

Gleanings from Farmers' Institutes.

BY G. C. CREELMAN, SUPT.
IN NORTH YORK.

"It seems like old times," said Mr. Wm. Rennie, Sr., as he, in company with the Superintendent of Farmers' Institutes, boarded a Metropolitan street car one day last week. They were going to a Farmers' Institute meeting at Aurora, where Mr. Rennie had been invited to speak by the farmers of North York. Passing his old farm, he said: "That was a rough old place when I first moved from the old homestead to occupy it, and many a hard day's work I put on it before I got it in shape to suit me. I finally got it into such a state of cultivation that the Commissioners appointed to judge prize farms in Ontario awarded me 1st silver medal, the gold medal going to the old homestead on which I was born and reared." Continuing, Mr. Rennie said that if farmers knew how much the planting of trees and ornamenting the grounds around a home added to its value they would do very much more in this direction. Said he, "My land was no richer than many of my neighbors', but by removing fences and planting trees I had made the place so attractive that before long I was offered a cash price for it much greater than I could have hoped to get had I done less in the way of ornamentation."

At Aurora there was a splendid gathering of general farmers and stockmen to hear the discussions of the delegates to Farmers' Institutes. At the morning session Mr. Echlin, of Carleton Place, a cheese and butter maker, gave a talk on "Milk Testing, or the Paying for Milk According to the Amount of Butter-fat it Contains." This elicited quite a discussion. Some declared that they could very materially increase the percentage of butter-fat in a particular cow's milk by feeding. One man stated that the man in charge of the creamery to which he sent his milk found a difference of 2% of fat in his milk in different months. The consensus of opinion, however, seemed to be that the percentage of fat in a cow's milk could not be increased or diminished to any appreciable extent.

GROWING TOMATOES.

Major Jas. Sheppard, of Queenston, was asked to speak on "Tomatoes for the Home Market." Mr. Sheppard had introduced this subject at Aurora three years ago, and so many had profited by the instruction then given that they were anxious to hear again one who had been so successful a grower of tomatoes in his own district. Mr. Sheppard said: "Harden your tomato plants by exposure before you finally place them in the field, and in transplanting leave a good ball of dirt about the roots, also water well before transplanting, but not afterwards, and plant in the heat of the day rather than in the morning or evening. If these conditions are followed, your tomatoes will show no appreciable check in their growth. After this, the whole key to success is constant surface cultivation in the middle of the day. Two things in particular are accomplished in this way: 1st, the moisture is conserved in the soil by the constant breaking of the capillary tubes, which thus prevents evaporation; 2nd, the turning under of the hot surface soil prevents the chilling of the soil about the roots of the plants during the cool nights."

SOIL CULTIVATION.

In the afternoon Mr. Wm. Rennie addressed a well-filled house on the subject of "Soil Cultivation." Probably no man in Canada is better able to speak on this subject, for the phenomenal success which has followed Mr. Rennie's methods of cultivation, first on his own farm and afterwards for six years on the Experimental Farm at the Ontario Agricultural College, is known to all those who follow advanced methods of farming in Ontario. Mr. Rennie advocates a four years' rotation—2 years hay or pasture, third year roots, and fourth year grain. Said Mr. Rennie: "The whole subject narrows down after all to one thing, namely, how to procure and maintain decayed vegetable matter on the surface of our soils. This can be done most economically by growing clover or grass sod, turning it under and allowing it to rot, being always careful not to turn this vegetable matter under so deep that it will be mixed with the subsoil." Mr. Rennie does not say that we should not cultivate deep, but he does say most emphatically that stirring soil deep and plowing deep are entirely two different things. When asked the question, what he would do with his rotation if he failed to get a catch of clover, he replied that such a thing would be impossible, and that where the surface soil was prepared in the manner he described, a catch of clover would always result. Mr. Rennie answered many questions in reference to the killing of weeds, the amount and kind of grass seed to sow, the different kinds of implements to use, etc., all of which brought out many practical ideas that were eagerly listened to by the farmers present. "Let the Canada thistle grow to 3 or 4 inches high," said Mr. Rennie; "then cut it off and you will get two thistles where there was one before. Let these grow awhile, cut them off as before, and the root or underground stem, having exhausted itself, will at best throw out a thin, sickly shoot without vitality enough to bear seed."

IN MUSKOKA.

At Bracebridge, Mr. Robt. Thompson, of St. Catharines, gave some practical talks on "Fruit-growing." "I find," said Mr. Thompson, "that much more fruit is being grown in Muskoka than formerly. Three years ago we shipped a great many varieties of fruit from St. Catharines to

Huntsville, but since the Farmers' Institutes have started and the delegates have instructed the farmers in reference to fruit-growing, we find a difference. Last year we shipped only red and black currants to this district. The last time I was in Bracebridge," said Mr. Thompson, "I spoke on 'Strawberries,' and now I find several good patches in the vicinity. One gentleman sold \$300 worth off his place during the past season. There is still room for a great deal more fruit, however," said Mr. Thompson, "in the Muskoka region. Around the lakes, where thousands of visitors frequent each year, fruit has to be supplied from the Niagara district, and I find that even the butter, eggs, poultry and pork is shipped in not only to feed the tourists, but in many instances to supply the tables of the farmers themselves." Said Mr. J. J. Beaumont: "Too many of our farmers are hauling loads of hay to town and bringing back loads of pork. If they would feed this hay to stock on the place and raise pork and other animal products for sale, it would be not only more profitable, but would aid very much in maintaining and increasing the fertility of their farms."

CLOVER AGAIN.

Mr. W. S. Fraser, of Bradford, introduced the subject of "Growing and Curing of Clover," and a very healthy discussion followed. "Cut your clover before it gets too ripe," said Mr. Fraser. "In my own mow I like to see the pink blossoms when I come to feed. When cut green it must be well packed. Some use a horse to tramp it. In the center of the mow it is usually much darker in color and often packed very closely together, but so long as there is no mustiness it has lost none of its feeding value. You people have fed timothy so long that you think there is nothing else, but in Simcoe County we could not get along now without clover. It is almost a balanced ration in itself." Mr. Fraser found a peculiar condition of things existing in Muskoka. A great many of the farmers were formerly Old Country men, and they are making a good living on Muskoka farms. "They have," said Mr. Fraser, "the advantage of having learned farming under other conditions, and their constant comparisons and appreciation of our good



LEICESTER YEARLING WETHERS.
Winners of first prize and breed cup at Smithfield, 1899.
PROPERTY OF E. F. JORDAN, DRIFFIELD, YORKSHIRE.

methods make them very successful farmers. More cutting boxes are needed in this country," said Mr. Fraser. "You have plenty of fodder, but do not get the most out of it. With the nutritious grasses and other forage plants that grow in such luxuriance in this country, you ought to have the very best stock in the Province."

Mr. Hollingworth, of Beatrice, introduced the subject of "Dairying." "The day is past," said Mr. Hollingworth, "when a farmer can hope to produce milk profitably in winter without the aid of roots or ensilage. Besides good succulent food, warm stables and careful handling are necessary for the best results from the dairy cow. It does not do to turn your cows out in the cold and let them get chilled," said Mr. Hollingworth. "You check the flow of milk, and the food that should have gone to produce milk will be used up in the production of animal heat."

In summing up the impressions of Muskoka, both delegates seemed to think that this country had a bright future. In most places it is very rough, but where you find a soil of any depth it grows luxuriant crops, and all kinds of food products find a good market right at home.

"CORN GROWING AND THE SILO."

At Burlington, on February 2nd, a most interesting Farmers' Institute meeting was held. Mr. Andrew Elliott, Galt, addressed the Institute on the subject of "Corn Growing and the Silo." Many prominent men present declared that it was the best address of its kind they had ever listened to. "I do not know," said Mr. Elliott, "how we managed to get along without ensilage as long as we did. Ensilage is not sufficient in itself, but it supplies succulent material during the time of year when animals can get no green stuff whatever, and when mixed with a small quantity of grain it makes a balanced ration." The question was asked what was the smallest silo in which ensilage would keep properly? To this Mr. Elliott replied that a neighbor of his had a silo 12 feet in diameter and that the ensilage came out just as sweet as in larger ones. "We find trouble with mould at the top of our silo and we usually lose the last two or three loads," said someone in the audience. "Our remedy

for that," said Mr. Elliott, "is, after we have filled our silo, we spread over the top about a foot of wheat or barley chaff. This we soak thoroughly with water and sow on the top of it a quart of oats. These soon spring up, and the chaff having settled to about six inches, we have a mat composed of chaff in which the roots of the oats have interlaced, forming a complete covering over the silo. On removing this covering in the winter we find the ensilage good right from the surface."

Mr. John McMillan, M. P., Seaford, in speaking of ensilage said: "I have been travelling through the counties of Oxford, Elgin, Kent, Essex, and Middlesex, and have talked silo everywhere I have gone. Some of the old men still hold that they can do just as well without the silo, but I converted a few of them. Some contended that ensilage was all right for dairy cattle, but was not a proper food for beef animals." Replying to this, Mr. McMillan said: "A few years ago I took 70 head of fat steers to Liverpool. We landed on Friday, and an Edinburgh butcher came down to look over our lot, as well as those of other men who had taken over cattle on the same boat. He took ten of mine and killed and dressed them the next day. They seemed to satisfy him, for he came back on Monday and took the other 60 animals. This butcher said he had been buying cattle from Canadians, including my own sons, for years, but that this was the best lot he had ever received. These cattle were fed right through on ensilage. Do not tell me," said Mr. McMillan, "that ensilage is not good for beef cattle, for I have tried it, and it is not only good, but it is the very best and most economical food we can give to fattening cattle."

SELLING STOCKERS AS FINISHED BEEF CATTLE.

Mr. D. Drummond, Myrtle, who has been in Prescott, Stormont, Dundas, Glengarry, Russell and Renfrew Counties, says that those who have silos are very much pleased with them. "This is a great dairy country," said Mr. Drummond, "and the farmers, both French and English, are willing to listen to a speaker for any length of time who is well up in dairy farming. A very funny thing struck me in Renfrew County. Here the drovers come in the fall and buy up the young cattle, then pay the farmers \$3.00 a head for keeping these same cattle all winter until pasture is ready in the spring. The summer food costs the drovers very little, and in the fall they finish them for the butchers. It can easily be seen," said Mr. Drummond, "who is the loser in every case of this kind. The cattle are allowed to run around the stacks, tramping and destroying the grain; the manure is of very little value, and the drover walks off with the profit. While we are the banner Province in stock matters, we are very much behind the Americans in one respect—we do not properly finish our beef cattle. The Americans buy our young stock, take them home, finish them, and when we see them in Montreal they are so much superior to our own cattle going on the same boat to the Old Country that they demand from 1 to 1c. more per pound. This means," said Mr. Drummond, "that a 1,400-pound steer properly finished is worth from \$7.00 to \$14.00 more than the unfinished one. There is not much profit in raising an animal to 18 months and then selling it, but, nevertheless, Buffalo and other American frontier cities are getting carload after carload of just such animals from Ontario every week. Until we learn that the profit is in the finishing, and that we can do it just as cheaply here as anywhere else in the world, we shall continue to lose that profit," was Mr. Drummond's concluding remark.

Burlington being a fruit section, much interest was taken in the address of Mr. C. W. Nash on

"COMMON-SENSE SPRAYING."

"All insects," said Mr. Nash, "can be divided into two classes: 1st, those that have jaws and eat the foliage; 2nd, those that have beaks and suck the nourishment from the plant. This is the key to their destruction. If the insect eats, then you have to put poison on its food. To this class belong the grasshopper, beetle and caterpillar. If you see the leaves are drying up, and discover that some insect is sucking the life blood out of the plant, then you must treat it differently. Poison is no good, for the insects pierce the skin of the plant and get below the surface. You must then apply something that will strike the body of the insect and thus destroy them by actual contact. Insects breathe," said Mr. Nash, "through holes along their sides, and we find that any kind of oil coming in contact with these breathing holes stops them up and the insect suffocates in a short time. Kerosene and soap solutions are the very best remedies of this kind. In my own garden," said Mr. Nash, "I could not get along without English soft soap. I buy it at the druggists' and use one pound to two gallons of water. With this I thoroughly saturate the trunk and limbs of all my trees, and I am never troubled with lice or scale insects of any kind. The potash in the soap suds running down to the base of the tree and coming into contact with the roots seems also to stimulate the plant's growth, and you know," said Mr. Nash, "that a strong, vigorous tree will repel the attack of insects much better than a weaker one."

The question of

APPLE PACKING FOR THE BRITISH MARKET was also discussed. Said Mr. Springer: "We must send only the best if we are to build up the best kind of trade with the mother country. One