

The Farmer's Advocate

and Home Magazine

"Persevere and Succeed."

Established
1866.

REGISTERED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE COPYRIGHT ACT OF 1914.

Vol. XI, IV.

LONDON, ONTARIO, NOVEMBER 25, 1909

No. 896

EDITORIAL.

When one Canadian senator receives \$2,005 for a one-day's sitting, and another \$2,020 for two days, the public would do well to close up the museum.

The advantage of reading agricultural journals consists not so much in the gain of knowledge as in the stimulus of mind and purpose. Reading is an antidote for brain rust.

Instead of summer touring Europe for ideas evolved under greatly different conditions, is it not about time that Ontario settled down to think out for herself an educational policy better suited to her own needs?

"The best calf in the sale would have made any price had his skin been red or roan. As it was he made 350 gs. in spite of his white skin." This sentence, from our Scottish letter, illustrates the vogue of another one of those absurd fads which in all classes of stock has detracted from the pursuit of utility ideals during one generation after another. Were white a disqualifying color in Shorthorns there might be some excuse; but, as it is not, the color prejudice can only be set down as another instance of dropping substance to chase shadows. When shall we learn sanity in breeding?

The study of feeds and feeding problems, while seemingly complex to the uninitiated, is not beyond the comprehension of any farmer with ordinary intelligence and schooling. The rudimentary principles have been often expounded through "The Farmer's Advocate." It is, however, abundantly worth while to procure a book and go into the subject fully. Henry's "Feeds and Feeding" is heartily recommended, as probably the best work we have for the general farmer. It may be ordered through this office for \$2.15, post-paid, or obtained as a premium by any present subscriber for four new yearly paid-in-advance subscriptions.

Aggregate crop production in the United States during the season just closed is estimated at Washington as two per cent. greater than last year, and about nine per cent. greater than the average of the previous five years. Corn is placed at over two and three-quarter billion bushels, an increase of nearly a hundred million bushels over 1908, and of a hundred and eighty-odd millions over the previous five-year average. Fall wheat shows a slight decrease from 1908, but a twenty-million increase over the average from 1903 to 1907. Spring wheat not only registers a substantial increase over 1908, but a still bigger advance, namely, fifty-four million-odd over the five-year average. The total U. S. wheat crop for 1909 is computed at seven hundred and twenty-four and three-quarter millions of bushels. Oats are estimated at over nine hundred and eighty-three and a half million bushels, registering an increase of some hundred and seventy-six million bushels as compared with the 1908 crop, or of a hundred and thirteen millions compared with the previous ten-year average. Potatoes are nearly ninety million bushels ahead of last year. These stupendous yields of crops, vast utterly beyond real comprehension, are the chief source of the wealth and prosperity of our Republican neighbors.

Golden Opportunities.

What a change has taken place in the last few years in the opportunities that farmers have of not only making a living, but of laying by for their children and the proverbial rainy day. To those of no country does this apply with greater force than to the farmers of Canada. Hon. R. L. Borden, in a speech before the Canadian Club, of London, referring to the possibilities opening out to Canadians, said that one word expressed his feelings on returning to Canada after a visit to Britain and the Continent, and observing conditions there. That word was "opportunity." Opportunity used to be pictured by the Ancients, said he, as a figure with long hair in front, but bald behind, the idea being that she was swiftly passing, and that whoever failed to seize her before she passed, had lost his chance. But in Canada, Opportunity walked side by side with every man. And certainly, now is the Canadian farmer's opportunity. In any line in which he may engage returns are large.

It was not always so. In the winter of 1895-96 oats were selling in London, Ont., market at 70 cents per cwt. and under; barley, 24 cents per bushel. Before that time, it was thought that anything under 30 cents a bushel was an abnormally low price, and that there would soon be recovery if prices fell below that. Some farmers, acting on that idea, decided to hold their oats, but when, the next year, the price was but 20 cents per bushel, they scarcely knew what to think. However, in the third season the expected change came, oats again brought 30 to 34 cents per bushel, and ever since there has been little to complain of in the returns from that grain. Not only so, but the prices both last season and this have swung to the other extreme, so that the buyer is the party who has some right to grumble.

Cheese-factory patrons, who for two seasons have been getting from 11 to 12 cents per pound for cheese, will remember only vaguely, or as an unpleasant dream, the season of 1894, when, in Middlesex County, at least, a grasshopper plague cut the pastures bare, very seriously lowering the milk yield, and cheese sold for but six cents per pound. That was indeed a blue season for the factorymen.

These instances of ruinously low prices in two products of the farm are given as extreme cases only of what was experienced a few years ago in many lines. Instances of wheat being sold for 60 cents a bushel, hogs for \$3.50 per cwt., good export cattle at 4 cents live weight, and hay for \$8.00 per ton and under, could easily be cited, and will be remembered.

In justice to the farming class, it ought to be said that, though they felt keenly the shortage of income resulting from prevailing prices in those hard seasons, they made no loud complaint over it. They held themselves in, quietly waiting for the tide to turn.

Now that it has turned, they are as quietly attending to business, feeling good, but not saying much.

It is safe to say that, never within the memory of Canadians were values for farm products so uniformly high as during the past two years. Wheat, of course, has been higher than at present, but a dollar a bushel is fair, and almost everything else is away up. What shall be said of 11 to 12 cents per pound for cheese the season through, of 40 to 50 cents per bushel for oats, of chickens selling for as much as turkeys used to bring, and ducks as much as geese of old; of strictly fresh eggs selling in Toronto in November for 40, 45 and even 50 cents per dozen, with proportionate prices in other towns of 30 cents and upwards? This is only a part of the list, for

reference might be made to the value of hay, barley, butter, export cattle, and last, and perhaps best, live hogs, of whose sustained and increasing value all are aware.

It may be said, to offset this, though only in part, that more has to be paid for things we buy; that wages are much higher, and the same is true of machinery, clothing, boots and shoes, rubbers, and, indeed, almost all supplies. In fact, as an appreciative reader expressed it the other day, about the only thing one doesn't have to pay more for is "The Farmer's Advocate." On the other hand, it must be admitted that most of the things we pay higher prices for, as well as many obtainable at the same old rates, are improved out of proportion to the slight advance in price. Machinery, for example, is being constantly perfected, while ready-made clothing is turned out in many shapes and sizes, and so well gotten up that it is steadily reducing the business of custom tailors.

Taking it all round, the increase in prices on produce we sell much more than compensates for any net advance in what we purchase; so that, as compared with twelve or fifteen years ago, the farmer's business is pleasant and prosperous, with every prospect of remaining so for many years to come. Land values in the progressive farming regions are steadily rising, because the earning power increases, and there is no safer or better investment to-day than rural real estate, providing one is in a position to work it to advantage, and thus realize a fair rate of interest from year to year. Altogether, the farmer in Eastern Canada has come upon halcyon days. It only remains to bestir ourselves, and improve the opportunities with which we are surrounded on every hand.

The Christmas Number.

Plans for the 1909 Christmas Number are practically completed, and ere this announcement is read, the first forms will be off the press. That it may be the more pleasurable and refreshing surprise when it comes, we refrain from disclosing the identity of contributors, or the scope and character of their contributions. Suffice to say the writers include some of the most gifted and eminent agricultural men in three countries, the great majority, however, being Canadians; while, from the bold, pleasing and original front-cover design, to the last advertising page, the contents will please, edify or profit with the turning of every leaf. A strong point is being made of illustrations, selected with a view to variety, interest, and illustrative value. Taking everything into consideration, we may confidently promise that our readers' high expectations, based on previous productions, will not be disappointed in the expensive and handsome issue forthcoming next month.

Why Some Farm Returns are Low.

Many a farmer fails to get adequate returns from his farm because he stays at home too closely, puts in too many hours a day following the plow, and does not often enough visit good farmers in his neighborhood or other sections of the country where good farming is done. Furthermore, a man physically exhausted from a long, hard day's work is in no condition to follow and get much out of the literature of his business, as reported in farm papers, agricultural bulletins, reports and books, and without the advantage of all the information available from every possible source he will find awkward situations, times when some particular problem arises that cannot be solved from his own experiences.

Success in farming calls for the very best effort in a man along all lines. The farmer who is dis-