

FARM

Evidence is Against Mr. Benson

EDITOR FARMER'S ADVOCATE:

Apropos of Mr. Benson's figures, the facts of Mr. Benson's farming would be much more interesting, and I think somewhat of a contrast to the figures of that imaginary farm. I think I have read Mr. Benson himself to the effect that he does not believe in summer fallowing (of which the only good that can be said, is that it is not quite so bad as continual cropping), that seventy acres, as he deals with it, should give at least \$400 net in barley, to add to that \$14 profit. Again, I expect that from the horse stock, with which Mr. Benson works his farm, he is able to raise at least one or more colts worth \$200 each at four years. Instead of selling all his grain to the elevator, he might sell a portion of it to that colt, allow \$100 for this and other expense, he will have another \$100 to add to that \$14. If this is not sufficient, I have no doubt some of the successful farmers near him could show him a few more little items, but if practical and successful farmers publish statements of farming operations, the only useful and interesting ones are the actual facts of their farming. I would just ask Mr. Benson this, does he know any farmers who settled upon their farms with practically no capital, and who have made a fair living for themselves and families, whose money and possessions to-day are in the thousands, irrespectively of the value of the land? If not, I think I could introduce him to scores, and if one includes the money they have spent in permanent improvements, buildings, etc., it will run into tens of thousands.

The farmer is a proverbial and privileged grumbler. One might divide them into two classes, the philosophical, rather cheerful grumbler and the pessimistic complaining one, and it is the latter class who are most apt to write to the papers. Good and well-informed as was the evidence before the tariff commission, there seemed a tendency to complain, that the farmer was not making as much money as the manufacturer. It is ridiculous to compare the income of a man employing hundreds, perhaps thousands, of workmen, to the farmer who probably averaged one; rather compare his lot to that of the mechanic. Suppose the mechanic is given a little plot of land and by diligence and application is able to build himself a small house thereon at the end of a few years, he finds himself in this position, land worth \$7500, at 7 per cent per annum, \$562; \$2.75 per week for four members of family (we will leave out Mr. Benson's fifth member, who I presume is the hired man), \$440; cash \$14 per annum; equals \$1016 per annum plus house rent free, in most cases free fuel, the very lowest taxes, no anxiety as to loss of employment, occasional days sickness, little or no pecuniary loss, independence, and many other little things I need not go into. Would he not consider his lot a comfortable one? Yet something like this is the analogy. Most farmers do not seem to know when they are making money, they are making capital in the shape of machinery, horses, buildings, etc., and because they have not cash to spare while doing so, cry out that they are worked to death and make nothing. This leads to the question, "Is it to the benefit of the country generally that they should make money?" The instances are getting too numerous of farmers making sufficient money to leave their farms, while still perfectly able to conduct them. There would be no objection to this, if the people, who take their place either as tenant or purchasers, were in a position to farm these places properly, as a rule they are not. The original farmer made his money on a new rich farm, free from foul weeds, a tenant comes, paying the rack rent of one third of the crop, without means to stock or work the place properly, and leaves it more impoverished and dirtier. A purchaser at \$7500 per half section, perhaps with only \$500 to pay in cash, assumes a mortgage of \$7000, expecting a further rise in land values to let him out of his quagmire; result, land dying of overwork, starvation, and two men trying to live off what is fast becoming a dirty desert. You may think this overdrawn and pessimistic, but I see it going on all over older Manitoba, and those who are thinking of selling or renting to impecunious men would do well to consider it. Of course there are men buying who

have the means and capital to farm these lands successfully, but they are the exceptions.

Is England in a better position with land worth £50 an acre, owned by few men, often embarrassed by their tenants inability to make it pay, than she would be if land was worth £1 an acre and owned by the individual, who occupied and farmed it? Why is French husbandry so prosperous, chiefly because so large a proportion of the farmers own their farms? Let us try and follow their example. I mentioned weeds. The absurdity of supposing that a whole country over-run with noxious weeds, can be cleaned by Acts of Parliament, inspectors, path-masters pottering about road allowances, etc., is too laughable. Suppose an inspector has the legal right to destroy a private individual's crop (without compensation) where is he going to draw the line? If I have 5 per cent of noxious weeds, my neighbor 10 per cent, another 20 per cent and so on, whose crop shall he decide to leave undestroyed? An inspector may do a lot of good in a new district, warning the inexperienced and educating them as to what are noxious weeds, before the country becomes infested, but in these already dirty districts, it seems to lead the happy-go-lucky ones to think that something is being done for them and they need not take too much trouble themselves, but damn the Government for not enforcing their Act, when the weeds increase.

Lorne Municipality.

A. J. MOORE.

Clover and Timothy Mixtures.

EDITOR FARMER'S ADVOCATE:

I notice in your last issue of the Farmer's Advocate that you advise farmers, who intend to sow clover to sow it mixed with timothy, six pounds of Red clover to three pounds of timothy, which will make nine pounds to be sown to the acre. My opinion is, this test will not prove satisfactory in most cases for the reason, that it is too little of the timothy per acre to give a satisfactory crop. Should the clover fail, it will allow the weeds to grow to a very great extent, which will be very discouraging to the sower. On the other hand, if he puts enough timothy seed in the land to ensure a good catch, it will not interfere with the clover, if the clover came through the winter in good shape. Timothy seems to be of a nature that it will grow or live in the land in a very confined state, until it has a chance for itself. While I believe that nine pounds of mixed seed is sufficient for an acre, I would much rather sow at the rate of five pounds of clover and four pounds of timothy mixed to an acre or one bushel of clover and one of timothy on twelve acres.

Dufferin.

JOS. A. RUSSELL.

Another Sample Market Man.

EDITOR FARMER'S ADVOCATE:

In your issue of January 24th appears an article headed "Grades as an Advertisement," which I think is both timely and to the point. From all accounts it is an undisputed fact that our grades are higher than those of our neighbors across the line, and it certainly does seem that we are shooting at the goose but hitting the gander, when we reason that by keeping our grades high, we are to be able to keep up a reputation, or command a premium for high grade wheat, when we consider the amount of 1 Hard produced and consider the relative values of grades here and at Duluth. Also consider that the price of 1 Hard is only 1 cent above 1 Northern and 1 Northern here is equal to 1 Hard at Duluth inspection. How many farmers are to lose by the abolition of the present high standard of 1 Hard by lowering it sufficient to admit of the present 1 Northern?

From the best information obtainable it would appear, the delegation of farmers, who attended the conference in Winnipeg last Spring to investigate the Sample Market proposition, were misled by the more vitally interested members of the conference, the officials of the C. P. R. and a few grain men, and were persuaded that it would not be in the interests of the producer to have a Sample Market at present, using as an argument that it was going to delay shipment and encourage mixing, neither of which the grain growers wished to be held responsible for. But as subsequent developments have shown how a Sample Market would be beneficial, not only to the farmer, who ships direct, but also to the Elevator Companies, whose local buyers have made a great many mistakes this season by buying slightly smutted wheat for straight grade and as they are the direct losers in many cases, they are not only willing but anxious to see the Sample Market established, and if it is not established before next season, the local buyers will have such caution re grades, they will be paying rejected prices for straight grades, so would beg to second your suggestion, that the matter be given due consideration at the coming Convention and a definite decision arrived at.

H. A. FRASER.
SEC. HAMOTA G. G. A.

Testimony re Smut in Wheat.

EDITOR FARMER'S ADVOCATE:

In your issue of January 31, 1906, you asked your readers for letters on any subject presenting itself to them. There is a great deal of talk about poor bluestone. My belief is, have the best and use it in the best known way, if it is worth doing at all, do the bluestoning the very best way you can. To my mind it is not necessary to bluestone wheat, I want to say right here that I have farmed in Manitoba for twenty-five years, I have never grown a bushel of any kind of wheat but Red Fife. I never used an ounce of bluestone in my life and I never had smut that caused me one cent of loss, as near as I can remember; there has been an odd smut ball in my wheat three different years, but they were so scarce you would look a good while before you would find one. I grow wheat without bluestoning or smut by sowing good clean seed and using a little judgment in the depth to sow. First when stacking, which I always do, I select what I think is the best wheat for seed and put up enough in a setting to do for seed and bread. Keep it separate when threshing and never change seed except from the different kinds of soil on my own farm, never sowing two years in succession from the same kind of soil; my seed originated from Mr. Saunderson of Souris, the prize winner with Red Fife, and is pure as any I have seen.

I clean my seed thoroughly; from three to five times through the fanning mill. If necessary, I take it up in my hand and look at it after going through twice, then I test it with the mill, cleaning out the box and all dirt around and as long as there are any small grain come into the box I continue putting it through again and again until no small kernels come into the box. Then I think it fit to sow, and you can depend upon it there are no foul seeds in it by the time you have every small kernel out, consequently a clean farm. Now, Mr. Editor, this is the kind of doctrine I would like to hear the seed grain special preach. If farming was done along these lines there would be less complaints about dockage on cars of wheat shipped. I have lost one per cent on all wheat shipped this season. I must say that I have my farm fenced in and keep my stock at home and see that my neighbors' stock stay off; the only way to keep clear of noxious weeds.

I said "judgment in depth of sowing," in the early part of the spring when there is little growth, I sow very light, from three quarters of an inch to one inch deep and as the growth increases so must the depth until two inches is reached which to my mind is deep enough at any time. If there is not sufficient moisture two inches down to start the wheat, I think the chances very small for the crop until rain comes. If sown deep it may come up with roots away down say four inches but as soon as rain comes it will take a new root about one and a half to two inches from the surface consequently the seed has two sets of roots to start out and not only has it two roots to set agoing but being sown say from three to four inches deep there can be no growth that far down in the early spring. In my mind, seed cannot lie in the moist ground and do nothing. It must either grow or decay (rot) unless there is heat enough in the ground to germinate it, by the time there is heat enough to start seed three or four inches in depth it has lost part of its strength and sends up a weak plant, just the same as if you had sown a small weak kernel nearer the surface and it comes away at once after sowing. It seems to me that it is from these weak plants that we get smut. A good proof of my theory was given at our institute meeting when a neighbor gave his experience. He had planted a certain number of good strong seeds by rule measure, first lot one inch, second one and a half inches, third two inches, fourth two and a half inches, fifth three inches; all from the same bin of seed—first fair crop no smut, second good, no smut, third good crop, two or three smutty heads, fourth not so good and considerable smut, fifth about one half smut.

I think another good helper to grow smut is the disk drill. It is almost impossible to keep it from going into the ground; this year my neighbors that used disks had smut in plenty, where people on the same section sowed with the shoe drill had none. I hear the learned say that bluestone kills the weak grains, and prevents them sending out weak plants, it seems to me if it will kill one it must weaken the others.

Glen Souris Farm.

TULLY ELDER.