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EDITORIAL.

OUR GREAT FRESH-WATER OCEAN PORT.

The Dominion of Canada has a national interest in the Port of Montreal. At its docks the steamships of the Atlantic meet the converging arteries of water-borne and rail-carried commerce of the interior continent. In fact, it might be said that North America has a continental interest in this fresh-water ocean port—for, despite the apparent contradiction of the term it fairly describes the strategic situation of the great St. Lawrence city. From Montreal to the sea, by way of the St. Lawrence River, Canadian enterprise has established a channel, with an available depth of 30 feet, now actually in use by steamships of 12,000 tons. By 1910 it will accommodate ships of 18,000 tons. This gives to Canada a virtual seaport at Montreal, the head of ocean navigation, 1,000 miles from the sea, the junction-point of three transcontinental railways, and of a navigation system with a minimum depth of 14 feet tapping all the cities of the Great Lakes, clear into the heart of the continent. Prospects are that facilities will be vastly improved by the construction of a 22-foot Georgian Bay Canal, and not unlikely, a new and deeper Welland Canal.

In view of these tremendously important facts, and especially the developments of the present season, during which American seaport cities have been alarmed by the rate at which Montreal has been capturing the export grain trade, special interest attaches to a recently-issued report on British and Continental ports, with a view to the development of the Port of Montreal and Canadian transportation. This report, published as a supplement to the fortieth annual report of Marine and Fisheries, is prepared by Geo. W. Stephens, President Harbor Commissioners, Montreal, and Frederick W. Cowie, B. A. Sc., M. Inst., C. E., Engineer River St. Lawrence Ship Canal, who visited the different seaports of Europe and Great Britain to personally inspect the various phases of port development and management, and to gather such information as might serve a useful purpose in the development of Canada's national ports. Their information has been published in clear and concise form, as will appear from the presentation of facts quoted elsewhere with regard to our own port of Montreal.

Scarcely necessary, we should hope, though not out of place by any means, is the emphasis in the foreword placed upon the supreme importance of retaining the national waterway as the property of the Canadian people, not allowing it to come under the control of any navigating corporation or railway, or combination of either, "as has been the case in the United States, where the railways have killed the efficiency of the Erie Canal by blocking legislation for its enlargement; in England, where the inland waterways have largely been bought up by the railroads, and their usefulness confiscated; or in France, where a like situation exists with regard to the Port of Marseille." Hamburg, on the other hand, with a canal system eight feet in depth, distributes annually to inland points, 8,000,000 tons of freight by the cheapest known means of transportation; and Antwerp, with a canal and river system of the same depth, carries water-borne cargoes to the boundaries of Austria at the rate of something over 6,000,000 tons per annum, and distributes annually, by means of her own waterways, 37,000,000 tons of merchandise.

WHEN PURE-BREDS SHALL BECOME COMMON.

We look forward to the day, still well in the future, when pure-bred stock will supplant scrubs, mongrels and, for the most part, grades. It may never entirely supplant straight cross-breeds or high-grades, for a first cross often produces a most profitable animal to feed, and doubtless a certain amount of crossing and mingling of blood will always be done, but the stockmen's missionary work must continue until no one thinks of using any but a pure-bred sire, and until the great majority of breeding females in horses, cattle, sheep and swine are either pure-bred or else first-crosses or high-grades. In swine this goal has already been attained in most districts, thanks to the fecundity of the sow; in sheep, it is within measurable approach, but among horses and cattle it will be some time yet before pure-breeds are so generally disseminated as they should be. When pure-breeds become as common as grades now are, the tendency will be to reduce prices, though not the values, of the average run of pure-breeds, thereby lessening the temptation to palm off inferior individuals on the strength of registration. Then, only those registered animals which combine superior individuality with rich breeding will command a premium by virtue of their pedigrees. The business of distributing seed stock will not be confined, as at present, to a few breeders, but every farmer will stand a chance of producing an animal of rare value for purposes of stock improvement. At present, with grades chiefly in vogue, no matter how superior an individual male animal may occur in a farm stud or herd, he is of little value for stock improvement because lacking the concentration of blood lines which tends to insure prepotency in the transmission of his good qualities. Even if he prove an exceptionally good sire, the breeder of pure-breeds dare not use him, since his get would not be eligible for registration. Thus, many a jewel in farm stables is passed by, which, if a registered pure-bred, and, therefore, available for the purposes of the pure-breeder, would prove an acquisition to the cause of stock improvement, and incidentally a source of profit to the farmer who raised him. The more plentiful the pure-breeds in the country, the more rapidly and thoroughly may the cause of live-stock improvement advance. At present the number of pure-breeds is so small, comparatively speaking, that the business of breeding them is inconvenient and expensive; and this, together with the expense of registration and selling, and the obvious need for blooded stock in almost every community, tempts the breeder to distribute for breeding purposes registered stock which never should be allowed to perpetuate its kind. Among pure-breeds, as among scrubs, close culling will always be necessary to maintain, let alone to advance, the standard of merit; and the fact that this has not always been practiced accounts for the inferior showing, from a utility standpoint, which the poorer class of pure-breeds often make in competition with high-class selected grades. For practical purposes, a high-class grade is more valuable than a medium pure-bred, but a good pure-bred is better than an equally good grade, in that the descendants of the former, if bred pure, will have the prepotency to transmit their excellencies with greater certainty. This fact of prepotency, due to concentration of blood lines and tendencies, is the sole and only reason why pure-breeds are so necessary for improvement of the general stock of the country.

We do not anticipate that the best stock will become uniformly distributed among the rank and

file of farmers. Doubtless, in future, as in the past, the cause of stock improvement will be served by those few men of enterprise and genius who make it a point to assemble in their stables some of the best stock of richest blood lines, and, by intelligent selection, skillful mating, and favorable environment, to produce masterpieces of the breeder's art, just as in swine we still have our noted breeders, notwithstanding the plenitude of pure-breeds throughout the country. But, as in swine, so in other stock, the work of the leading breeders, while not less profitable to themselves, will be much more advantageous to the country when they can draw freely for their studs and herds upon the specially-choice specimens occurring here and there among a large number of pure-breeds kept throughout the country, and when they will no longer be tempted to sell for breeding purposes everything that claims a pedigree certificate.

Of course, the student of this question must realize that one practical difficulty in the way of utilizing animals from commercial herds, even though pure-bred, will be the fact that many stockmen, keeping pure-breeds for every-day purposes, would refrain from recording their stock; so that, after several generations had passed without registration, it might be difficult, under existing herd and stud book rules, to enter ever so deserving a beast. This could and doubtless will be met in time by a judicious relaxation of rules to allow the inclusion of meritorious candidates of evidently pure-breeding. Even were a dilute strain of alien blood occasionally filtered in through such channels, it would doubtless do the breed more good than harm.

The scarcer the supply of desirable pure-bred stock, and the more narrowly its ownership is limited, the greater the cost of pure-bred sires to the general farmer; whilst, on the other hand, the more abundant the supply, the more general the distribution, and the more closely the breeding of pure-bred stock is brought down to an every-day commercial basis, the higher the standard of merit will be raised, the less will be the cost of production, and consequently the selling price of serviceable breeding males. Wherefore, we see that the general dissemination of pure-bred stock over the country promises substantial betterment of live-stock interests, particularly to the dairyman and the raiser of market stock.

WISE AND UNWISE INVESTMENTS IN PURE-BRED STOCK.

Seeing that the premium in price ordinarily commanded by registered stock depends upon their accepted prepotency in the transmission of type and function, owing to the fixation of these characteristics in themselves by reason of concentration of blood lines of ancestors in which the said qualities have been developed, it follows that a pure-bred is valued not for its own merit alone, but also with a view to the prospective value of its progeny, not only of the first, but of subsequent generations. Hence the wisdom of investing in a pure-bred animal will depend upon what use can be made of it. For instance, a man who bought a high-priced registered female to be put in a herd where no registered sire of that breed was available, would be investing most unwisely. A good grade would answer his purpose almost if not equally as well, and would cost him much less to buy. Folly of this kind runs its length when it leads, say, a dairyman to purchase a pedigreed Shorthorn or Aberdeen-Angus, at a good round figure, and then breed it to a dairy