

Alva, the Farm Home of the Dominion Minister of Agriculture.

In Brome County, the constituency he represents in the Federal Parliament, and nearly equidistant from Knowlton and Foster stations on the Canada Pacific Railway, about three miles from either, and seventy miles east of the City of Montreal, is the farm of the Hon. Sydney Fisher, Minister of Agriculture for the Dominion, situated in the rich and fruitful section of the Province of Quebec familiarly known as the Eastern Townships. The property borders on Brome Lake, a pretty sheet of water about five miles long by three miles wide, surrounded for the most part by densely wooded hills, the full foliage of the trees, evergreen and deciduous, the latter brilliantly tinted by the touch of the autumn frosts, as seen in the sunlight of an early October day, giving the lake the appearance of a gem in an emerald and crimson setting. On a point of the farm overlooking the lake and commanding a charming view of picturesque landscape is located the spacious and substantial residence and the well-kept grounds and lawn sloping gently to the pebbly beach. Shelter belts of wide-spreading spruce, pine and other evergreen trees, planted many years ago by the hands of the owner, afford protection from the north and western winds, while here and there are openings giving glimpses of the shining and sometimes surging surface of the

wooden silo, the Minister claiming to have been the first to build a wooden silo in Canada, and one of the first to build a silo of any kind.

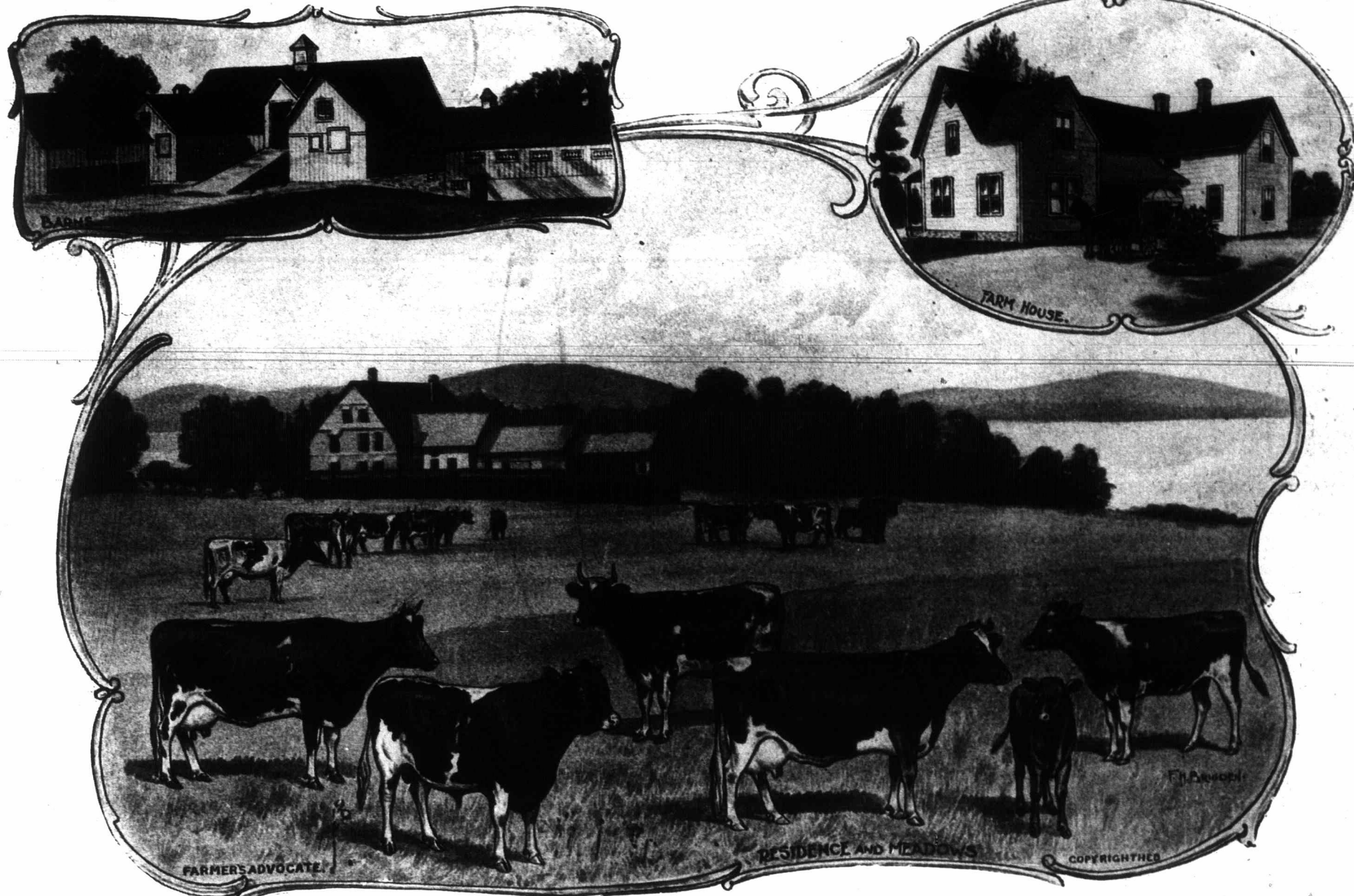
The rotation of crops followed is a short one, and consists in plowing sod in fall for oats and peas, followed by corn and roots. Next year oats seeded down with clover and timothy, alsike and red-top. Hay is cut for two years, and the sod plowed down for grain crop again. Pastures only on rough land, and on aftermath of meadow the year before being plowed down. Sheep are kept for the double purpose of growing mutton and clearing the pasture land of weeds and briars, and Mr. Fisher highly approves of sheep for the latter purpose while land is in stump, and believes the farmers of the Province might profitably keep many more sheep than they do.

THE FARM BUILDINGS.

though erected many years ago, and not as pretentious as some of more recent erection illustrated in this issue, are neat in appearance, commodious, well-arranged and up-to-date in appointments, being well ventilated, lighted by electricity from the village plant, the walls kept whitewashed, and water conveyed in pipes from springs on the hillside to troughs before the animals, and is on tap in every department. The basement cattle stable has stalls for 50 head, besides a number of roomy box stalls and wide passages. Cattle are fed in winter, morning and

market, which is good. The stock to be wintered will consist of 50 head of cattle, seven horses, 20 sheep, and about 30 head of pigs are fed off. About a carload in all of bran, oil cake and cotton-seed meal will be purchased, and to offset this there is on hand 20 tons of hay more than can be consumed, and which may be sold if the price justifies it. In so far as we have described it, this is an ordinary stock and dairy farm, carried on without any extravagant expenditure, and made to pay its own way under methods which the average farmer of moderate means may well adopt. The Minister, however, figures also in the list of breeders of pure-bred stock, the principal stock feature of the farm being the excellent collection of registered Guernsey cattle kept at Alva, numbering some forty head in all, at the head of which is the grand young bull, Golden Lad, imported with his dam, Cora Hayes, the rich and deep-milking cow selected by Mr. Robertson for the Experimental Farm at Nappan, N. S., last year.

A useful herd of these rich butter-producing cows, with their quiet dispositions and great capacity for converting provender into a salable product in concentrated form and at fair profit, constitute the working dairy herd on the farm, the surplus of their offspring being in increasing demand at good prices. A handsome lot of heifers, principally sired by Nereus, the former head of the herd, winner of first prize at Toronto and Ottawa,



THE FARM HOME OF HON. SYDNEY FISHER, DOMINION MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, KNOWLTON, QUEBEC, CANADA.

little lake. Neatly-trimmed hedges of spruce and hemlock, the most perfect we have ever seen, set off the grounds and screen the well-cultivated and fruitful garden and orchard and the outbuildings in the rear. The farmhouse and barns, etc., are a little back near the highroad. The farm, which now embraces 400 acres, was purchased in 1873, being then in a rough and neglected state, largely overgrown with second-growth timber, and the ambitious young owner, fresh from college, having graduated from Cambridge University, and choosing farming as his vocation, selected the site for his homestead, and with his own hands assisted in clearing the stumps from the land which now forms the lovely lawn by the lakeside, as well as from most of the portions of the farm now under cultivation. About 200 acres are yet in woodland, and over 100 acres in rough pasture, partly too stony for profitable farming, and the balance still studded with stumps, the woods having been only removed in recent years. Sixty-five acres of strong clay lands are in meadow and crop, the principal grain crop being oats. Some peas are grown, but a considerable extent of the farm, lying too low for successful tile drainage, is used mainly for meadow and oats, the uplands being devoted to roots and ensilage corn, some seven acres of the latter being grown each year. This year about 100 tons of well-cared corn was harvested, and is preserved in a

evening, a mixture of ensilage and the hay of poorer quality passed through the cutter. The grain fed is added to this. At noon a feed of best quality hay, uncut. All straw for bedding is passed through the straw cutter, except that for box stalls. The litter from the horse stable is thrown into a manure shed situated between the horse and cattle stables, where all is kept under cover, the pigs being allowed to work it over for exercise, when it is mixed with the manure from the cattle stables and pigery, the whole being hauled to the fields and spread upon the fall-plowed land for corn and roots, except when snow is too deep, when it is piled in the field, to be distributed when the snow is gone. A cream separator, driven by tread power, is used at one end of the stable, the cream and the parts of separator coming in contact with milk being taken to the dairy building, which is kept strictly clean and sweet. The milk is fed to calves and pigs, and the butter, put up in prints or in small paper pails of three pounds, is sold to patrons in Montreal at a few cents above market price.

A few good breeding sows, Chester Whites, are kept, and the pigs are cheaply raised in summer, pasturing on a mixture of oats, tares and clover until the last six weeks before marketing, when they are fed ground oats and shorts, with a few whole peas, when they lay on flesh rapidly, and make a very satisfactory product for the local

1897, and first prize and sweepstakes at the New Brunswick and Nova Scotia Provincial Exhibitions, 1898, will soon increase the numbers and the milking capacities of the herd. A few good grade dairy heifers are purchased in the fall to assist in consuming the fodder on hand, and are sold in the spring at a profit when about coming into use as milkers. The whole herd has been tested twice a year for several years back with tuberculin, and are all sound. No animal is brought in except after test. Mr. Fisher is thoroughly practical in his views and methods of farming, giving personal attention, in so far as his public duties permit, to every detail of the management of the farm and stock, and has a genuine liking for the study and practice of agriculture on his own farm, while his experience as a practical farmer and stock breeder has given him a thorough knowledge of the difficulties and disabilities which his fellow farmers have had to contend with, and a real interest in seeking to accomplish their removal. In this he has been eminently successful, as evidenced by the abolition of the irksome cattle quarantine between Canada and the United States, which has resulted in an immense increase in our cattle trade, the securing of the application of the tuberculin test in Great Britain in the case of cattle purchased for importation to Canada, thus facilitating the introduction of much-needed new blood to our herds of pure-bred