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FARMING IN THE MUSKOKA DISTRICT

Contrary to the Opinion held by many, Muskoka is not a land of Summer Resorts only; it has much Arable land on which Clovers, Potatoes and Cereal Crops excel, and upon which a high-class of Live Stock is kept

THAT the Muskoka District has large agricultural possibilities and is not simply a summer resort as many imagine, is evidenced by the well-kept farms, the comfortable residences and the fine appearance of the farmers of that portion of Ontario. That the country is by nature adapted to the production of live stock and dairying was brought home to one of the editors of Farm and Dairy while judging last fall at some of the fairs in the section. Horses, cattle, sheep, swine and poultry of a class and quality, of which any community might be proud, were found at the exhibitions throughout the district. The horses, in particular, especially those in the draught, agricultural and general purpose classes, would be hard to beat in any section. Dairying, in the form of home buttermaking, flourishes. The people are evidently masters of the art of buttermaking, if the quality and flavor of the butter exhibited at their fairs is any just criterion.

Possibly the natural advantages of the country can be set forth best by a reference to one of its farmers who has made a success of his business under adverse circumstances. Twenty years ago, Mr. J. J. Beaumont, a Norfolk farmer in England, who was operating a large farm, was struck by the hard times and was disposed of practically his last pound. Realizing that his chances of ever rising to his old level, were against him if he remained in the Old Country, his thoughts naturally turned to Canada. He accordingly headed for the Muskoka District and stopped at Bracebridge. Mr. Beaumont, as is the practice with landed gentry in the Old Country, had never been used to practical hard work on the farm. He was thoroughly conversant, however, with the ways of doing things as he had always been of an inquiring mind and wanted to learn and understand all things in connection with farming. He had worked for short intervals at all kinds of farm work, having done it in the spirit of fun as well as from his desire to acquaint himself with farm operations that he might the better direct his laborers.

FIRST EXPERIENCE

On reaching Bracebridge, he applied to a farmer for work. The farmer, noting that he was an Englishman, was rather loth to employ him. After assuring his prospective employer that if he

did not know much of farming he could at least learn, Mr. Beaumont was taken on and set to work mowing timothy with the scythe, along with some other workmen. The employer, wishing to make it as hard as possible for the new man, gave him the poorest scythe. His co-laborer, however, noting the inferior tool, traded with him and smashed the worn out implement in full view of his employer. This necessitated the purchase of a new scythe. The new man soon proved that he could do things and that he was in dead earnest. He continued with this farmer for four months, during which time, he had become acquainted with his surroundings and had proven at least that he knew something of farming.



A Barn Typifying Agricultural Progress in the Muskoka District

A special feature of this barn is its covered gangways or approaches to the barn floor, one of which may be seen beside the silo. The stables under this barn are well lighted and ventilated. Read the adjoining article.

A neglected nearby farm, which had been rented for some time, was, in the fall of the year, on the market for a tenant. The farm had a bad name in the neighborhood, however it appealed to Mr. Beaumont. He was advised by his best friends, and by all that knew him, that the farm was useless and that he would make a great mistake if he had anything to do with it. However, he thought he knew land when he saw it and he was satisfied that the farm could be made one of the best if not the best in the neighborhood. Accordingly, he took a five-year lease of this farm, with an option of buying. Ere the five years were up, he became thoroughly convinced of the value of the land and accordingly purchased it. To-day, Mr. Beaumont has the same 1,100 acres, 200 acres of which is under cultivation; a large part in rock pasture and the remainder in wood and timber.

It is as fine a farm as one could wish for.

CROPS GROWN

The principal grain crop grown is oats. Peas are sometimes grown successfully but of recent years they have been damaged owing to high water backing up from Muskoka Lake. No trouble of this kind was ever experienced until the last two years. When the C. N. R. built through on the west side of Muskoka Lake, they filled one of its outlets and erected a large swing bridge over another. The pier, on which this bridge swings, blocks up about one-third of the channel. With these two natural outlets, more or less stopped, the high water in the spring cannot get away fast enough. Consequently, it backs up into the river's mouth, doing much damage to the farm crops as well as being a constant menace to cottages and bathhouses on the islands. Mr. Beaumont is circulating a petition among the various property holders surrounding the lake and he hopes to have these waterways opened ere long by order of the Dominion Railway Commission.

Clover, the common red variety, grows luxuriantly wherever sown. On Mr. Beaumont's farm, all land devoted to cereals is seeded to clover. On all fields where crops had been removed was to be seen a catch of clover which would be the pride of any farmer in Older Ontario. So well is clover adapted to this country that it grows in profusion even along the roadside. The high water above referred to is its only detriment.

Several acres of corn are grown to furnish fodder for the cattle in winter. Last fall, a new tub silo 15 x 28 ft. was erected. At the time of our visit, this had just been filled. It seems impossible to grow mangolds with any degree of success. Turnips are grown instead. The soil is a sandy loam and it grows turnips to perfection. A large acreage of as fine turnips as one could wish for was to be seen in this section.

THE BARN AND STABLES

A few years ago, Mr. Beaumont re-modelled his old barn and made considerable additions to it. He now has a modern, improved barn, 80 x 42 ft. well laid out and equipped with labor-saving devices such as the hay fork, and litter carrier. A novel feature of this barn is its covered gangways or approaches to the barn floor. Under these are the root houses.

"These covered gangways are one of the best features of the barn," said Mr. Beaumont. "Although the barn has a basement under it, it is possible to drive in one side and out the other, and the gangway never becomes slippery in wet weather."

Everything grown in the shape of fodder is fed on the farm. When Mr. Beaumont started on