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THE HORSE.

Britain's Remount Service During Wartimes.

EDITOR "THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE":

By the courtesy of the Director-General of Remounts for the British army we are able to give some interesting facts and figures showing the growth, expansion and magnitude of the Remount Service during the War.

At the outbreak of War (August, 1914) the British Army possessed 19,000 horses.

The following table shows the totals, year by year, in all theatres of war—horses and mules:

	Aug., 1914	Aug., 1915	Aug., 1916	Aug., 1917	Aug., 1918
United Kingdom	25,000	234,161	146,752	137,595	91,289
France		232,635	409,730	449,880	391,458
*Egypt		68,155	53,233	71,788	106,316
Salonika			58,988	81,200	41,618
Mesopotamia				64,657	80,947
East Africa				4,244	1,766
Italy	1,076	4,681	23,731		19,310

*Does not include many thousands of camels and oxen.

Does not include donkeys and oxen.

Total horses purchased in the United Kingdom since mobilization, 468,088.

Total Shipped from North America.

	Horses	Mules	Total
To the United Kingdom	411,473	205,231	616,704
To France and the Mediterranean direct.	7,691	64,224	71,915
	419,164	269,455	688,619

North America shipped a total of 411,473 horses and 205,231 mules to the United Kingdom, and 7,691 horses and 64,224 mules to France and the Mediterranean direct, making a grand total of 419,164 horses and 269,455 mules.

Out of the number shipped 6,962 horses and mules were lost through sickness and 6,667 were lost by enemy action, making a total loss in shipping of 13,629 or 1.97 per cent.

The average wastage per annum of army animals in the United Kingdom during the war has been 12 per cent. This compares extraordinarily well with 8.23 per cent. of sick, dead and casting for disease, and 6.57 casting for other causes, making a total of 14.80 per cent., which was the annual wastage under peace conditions just before the war.

Compare also with horses in civilian use. Three of our biggest railway companies show an average per annum of 10 per cent sick and 10 per cent resting. Three large business firms given an average of 20 per cent. sick and resting. The average wastage of commercial firms may be put at 20 per cent. per annum.

The highest total of animals in France with the British armies was reached in June, 1917—460,000. The loss from all causes that year was also the highest recorded, namely, 28 per cent., which was largely the result of the Somme offensive and a very trying cold spring.

In Eastern theatres losses have been far less than in France, due to less fierce and only intermittent fighting as well as to favorable climatic conditions. Here are some figures:

Italy less than 1 per cent. per month.

Salonika, 8 to 10 per cent. per annum.

Egypt, 10 per cent. to 14 per cent. per annum.

Mesopotamia, 8 to 10 per cent. (since the War Office took over the administration from the Indian Government.)

It is estimated that of our animals now in France, 27 per cent. are sound and under 8 years old, 44 per cent. between 9 and 12 years; and 19 per cent. are either over 12 or unsound.

A considerable number will be wanted for the army of occupation. They will come home eventually. At present plans have been made to repatriate and distribute for sale all over Great Britain a great many more. The Belgian Government is being provided with 50,000 animals to assist in re-construction. The devastated districts of France will, no doubt, take many more.

As regards sales at home in the immediate future: there are 25,000 good surplus horses which are being put on the market between now and the end of January. By that date we shall have others freed and sales all over Great Britain will be kept up as required by the public.

In the last 4 years we have taken from Great Britain 17 per cent of its working horse population, and we are now to put that number back if required.

Only the best class of horses are to be brought back from France, i.e., the pick of the horses which are sound and under 12 years of age.

The Horse Controller has given us coupons for issue when a horse sold, which entitles him to the ration of 7 lbs. of hay, and it is understood that 7 lbs. will now be given for pleasure, (riding and carriage) horses. The ration, it is hoped, will shortly be increased to 10 lbs.

ALBION.

Handle the Colts During Winter

There are many colts that will by spring have reached the age at which they will be expected to work. The practice too often followed, of not taking any trouble to educate them or fit them for work until the season in which work must be done has arrived, and then, without any preparation, expecting them to give reasonable satisfaction, is not less irrational than harmful and expensive. Under such conditions the animal will fret, tire, lose flesh, get sore shoulders, etc., and become practically useless for a greater or less time. This is the normal result, and should be expected; and, while we occasionally notice the contrary result, we, upon consideration, wonder why it is so. The colt frets because he is at once required to go in harness without education. He tires easily because his muscular system is not accustomed to such exertion, hence the muscles are soft, lack tone, and cannot withstand the more or less severe exertion they are called upon to perform. His respiratory organs also are called upon to perform, without preparation, increased functions, and this tends to exhaustion. He loses flesh on account of want of muscular and respiratory tone, and from the fact that the flesh he carries lacks the solidity that would be present had he acquired it while performing light work. His shoulders become sore because they are unaccustomed to friction or pressure, and are at once subjected to both. He will sometimes suffer

same way, after which he should be driven on the road or in the fields without being hitched, until he becomes handy, will yield readily to the pressure from the lines on the bit, stand when told to back, go forward, etc., readily at the word of command. Now he should be hitched with a suitable mate, one that is prompt but steady, reliable and not irritable. The future usefulness and value of the animal depends largely upon his manners, and these depend largely upon his early education, notwithstanding the class to which he may belong. After he is safe to drive he should get a little regular exercise or light work daily, and the amount of work or exercise should be gradually increased. The quantity of grain given should be increased in proportion to the amount of work or exercise given. The idea that a horse should be fed a given amount of grain whether working or idle, is altogether wrong. The amount of bulky feed should be about the same in either case, as this is necessary to satisfy his hunger, but the grain ration should be in proportion to the amount and kind of labor performed. If reasonable care were exercised in this respect, there would be fewer troubles and diseases in horses.

By observing rules somewhat after the manner above described, the colt's muscular, respiratory and digestive systems will have gained the necessary tone, and his shoulders will have become so accustomed to the collar that he will be in condition to give good service in the field when the busy time arrives in the spring, and he should be able to do a full day's work with comparatively little danger of being laid off from any cause. The objection that "this all takes too much time" may be raised. We must admit that it "takes time," but it is



The Percheron Stallion, Nard.

First prize winner and champion Percheron stallion at the Western Fair, London, 1918, for T. J. Berry, Hensall, Ont.

from digestive trouble, as he is usually fed more grain than he received during the winter, and the change in quantity, and often in quality of feed is often sudden, hence the digestive organs, being suddenly called upon to perform increased functions, will, in many cases, be over-taxed, and the result is a more or less severe case of indigestion.

In most cases all these probable troubles could be avoided, and much more satisfactory service be had by the exercise of reasonable care on the part of the owner. Colts should be "educated" not "broken" to go in harness, and by gradually increasing the amount of exercise or light work, and also gradually increasing the grain ration during the winter, the animal becomes accustomed to perform labor, hence his muscular and respiratory systems gradually acquire strength and tone; his shoulders gradually become accustomed to friction and pressure, and when the time comes when he is expected to go to the field and perform the functions of a horse, he should be in a condition to do so with at least fair satisfaction.

The colt's education should be gradual. It is not as difficult and tedious to handle one of the heavier classes as one of the lighter and more spirited classes. At the same time, in order that it may be well done, the handler or trainer must not be in a hurry. The first point is to get him accustomed to the bit. This can be done by putting an ordinary bridle with a plain snaffle bit on him and leaving it on for a few hours daily until he ceases to worry and fight the bit. Then he should be made accustomed to wear harness in the

during a slack season, when on most farms, there is little to do but attend to the stock, and when there are boys it is an education to them as well as to the colts. And even when there is not sufficient help, such can usually be procured cheaply during the winter, and we think it would pay the owner to hire some careful man to handle his colts. The cost will be well repaid in the spring when his colts can do the work of a team; while, if put to work without preparation, this cannot be expected, but they will have to receive their preparation gradually when time is much more valuable, when there is much more danger of their becoming incapacitated from work altogether, and, if no extra horses are available, causing a suspension of labor for a variable time. Hence we consider that, even where a man has to be hired to handle the colts during the winter months, it will be money well and wisely spent.

WHIP.

The grade stallion in Ontario is now a thing of the past if the Stallion Enrolment Act is enforced, and we believe it will be. Never in the history of this country was it so necessary to breed good horses and no misfits. There will continue to be a demand for the right type of farm horse, but the market for throwouts and undersables is gone forever. Western Canada is disposing of a large number of horses which cannot be used in productive enterprises, and eastern breeders cannot expect to sell anything but a good horse there in the future. Take good care, breed to a good horse.