

The Farmer's Advocate and Home Magazine.

THE LEADING AGRICULTURAL JOURNAL IN THE DOMINION.

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and permits the soldier to discharge the debt in a period of twenty-five years.

When the majority of the soldiers returned from overseas they found industries busy and work plentiful, and consequently were not overly enthusiastic about farming. It is possible that in the readjustment of conditions from a war to a peace basis it may be necessary for a large number of urban dwellers to seek employment in the country, or to operate farms of their own. While only 12,591 soldiers have already taken advantage of the Soldier Settlement Scheme, it is altogether probable that as the months go by it will appear more attractive to them and afford an opportunity for would-be farmers to get started on the land. Complaint is heard on all sides, and it is well founded, that it is practically impossible for a man with small capital to start farming. The Soldier Settlement Scheme affords an opportunity for returned soldiers to become land owners and farmers, and we look for the benefits of the Act to be taken advantage of in the future more than in the past. This investment of public funds is well safeguarded, and it results in additions to our rural population of ambitious, progressive young farmers, it will be one of the best investments the country ever made.

Farmers are using the automobile to good advantage this season in their excursions into nearby counties and neighboring states of the Union. The practice of travelling in a party has much to commend it, for the information can be exchanged so as to make the most of the time and to spend most profitably, and the parties called on are obliged to take sufficient time to discuss methods and crops, and the number of visits warranted them and so on. Not only can Ontario farmers visit the adjacent counties, but several excursions have been made into the States. Farmers take only a few hours' holiday, and with arrangements can be made to visit the States, where, at home, the crop reports are not so good as they are.

The Worry Habit.

BY SANDY FRASER.

Talkin' about the crop reports frae the different parts o' the country an' that sort o' thing, reminds me o' something I saw in the paper a few weeks back. I thought at the time the thing wis worth keepin', and I cut it out and laid it by "for future reference," as our meenister says aboot ony question that comes up that he doesn't feel like expressin' an opinion on.

But havin' rin across this clipping juist noo, that I wis tellin' ye aboot, I think I'll copy it out for yer benefit. Here's the way it reads:

"Ottawa reports that crops in the Ottawa Valley and other low-lying grounds are very much behind those of last year, and in many cases behind those of 1915, when heavy rains retarded crops to an almost disastrous extent. The high lands are very green and promising. One of the chief troubles over which farmers are brooding is the probability of a prolonged dry spell which would bake the clay lands."

It wis that last sentence that took my eye and made me laugh a wee bit. "The poor farmers," thinks I to myself, "they hae their ain hard times. Or if conditions ever happen tae be right wi' them they are very sure it won't last long." Like an auld chap I used tae ken in my younger days. If it happened to be a fine winter's day an' you mentioned the fact tae him, he wad say, "Oh aye, but it looks tae me like a 'breeder.' Ye'll see a bad day to-morrow."

But I dinna think I ever read anything in a regular crop report that wis a better illustration of the natural state o' mind o' a guid percentage o' us farmers than that one I copied out for ye above. It says the farmers were "broodin' at the chances o' a lang dry spell, and them at the same time kickin' aboot bein' halt-drowin' doon." The way some chaps are built they dinna gie themselves muckle rest. They remind me o' a story I heard once, aboot a young fellow that came frae the city to spend a few weeks o' his holidays wi' his uncle in the country. It seems it wis the fashion at this place for everybody to "wash up" at the kitchen sink in the mornin', and the city chap had to tak' his turn wi' the rest. It took him some time, however, what wi' all the extra touches he wis used to puttin' on himsel'. He had to brush his teeth as well as his boots, and he seemed to think that his collar wis as necessary a part o' his clothing as his shirt.

The hired man had been sittin' in the corner all this time waitin' for his breakfast and takin' in the performance at the sink an' the lookin'-glass. At last his curiosity got the better o' him an' he got up an' went over to where the ither fellow wis juist puttin' the last o' his hairs into place an' says he to him: "Say, mister, are ye that much trouble tae yerse' every day?"

So that's the way wi' a lot o' the men that are in the business o' farmin'. They're an unco' lot o' trouble to themselves. If they juist took what they got in the weather line an' quit worryin' aboot what might be comin' to-morrow or next week they'd find this auld waird a muckle sight better place to be stoppin' off at than they think it is the noo.

As it happened, (in the case o' the farmers doon this way that were "broodin'" aboot the dry weather that wis maybe comin'), after five or six days o' fine weather that let the maist o' us finish up the seeding, we had another o' the regular auld-fashioned soakers that should hae satisfied ony man that wis afraid o' his clay land "bakin'." I wis in town that day an' got talkin' wi' Jim McCallum that lives doon on the fourth road. "Weel Jim," says I, "that wis a great auld rain we had last night, eh?" "Too much, too much," he replies, shakin' his head. "My low land is that wet I willna be able tae go near it for a week. It's a blue lookout for ony kind o' crop this year, Sandy," says he.

Where some men hae high land thers hae low, where some hae clay and thers hae sand, it's pretty hard tae satisfy everybody and gie them what they think they want, but it beats all how many o' us, that ken enough aboot oor business to deserve to be called farmers, mak' oot to hae some kind o' a harvest ilka year, on which we seem to worry through to the beginnin' o' another round. Some way, the worst never happens, an' we never hear o' ony farmer an' his family being found starved to death by their neighbors, or see a one gone that they couldna' be brought back to life, some way or ither.

For a while this last spring black looked aboot as blue as they could wi'oot gettin' black entirely. When it wasn't rainin' it wis snawin' or freezin', and the prospects for gettin' the coos oot on pasture by the middle o' May, as a guid noo-farmer are in the habit o' doin', wis near noo guid. Hay wis sellin' at anywhere between thirty an' forty dollars a ton, and no roads to draw it on, even if ye could scare up the price. A chap wi'oot ony past experience wi' similar conditions might hae been excused for gettin' a wee bit nervous over the situation, maybe, but as things turned out it wouldn't hae been worth his while. The weather turned warm juist in time. In fact, it wis what we might call hot for quite a spell. And wi' the fields soaked wi' water the way they were the grass grew then comin' along, and at the present time I dinna remember ever seein' a better prospect for hay or better pasture on the north. And they were tamed out on them as early as usual too, I noticed that. If they could hae been green glasses put on them for the first time I'm sure the poor bosses wad hae eaten the grass wi' a relish.

But the point is that the troubles we saw in the papers aboot the crops hae all disappeared as we got on our way, and that all they were waitin' for was a change in the weather, and at the present time is what bax o' us.

to the country if the grasshoppers come or the Bolshevik chaps get too many for us or something like that. The man that worries by nature or, as a matter o' principle, will never be oot o' material to work on. But it's a poor business as a rule, wi' small pay an' lang hoors.

There's juist one kind o' a man that I wad advise to get the worry habit. That is the chap that is inclined to be a wee bit lazy, tae put it in plain language. He has, as ye might say, gone tae the ither extreme. If the reason for ony man being behind with his work this year is the fact that he found it easier to put on his plowing till this spring when he might hae done it last fall, I wad say to him, "Gae ahead an' worry all ye can. It may be as guid as a condition powder for ye."

But for the mon that has done the best he can there is na mair need o' worryin' than there is to be sittin' up nights to see if the sun is gaein' to rise. The sun will be there on time, an' so will be the results o' oor labor.

Nature's Diary.

A. B. KLUGH, M.A.

Ranchers of the Northland.

The ranches of Canada are gradually but steadily giving place to farms, and it does not take a very long look into the future to see the day when all the southern portions of the Dominion will be utilized for general farming or grain-growing. In view of this fact it is interesting to examine Vilhjalmur Stefansson's scheme for turning the sub-arctic regions lying west of Hudson Bay into a meat and wool-producing country.

The domestication of the cow and the sheep took place in sub-tropical Asia, and for generations man has been engaged in the task of extending the range of these animals to the north. In far northern countries these animals require housing and feeding to such a large portion of the year as to render their culture unprofitable, and in place of tending their, Stefansson proposes the establishment of herds of Reindeer and the domestication of the Musk-Ox.

The Reindeer has been in domestication in Northern Europe for a long time, and has more recently been introduced into Alaska with such success that the herds have doubled every three years, and about 1,500 carcasses of some 150 lbs. each were sold last year on the American markets, and 100 carcasses were shipped to London, where they sold at a price of about ten cents per pound-ox more than beef.

In the Musk-Ox we have an animal about three times the size of a sheep which produces meat and wool of good quality, an animal of which Canada has a monopoly, and which is by nature thoroughly adapted to the far northern regions. From a long and intimate acquaintance with the Musk-Ox Stefansson believes that it would prove easy of domestication. This animal is less given to wandering than most of the other hooved mammals, and they are able to protect themselves against all enemies except man, as when attacked they form a circle with the calves on the inside.

Stefansson states that the idea that there are only lichens and mosses on the northern tundra is erroneous, and that in reality there is an abundance of grasses. The explorer says that there are a million square miles of fine grazing country in the north, and that the summer varies in length from six months north of Slave Lake to three months in the more northern islands. "But whether the summer is six months or three," he continues, "it is abundantly long enough for the development of nutritious vegetation, which although it is green only in the summer, is satisfactory food for grazing animals throughout the winter as well. The snow-fall in most parts of the far north is less than half that of Manitoba. I was brought up in Manitoba and Dakota in sections where houses were far apart, and I speak with the authority of ample experience when I say that at that time a man brought up in Manitoba, if he could have been magically transported to the middle of Banks Island, would not have been able to realize that he was not in his own country. Had the month been July, he would have seen the rolling prairie stretching away to the horizon in either place, green in either place, and differing in Banks Island only by the larger percentage of small lakes and the greater number of flowers. And the same would have been true in winter, for as in Manitoba, he would have found deep snow-drifts in some places, but in most places a negligible amount of snow on the ground and the grass here and there sticking up through it, so that only in a few places would grazing animals have to use their feet for pawing away the snow as they fed."

To many people the utilization of the northern prairies seems an impossibility on account of the distances and the difficulties of transportation, but, as Stefansson remarks, it would have been difficult fifty years ago to convince the ordinary citizen of Montreal or Toronto that Manitoba was a fit place to live in, or that it could ever be of any value. In about a year we shall have a railway to the west coast of Hudson Bay, and we already have an ocean route to Europe from Hudson Bay, so that only the interior of this northern grazing area is as inaccessible as Manitoba was in 1875. Practical railway men like Lord Shackleton and Mr. Beatty see no insurmountable difficulties in the matter of transportation in the far north.

While it does not do to wear glasses of too rosy hue when looking at a scheme like that proposed by Stefansson, at the same time it must strike the naturalist as fundamentally sound to attempt to utilize the native animals of a region or to bring in animals from similar regions rather than to seek to introduce those whose normal environment differs radically from that of their new home.

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