

Correspondence.

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Road Making.

SIR,—I was pleased last month to see you deal in your incisive and matter-of-fact way with the question of road-making in this country. Without doubt you struck at the root of the difficulty when you said that the statute labor system is what stands in the way of improvement in our roads. In fact the only good roads in Western Ontario are such as were made by Government under the contract system, or have been constructed by counties under a general by-law, and town or private roads built as a business enterprise. As instances I may cite the roads in the County of York; the Macadamized road between Hamilton and Waterloo County; the Brock road between Hamilton and Guelph; the Governor's road between Hamilton and London, and the Bruce County gravel road. These, and such as these, constructed as they were, from 30 to 50, or more years ago, are the only roads, with few exceptions, which have a good solid road-bed. It may be set down as a rule that all roads which have been maintained from the beginning on the statute labor system are no better now than they were 20 years ago, and are simply a standing disgrace to our country. Some sections make a worse exhibit than others, the nature of the soil having something to do with the condition of the highways; but a very great deal, however, depends upon the inhabitants. Without seeking to be too invidious, I think that it is generally conceded that the County of Haldimand lays in the very tail end of the rear in the matter of roads. There has been no public effort made in any way whatever to construct road-beds other than by the most primitive means, and to-day, "as it was in the beginning," there is nothing but the heavy clay, which for adhesiveness is hard to beat, making travel a practical impossibility in spring and fall. It was in Haldimand County Council where the advisability of making two good leading gravel or stone roads was being discussed, that only the Reeve, who was most violent against what he considered the proposed extravagance, said, in the course of his remarks, that he "was opposed to the scheme of building a stone road, because the boys would do injury to their farms by throwing the stones into the fields." The poor man had evidently not been very far from home and didn't want to indulge in the luxury of travelling. At all events he and the majority with him succeeded in burking the much needed improvements, and Haldimand continues to be the most unprogressive county in our country. It is well said that the roads of a country are a good index to the character of a people. A live, energetic and intelligent people will not continue to wallow through mud year after year when a reasonable expenditure will give them good roads. As an instance of the truth of your remarks about the inefficiency of the statute labor system, I may cite the following: A pathmaster on one of the most travelled roads in the county set men with horses, carts and scrapers to work to remove mud or loose soil from one part of the road to another. What the object was I never could learn, but the fact of the removal of the mud was patent, as it was dumped in little heaps for a long distance all over the road-bed and left without spreading or fixing in any way whatever. When the mud hardened the highway was in the worst condition imaginable.

It is useless to waste time in arguing the question. The statute labor system is no longer a benefit. It may have been necessary in the early years of settlement, when the farmers were unable to pay out ready money for road-making, and when good work was done. People were earnest in whatever they did in those days, but the present generation look upon road-work more in the light of a holiday spell. I have seen half-a-dozen men with picks and shovels and a span of horses and a wagon, who did less work in a day than two men would do by honest work with a wheelbarrow. Not one pathmaster in fifty knows the first prin-

ciples of road-making, culvert building, or ditching, and but few of them care to learn.

I hope you will continue to show up the disgraceful state of roads, and expose the shortcomings of all public men who stand in the way of the progress of our country.

CANADENSIS, Paris, Ont.

SIR,—Would you kindly tell me how to measure off an acre of land correctly, as I do not know exactly how many feet go to the acre? Also if raspberries, currants, gooseberries and apples will grow here, the thermometer going as low as 35° and 40° below zero in winter? Also if clovers will do here, and what kind of grasses would be best to use in seeding down a piece of land which I want for hay and pasture?

QUEBEC, Indian Head, N. W. T.

[Our correspondent can measure an acre in several ways. For instance, an acre contains 160 square rods, and by using any multiple of this or divisor, gives the sides of the field. For instance:

160 rods	160 rods
— = 16 and 10	— = 20 and 8
10	8

Which would be respectively the sides of an acre in rods. With regard to the raising of apples, we are doubtful if only the hardier varieties would flourish on the open prairie; but we think if the Russian plan were followed of planting the trees thickly and keeping cut down low so as to form a protection, they may be raised the same as in Russia. We have seen several orchards in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia planted on this plan which were a success. We should like to hear from any of our subscribers in the North-west on this important subject. There is nothing to hinder the smaller fruits you speak of from thriving. It is doubtful if clover will succeed during such rigorous winters—the root would be apt to heave out. Timothy, Orchard and Kentucky Blue grass should thrive, but the only way to determine all these points of the growth of fruit and grasses is to try experiments for yourself, as different places are influenced by local circumstances.]

SIR,—(1.) Can you give in the ADVOCATE any information respecting any tile machine for use on the farm? I saw one at an exhibition once in Guelph. It was worked by hand, set in the drain, tiles being made and laid in one continuous pipe, made of water lime and coarse sand. Could you say anything respecting the merits or demerits of such a machine, where it can be got, the price, &c.?(2.) I have some natural growth apple trees (not yet bearing). They are almost covered with something like lice about 3-32 of an inch long. What are they? What should be done with them? Expecting an early visit of the ADVOCATE, I remain,

W. S. G., Goldstone.

[1. Can any of our correspondents give the desired information? 2. The louse you complain of is the *Aphis*; the remedy is spraying your trees with a solution of carbolic acid.]

SIR,—Can you give any good formulae for preparing bones for the land that will not be expensive, other than grinding? Please answer through the columns of your journal and oblige.

H. H., St. John, N. B.

[Bones may be reduced in several ways. By burying in horse manure until decomposition takes place; by the chemical action of unleached ashes; burying the bones until the alkaline action decomposes them; or take one-third part of sulphuric acid to the weight of bones to be reduced, and dilute one-half by water, and leave until the bones become soft.]

SIR,—Would you be so kind as to tell me, through your valuable paper, what is the reason of young turkeys dying at the age of from three to four weeks old?

W. M. W., Shannonsville.

[At this period they are tender, and we know of no cause only damp, unclean quarters, and cold. They should be kept in-doors, especially a cold spring like this, until the day is far advanced, and not let out at all if anyway stormy.]

SIR,—Would you kindly inform me through your valuable columns or otherwise which is the best method of growing sweet potatoes, the time for planting, the nature of the soil required and where the best seed can be obtained? I would like to grow some this season and would be thankful for any information.

T. G., Sandwich.

[See answer to J. Y., on page 115, April No.]

SIR,—I wish you, if possible, in June No. to give your opinion, and that of others of experience, of the best way to start an egg farm, the best buildings, and the best breed of fowls for the business,—that is, those that can be disposed of for table fowls as soon as their usefulness is gone?

C. N., Northport, Ont.

[To give full and satisfactory information on poultry raising on a large scale would require more space than could be supposed to be devoted to ordinary newspaper correspondence. We are of the opinion that poultry raising on a large scale is extremely hazardous, from the fact that not more than fifty hens should be allowed to run in one flock, owing to the liability to contract disease; hence on a poultry farm it would be required to have separate houses, at least ten rods apart, for each fifty fowls. Each of these houses would cost, with rough boards, about \$25. For every fifty hens half an acre should be allowed. Of course the success will greatly depend upon experience and knowledge of care and management. We would advise our correspondent to start on a small scale and gradually extend his operations as he finds the business pays. By no means make a large outlay on an egg farm without a thorough knowledge of the business. The Plymouth Rocks, Leghorns, Dorkings and Asiatics are all good, either as layers or table fowls.]

SIR,—I see an inquiry in your May number about wire-worms eating corn, and I will send you my plan. I have used wood ashes with good effect. I do not condemn old pasture because we raise some of our crops of corn on this kind of land. Give it plenty of room and good cultivation, and do not be afraid to claw some of the dirt from the roots and sprinkle on some wood ashes.

R. T. C., Ingersoll, Ont.

SIR,—If I may be allowed a suggestion, I think it would meet with general response from your farmer friends, if you were occasionally to advocate agricultural education. You are all right in Ontario with your Guelph College; the farmers and people generally should be proud of such an institution. Those of our young men who have graduated there speak in the highest terms of it. We want in Nova Scotia a similar establishment; in fact we should have an experiment station in every county. The necessity of such a depot of agricultural and horticultural knowledge is apparent from the numerous inquiries that appear in your monthly issues on the most common-place subjects. These are not my views alone. They are being canvassed in the societies, agricultural clubs and the granges. As the ADVOCATE carries weight, it will help to forward this much desired object. The men in our Lower House are chance men; they don't know their constituents. Law, physic and the shop comprise the batch, and agriculture is out in the cold. The people in the country districts are beginning to feel the effects of the chill.

W. K. O. H., Wolfville P. O., N. S.

SIR,—Send a description of the Southern fodder corn, and also instructions how to plant it.

G. C., Charlottetown, P. E. I.

[Ensilage corn or Southern corn fodder, either for drying, ensilaging or silos, may be sown broadcast or planted in drills ten inches apart. Half a bushel to the acre either way is sufficient; sow from the first to the middle of June.]

SIR,—Please answer the following and oblige: At the Lucknow Spring Show the owner of the horse that the judges awarded the second prize, refused to take the ticket, expecting to get the first prize. Can he compel the society to pay him the prize money if he calls for it? 2nd—Would it be legal for the judges to give the second prize to the horse they intended to give third prize, after the second prize one refused to take his ticket?

R. B. R., Amberley.

[The person to whom the judges awarded the second prize can legally collect the money from the society, unless the judges reversed their decision previous to leaving the ring.]

SIR,—Will you please, in your next issue, give your opinion as to the best time to sow plaster on clover? I contend that the clover should be far enough advanced so that the leaf will receive the plaster, but would like to have your opinion on the subject. By so doing you will oblige.

A SUBSCRIBER, Campbellford.

[The time to sow plaster will depend upon the advancement of the season. The best time is when the plant is about six inches high.]