

Better Farming for Saskatchewan

By A. F. Mantle, Deputy Minister of Agriculture

EDITOR'S NOTE.—The Saskatchewan Department of Agriculture, which is continually breaking out into new lines, is at present maturing plans for rendering service to the farmers of the province in several important directions. In response to a request for information as to the plans of the department with regard to demonstration work, the Deputy Minister, Mr. Mantle, has written for *The Guide* the article published below.

I am pleased to be able to advise you that plans have now been pretty well completed for making a start with both demonstration farm work and farm demonstration work early in the new year. Not only are our plans practically completed, but what is even more important, some funds will be available by that time for the carrying on of this work. It has never been the intention in this province to have a system of government-owned and operated demonstration farms. Our feeling is that the men who most need to be reached thru demonstration farms or other educational agencies, are inclined, very often unjustly, to discount the work done and results obtained on a government owned and operated demonstration farm simply because it is owned and operated by the government. Their comment is, that they could do just as well and obtain the same results if they had the government at their back.

Demonstration Farms

The line we propose to follow, therefore, is, to select a farm that is typical and conveniently located in each district, as we are able to take up the work in the different districts, and a farm, moreover, that is owned and operated by a progressive man who has the confidence of his neighbors, and to seek to enter into an agreement with such a man in each locality, whereby he will undertake to carry on certain lines of demonstration work on his farm. These lines of work will not be elaborate nor will they call for a great deal of extra work or expense on his part. When a piece of demonstration work reaches the point where the truth or practice which is being demonstrated can be pointed out to advantage, we hope to organize gatherings of the farmers of the locality at the demonstration farm and point out whatever is to be pointed out. Results obtained in this way on a farm which is well known to the community, and by a farmer who has not the advantage, if it be an advantage, of government operation or government assistance outside of expert advice, cannot be discounted by the indifferent or critical farmer as can the results obtained on a government owned and operated demonstration farm. I hope that by the time another year is past we may be able to report some substantial development and progress with this line of work.

District Representatives

No doubt you are familiar to some extent with the district representative work that has been carried on to an increasing extent in Ontario during recent years. I believe that the Ontario Department of Agriculture now has a representative, with from one to three assistants in the summer time, and a district office, in at least forty of the counties of Ontario, and spends something like \$160,000 a year in the maintenance of this very effective form of service. Thru the aid of a recent United States statute also, county demonstration agents are being placed in an ever increasing number of counties in all the most progressive states of the union, from an agricultural point of view. These well trained men with local headquarters, local atmosphere and a personal knowledge of local conditions are found to be very effective agents for bettering agricultural conditions. In Saskatchewan, however, we have no counties. Our unit of local self government is the rural municipality, which is only nine townships in extent as a rule, and of which in consequence there are many hundreds in the province. It is obviously impossible, for lack both of trained men and money, for the Provincial Government to place a district representative in each rural municipality in the province. Yet there is plenty of work within the boundaries of any one rural municipality for the

energies of a good man. The noxious weeds question and the Noxious Weeds Act alike require that a rural municipality appoint one or more weed inspectors to deal with this question. Our plan is to encourage rural municipalities to appoint a successful and progressive man to promote better farming in their municipality thruout the summer months, or even thruout the year if possible, instead of merely appointing a kind of police officer to enforce the policy of destroying weeds. Weeds are a by-product of poor farming. If the farming can be improved the weeds will be taken care of and the only need for a weed inspector will be to look after the weeds

is a pretty good start. It remains to be seen how many of these fifty-five councils will continue the policy and how many other councils will adopt it. No doubt in municipalities where a poor man was appointed and did not make good, and in municipalities in which crops were almost a total failure, or where very poor, no secretary will be appointed next year. On the other hand we expect that some municipalities in which crops were normal and which border on municipalities in which good live secretaries worked thruout 1914, will appoint a secretary in 1915. The Department thruout 1914 kept five field representatives at work all over the province meeting these

representatives will be officers of the Provincial Government, all of whose salary and expenses will probably be borne by the Provincial Government with the aid of the Dominion subsidy for agricultural instruction. In Ontario some part of the expenses of the district representative's office are borne by the county authorities. We are suggesting to our municipal authorities that instead of co-operating with us in bearing part of the expenses of the district representative's office, they will themselves select a man who will be their own officer (agricultural secretary) and work entirely within their own municipality and will be paid by them and therefore be responsible to them.

We think that a plan such as this fits into the sparse nature of the settlement of a province such as Saskatchewan pretty well. To the extent that agricultural secretaries are appointed by municipal authorities, district representatives will find in such municipalities a man seeking to further the same interests as the representative is appointed to further, and with whom and thru whom the representative can work in that municipality. There will be no conflict of authority and there will be no divided responsibility such as might arise where municipal and provincial authorities were uniting to maintain an office and support a worker.

SASKATCHEWAN LIVESTOCK COMMISSION

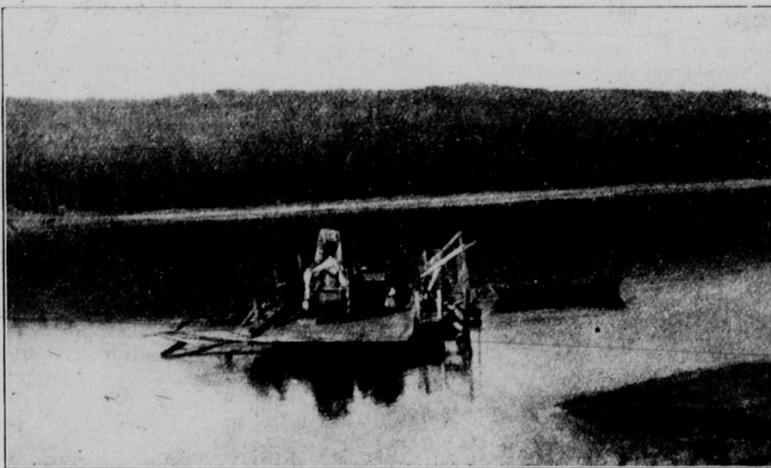
The Saskatchewan Government has appointed a commission of three to inquire into the condition of the livestock industry in South-western Saskatchewan. Inquiry will be made especially into such questions as the restraining of animals from running at large, the advisability of winter herd law, the kind of pounds that are provided for stock and the manner in which pounds are administered. The itinerary of the Commission will be as follows:—Gravelbourg, Nov. 25; Assiniboia, Nov. 26; Willow Bunch, Nov. 27; Wood Mountain, Nov. 28; Limerick, Nov. 30; Vangard, Dec. 1; Ponteix, Dec. 2; Shaunavon, Dec. 3; East End, Dec. 4; Gopher School House (S. 16-T. 5, R. 26, W. 3rd.), Dec. 5; Maple Creek, Dec. 7; Gull Lake, Dec. 8; Swift Current, Dec. 9; Herbert, Dec. 10; Mortlach, Dec. 11.

As the condition of the livestock industry in Southwestern Saskatchewan is a most important question to all settlers in that part of the province, and as it very desirable that the industry should as soon as possible be placed upon a permanent and satisfactory basis which will do justice to the interests of farmers and ranchers alike, it is hoped that all those who are interested will make a serious effort to attend one or more of the sittings of the Commission and give the Commission the benefit of their experience and views on these questions. The Commission is composed of T. R. Brown, of Regina, chairman; C. M. Hamilton, of McTaggart, president of the Saskatchewan Union of Rural Municipalities; and J. D. Simpson, of Moose Jaw, secretary-treasurer of the Saskatchewan Stock Growers' Association. Each of the Commissioners has spent most of his life in Saskatchewan and has been engaged in farming or stock raising in Southern Saskatchewan for a great many years. The personnel of the Commission gives assurance that the questions, which it is appointed to consider will be discussed and dealt with in a practical and broad-minded way.

AN INFERENCE

"The play is said to be an artistic success."

"Are they losing much money on it?"



BOUND FOR THE NORTHLAND
Settler's Outfit ferrying the Peace River on way to Interior

on abandoned lands, road allowances and farms held by absentee owners.

Agricultural Secretaries a Success

In 1914 some 55 rural municipalities, in response to our suggestion, appointed an agricultural secretary instead of a weed inspector, the secretary, of course, having all the power of a weed inspector, but having in addition a great many other duties calculated to improve the farming methods and better rural conditions in his district. These secretaries were appointed for terms varying from three to twelve months. The aggregate amount paid by these 55 councils to these men was \$46,000. Perhaps forty of these fifty-five secretaries are of the type that we wished to see appointed and these forty have done real good work during the past summer. This, you will agree,

agricultural secretaries and the weed inspectors of other municipalities and helped them in whatever ways they could. It is not the purpose of the Provincial Government to saddle the municipalities by means of this agricultural secretary plan with all the work and expense which the Ontario Provincial Government, with the aid of the Dominion subsidy for agricultural instruction, assumes. We still plan to have our district representatives. What I have tried to point out is, that our system of local self-government with its very large number of comparatively small units, does not lend itself to the co-operation between municipal and provincial authorities that the county system in Ontario, and in the States of the Union, makes possible. Our districts will have to be formed without much reference to municipal boundaries and our district



IN THE PEACE RIVER COUNTRY

Man's most ancient servant, the humble bullock, is used much by new coming settlers to the north country on account of its cheapness of maintenance and much cheaper price than the horse.