

present, or it would, by this time, be more extensively adopted. If it were the best thing under existing conditions, then we should expect to find it practised, more or less, in prairie countries, where fencing is both scarce and dear; and yet it is not so practised in these. When farmers have no fencing they grow only grain, and sell their grain rather than go to the trouble of soiling stock and of feeding at home the products of the farm. One of the standing excuses of farmers in the west who do not keep live stock is grounded on the fact that fencing is not more plentiful. It would seem, therefore, that it would be a very easy matter indeed to carry the idea of no fencing too far, under existing conditions.

The second view, that we cannot well have too much fencing upon the farms, is also extreme. The supporters of this view argue that it is well to have small fields so that we may easily alternate crops in them, one of the frequent alternations being pasture. But they seem to forget certain facts that should have a very important bearing upon the question of fencing. These include the following: First, the cost of construction. That, in most instances, is very considerable now. In many sections a good fence cannot be built at a cost much short of \$1.00 per rod. It was, of course, different when there was much timber in the way. It could be put into a fence without any cash outlay. But there are very few sections where this can be done now. Second, the cost of maintenance. Even a good fence is much liable to get out of repair, and it must be repaired or it soon becomes of but little use. It does not last very many years until it has to be renewed, and, as has been already shown, all such construction is costly. Third, fences occupy considerable ground. It would not be correct to say that this ground, when occupied with a fence, is not possessed of any value, or does not bring any return; for it does. Sometimes it may be pastured, and when it is not it may be cut for hay. But, nowadays, this means no little outlay, for the fence borders, if cut at all, will have to be cut with the scythe. And, fourth, they gather snowdrifts, which lie long in the spring, and so moisten the ground that it cannot be sown until late in the season, or, at least, until a period considerably later than would be necessary under other conditions. It is evident, therefore, that, while fences may be necessary, the amount of fencing used should be kept down to a minimum.

The third view is decidedly preferable under existing conditions. It is well to have the farm fenced, but not in small fields. The amount of fencing should be gauged somewhat by the character of the rotation. If a four-year system of ro-

tation were adopted, it would seem to be a good plan to have the farm divided into four parts by means of fences. One of these could be seeded with grass for pasture, a second with grass for hay, and the other two sections could be cultivated, one of the grass sections being broken up each year. When managed thus, the amount of fencing would be much less than it is now in many parts of Ontario, and yet it would seem to be enough for ordinary uses. Of course, some paddocks would be wanted. These would be small and located near the buildings, and some additional fencing would probably be wanted to give access to the fields; but the amount of this would not be very large, unless the buildings were located far away from the centre of the farm.

The question of fences, therefore, is likely to be always a vital one, under conditions such as exist in Ontario, for instance. And the same is true also in other parts, if live stock is going to be kept in them. The rails now in use will at length decay, and something will have to be used in their place. This means that posts will be wanted, and very likely in all the future, and, in consequence, the growing of posts should always be a vital question with us. The other material is likely to be wire, but not barbed wire, as at present, except in particular instances. It will include other forms of wire, as, for instance, that which is twisted and woven. Living fences may also be used to some extent, but not to as great an extent as is frequently supposed, unless we get some plant that will suit better for this end than any that has yet been introduced.

Field Crops in the Northwestern States.

The chief of the cereal field crops grown in the Northwestern States are wheat, barley, oats, flax, and, more latterly, rye. Of these wheat is the staple. In some localities, as, for instance, in the valley of the Red River of the north, scarcely anything else is grown. It is a sight to see those fields in harvest time. They present the appearance of one vast sea of gold when the heads have assumed the tinge of ripeness. As far as the eye can reach one sees nothing but fields of the yellow harvest in all its summer richness. Wheat husbandry is the idol before whom the northwestern farmer has bowed down, and to whom he has paid homage. And as long as the price of wheat was good he made money quickly. But when adverse seasons came and prices fell, the wheat farmers learned a lesson which will not be forgotten in their day. When a man puts his sole dependence on one crop, and that one crop fails one year or