impair the road-bottom. Ditches must be kept open and plenty of culverts provided.

2. Grading is advisable in nearly every case, although undue emphasis has sometimes been placed on grading. Grading which raises the crown by dumping red clay from ditch-bottoms on top of a good loam surface often works mischief. One of the best earth roads we have ever seen is a "give road" that never received much attention. It has shallow ditches and is slightly graded, but the wearing surface is of light loamy soil and never cuts up very deeply under traffic. Grading is good, but should be done with judgment.

3. Every clay or even clay-loam road should be kept smooth by frequent use of some leveller or drag. It matters not how steeply the driveway is graded, if there be clay in its composition it will cut up under traffic. Ruts and hoof-prints will hold water to soak into the road, and each succeeding vehicle works up a deeper mire. If the road is on a hill or incline, water follows down the ruts, wearing out channels in the center of the road. Or perhaps mudholes are formed, to be punched deeper and deeper by each team. The net results are that much of the road surface is worn away and carried to ditches or creeks. Worse still, water stands and soaks down into the subsoil to soften and render it unfit to bear the weight of traffic; for the subsoil must stand this in every case. The water from succeeding rains is held, to be mucked up by travel, whereas it should shed quickly to the ditches.

We are convinced that there is more need on our clay roads for the frequent use of a leveller rather than for the annual employment of an expensive grader, albeit the latter is valuable in its place. But many townships, placing too much reliance on the latter implement, have spent their available money in buying and using it, leaving little or none to keep the roads smooth after the grading was done. Consequently the road gets into a bad shape each spring, necessitating more expensive grading to repair damages. Three-quarters of this could be prevented by dragging or levelling, with a consequent saving of money and a greatly improved condition of the road. The common Ontario leveller answers well, but of recent years the new implement, called the split-log drag, has been extensively tried in the United States, and the results seem to be excellent. The essential difference between the leveller and the drag is that the former is hauled over the roads when they are more or less dry, while the drag it is advised to use to puddle the clay surface while

still muddy. Probably the greatest advantage of the drag over the leveller is that it can be used before one can work on his fields.

So strong is the American endorsement of the drag, so favorable the few Canadian reports we have had, and so reasonable, simple and cheap is the idea, that "The Farmer's Advocate," in cooperation with the Public Works Department of the Ontario Government, has decided to institute a widespread experimentation with this implement throughout Ontario, and has concluded to offer \$100 in cash prizes for the best results in the use of the drag on our earth roads this summer. The conditions, printed elsewhere, are as simple and easy as anyone could wish. The expense of making and using the drag is trifling to each individual, and the benefits, we feel sure, will outweigh the cost of the demonstration. In any case it will be an encouragement and assistance in the solution of the good-roads problem, and we appeal to the public spirit of our readers to make the competition a success. The time for making application is short, March 27th. Read the conditions and send in your name. A post card will do, stating that you wish to enter our split-log-drag competition, and are willing to make a drag and use it at least five times this summer on a mile of road in your vicinity. The motto of this competition is, "Let us try the split-log drag." The inspection and awards will be made by Mr. A. W. Campbell, Good Roads Commissioner for Ontario, but the entries must be sent to the office of "The Farmer's Advocate," London, Ont.

WESTERN WINTER AND LIVE STOCK.

The question is being asked among Eastern stockmen and farmers, as well as those in Western Canada, what will be the immediate or ultimate effect of the present extraordinarily severe winter on the prairie plains? Not only has the weather been severe, but the snowfall exceptionally heavy for the range country, and unrelieved by the snow-melting Chinook that in former seasons was invariably relied upon to uncover quickly the satisfying herbage below. Large numbers of cattle have been starved and frozen to death, and the survivors emaciated so as to seriously curtail the Western beef supply of the early summer at least. To what appraisal the losses will finally resolve themselves, it is not easy to conjecture, though a good many estimates have put them at from 40 to 50 per cent. Some have quickly concluded that the winter has given a "black eye" to ranching. Accompanied by the great demand on the grazing areas for farm settlements, the domain of the cowboy will be steadily and surely restricted, and even on those lands particularly suited to the "free-and-easy" system of stock-rearing, the tendency, where extended leases can be got, will be to make better future provision in the way of shelters and food supplies for similar emergencies. That this season's experience will work to the permanent detriment of the West, we do not believe, because, with all its acknowledged drawbacks, compared with Eastern Canada, it is so rich and sound a land that, under more gradual and rational methods, it will continue to advance, though at a more wholesome pace. Apart from the insatiable markets of the outside world for meats and other animal products, the West, with its fever for railway construction, increasing rural settlement and town growth, which has gone on far ahead of the capacity of the railways to provide rolling stock and power to serve the people already there, will provide a largely-increased consumptive demand, and we therefore expect to see a swing in the direction of mixed farming and

stock-raising on the Western farm as the fascinations of wheat-growing wane. In other words, more meat will be wanted, and it must come from the Western farm, instead of the ranch, unless the West pursues the fatuous plan of importing their animal foods and shipping away their fertility in the form of wheat. From this point of view, the outlook for the breeder of pure-bred stock would certainly appear to be better than before the advent of the rigors of the winter of 1906-1907.

GROW MORE CORN.

The fact that Canada imported from the United States for consumption, in 1905, Indian corn to the value of \$5,588,891, besides \$634,636 worth for distillation purposes, most of which is used as feed for stock, and paid for in cash by the farmers of this country, who ought to grow on their own farms nearly all the feedstuffs they need, should cause us to pause and consider whether we cannot materially reduce that expenditure, if not wipe it out entirely. While the cultivation of corn for ensilage purposes is being steadily extended, and the silo, as a profitable source of cheap and satisfactory feed supply, is steadily gaining in favor, the raising of the crop for the ripened grain has made comparatively little headway in this country, although it has been demonstrated that there are considerable areas in Ontario and in some sections of the other Provinces where abundant yields of the matured crop may be counted on with nearly if not quite as much certainty as the majority of the cereals. And when we consider that most of the cultivation and harvesting of the corn crop may be satisfactorily performed by horse-power and machinery, the labor problem in this connection is little more serious than in the handling of grain, while corn, well managed, yields heavily of the best of fattening foods, and at the same time provides in its stalks a great weight of fodder, which, if judiciously handled, may be utilized to excellent advantage in combination with other foods in carrying cattle through the winter in improving condition.

Corn and clover has been aptly designated by a writer in this issue "a royal pair," and it is practically certain that where these crops can be successfully grown they constitute a combination of stock foods unequalled as a balanced ration, supplying the requirements of the animal economy at a minimum of cost of production, while at the same time serving an admirable purpose in a rotation of crops in maintaining the fertility of the land, keeping it free from the robbery of noxious weeds, and preparing it well for following crops of any kind.

Presuming that the foregoing claims are well founded, does it not logically follow that the possibility of extending our corn-growing area and enlarging our production of this crop should engage the earnest consideration of Canadian farmers? And to this end, should not the study of the breeding and improvement of seed corn, and the adoption of improved varieties along the lines of early maturity and increased yield, engage the attention more than heretofore of our experiment stations, experimental unions and other institutions having for their object the advancement of scientific agriculture? Much attention is being given to this subject by similar institutions in the United States, and the possibilities of improvement in the productiveness and feeding value of certain varieties of corn have been shown to be very great, while the boundaries of the territory in which corn can be profitably cultivated for the ripened grain in that country are steadily extending. Among the facts that have been demonstrated is that there is a wonderful