

The Farmer's Advocate

"PERSEVERE AND SUCCEED." and Home Magazine.

ESTABLISHED 1866.

VOL. XXXVIII.

LONDON, ONT., AND WINNIPEG, MAN., AUGUST 15, 1903.

No. 580

EDITORIAL.

The Fruit Exhibit at Fairs.

In a few weeks the annual agricultural exhibitions will begin, and it should be the aim of everyone interested in agriculture to make them a fair and full exposition of the products of the country and its people. There is room for improvement in many ways with respect to our fairs, and this applies to the fruit exhibits as well as other products. Prizes are offered for too many varieties, many of them commercially worthless, and which no experienced grower would recommend for cultivation. The prizes are for a half-dozen specimens of each variety, and we have the professional exhibitor, as he is sometimes called, scouring the country for the choicest specimens he can find with which to scoop the prizes. He visits every fair he can reach, and scarcely any of the stuff is his own production. Fair boards should make a strong effort to stop this sort of rascality, for it is nothing else. It would be better policy to offer prizes only for fruits that are of commercial value, and make the prizes larger for these. Then have a twelve-quart basket of each variety, instead of a half-dozen specimens. Large collections should be discouraged; many of them are sure to be worthless sorts. In apples, there should be good prizes for, say, the best six varieties for export, a basket of each to be shown, or perhaps a bushel box would not be too much. Then say four varieties for dessert, and four for cooking, the same quantity to be shown. This would be a check to the professional, as it would be more difficult to obtain and carry about so large a quantity of each. Besides, it would give a better idea of the real quality of the fruit in a district if an exhibitor had to show a basketful instead of a few specimens. The same would apply to pears and other fruits.

It is a capital idea to offer some good prizes for the naming of varieties of fruits, to be competed for by farmers' children under sixteen years of age; the first prize to the one who can name the largest number of varieties, and the second to the next, and so on. This is an educational feature, and that should be one of the chief aims of our fairs. Take twenty varieties of our common fruits and place them on a table, and it is surprising how few under the age mentioned—or over it, even, for that matter—are able to name them all correctly. In judging fruit at fairs, one finds a great many varieties wrongly named. In most cases this is the result of ignorance rather than a desire to defraud, and a little educational work along this line for the benefit of the rising generation is much needed.

It is also a very important point to secure competent judges. They should be able to detect and correct any varieties that are wrongly named, and here they can do some educational work. Some men undertake to judge fruit who know very little about it. Such men do a great deal of injury, and should be avoided. There should be a few or two good line fruit men on the directorate of every agricultural society, who would see that the fruit gets the prominent place on the prizes, and among the exhibits that its importance deserves as one of the prominent industries of our country.

A Lesson in Grain Growing.

The character of the grain crops of the country for this year will be practically determined for the most part ere this paper reaches our readers. Taking the country all through, the result of the season, in so far as the grain crops are concerned, must be regarded as decidedly favorable and satisfactory. There are sections where, owing to lack of rain in the earlier months of the season, the returns are light, but, fortunately, this applies to limited areas, and is not general in any of the Provinces, while frequent rains in the last two months have wonderfully improved the prospect, bringing forward to nearly an average crop fields that earlier promised nothing but failure.

The experience of the year teaches how largely the prosperity of the farmer, and, incidentally, the prosperity of all the people, depends upon a sufficiency of moisture in the land. The supply of fertility in the soil seems to be generally sufficient to yield fair crops where all the conditions of cultivation and weather are favorable, but when a protracted drouth occurs, only the land that is rich in vegetable matter or from liberal manuring, and that has received generous treatment in the preparation of the seed-bed, will give profitable returns. The truth of this statement was plainly visible in the late spring and early summer months this year, when fields that had been ill-prepared by insufficient cultivation showed every prospect of proving a failure in the harvest, as they certainly would but for the plentiful rains that came later, while well-prepared fields admirably withstood the drouth, and gave promise of a profitable harvest, even if little or no rain came later. And these are the heaviest yielding crops in the end, whatever the weather conditions, for it is the crop that goes on well from the start that generally finishes best.

Fortunately, it is rarely that over any very extended area in Canada a summer occurs in which drouth is so prolonged as to cause complete failure of crops, but every drouth serves to emphasize the importance of preparing for such a contingency by a judicious system of rotation of crops; by keeping the land filled with vegetable matter, which better enables it to resist drouth; by reducing the surface-soil to a fine tilth before seeding, so that the plants may readily avail themselves of the elements of fertility, getting a good start, which is nearly half the battle, and gaining strength to withstand any adverse conditions that may follow. In the Northwest, where the rainfall is generally less uniform than in the East, experience has taught that summer-fallowing the land the year previous to sowing, in order to store and conserve moisture, is in the average of years decidedly the best security for profitable results from soil that has been cropped for many years. The wisdom of this practice is well exemplified in the present season, in which, owing to lack of rain in the early summer in some districts in the West, crops sown on stubble-ground are a partial failure, while those sown after summer-fallowing, or on fresh breaking of last year, that was backset and surface-cultivated in the fall, the returns are fairly satisfactory. The lesson to be learned from this season is that it is wise to prepare for a dry time by thorough, judicious and intelligent cultivation, which may carry the crops through a crisis of that kind and save them from failure, while if seasonable showers come the results will be all the better.

The Grand Trunk Pacific.

The Premier, Sir Wilfrid Laurier, has laid before Parliament and the country the Grand Trunk Pacific bill, which contains the agreement whereby Canada secures another transcontinental railway, 3,300 miles long, from Moncton, N.B., via Quebec City, to Port Simpson, on the Pacific coast. In the main, it corresponds with the outline given of the scheme in the July 15th issue of the "Farmer's Advocate." There is no direct cash subsidy and no land grant. By means of a commission the Government undertakes to build, and will own, the line from Moncton to Winnipeg (1,800 miles), and leases it to the Grand Trunk Pacific for fifty years. For the first seven years the company will pay no rental, but for the remaining forty-three years the rental will be three per cent. upon the cost of construction. The Intercolonial and other railways are to have running powers for compensation over the Moncton-Winnipeg division, and if it be made a genuine common highway this makes it of immense value as an asset to Canada. The cost of this section would probably reach \$54,000,000.

To the construction by the Grand Trunk Pacific of the western division (1,500 miles), the Government will guarantee seventy-five per cent. of the principal of the bond issue, which is not to exceed \$13,000 per mile of prairie section, and \$30,000 per mile of mountain section. The Government will meet the interest in the mountain section bonds for seven years, and in case of the default of the company to pay the interest during the next three years, the Government will do so, and the interest will be capitalized and repaid with interest by the company. The western section is to be up to a standard not inferior to the main line of the G.T.R. between Montreal and Toronto. The tolls to be charged by the Grand Trunk Pacific will be under the control of the Government, or the Railway Commission. The company must spend \$20,000,000 on improved rolling stock, of which \$5,000,000 must go to the eastern division. The company must put up a deposit of \$5,000,000 as security for the construction of western division, and equipment of eastern division. All supplies and materials must be purchased in Canada, the quality, prices, terms, etc., being advantageous as elsewhere. The capital stock of the company is fixed at \$45,000,000, of which \$20,000,000 will be preferred and \$25,000,000 common stock.

The details of the proposition are now being thoroughly discussed in Parliament and in the press. That the line is imperatively needed and will develop vast areas of rich agricultural, timber and mineral lands, is beyond question. It will put Canada in a position of independence in the matter of transportation, relieving the country from the continual menace of a removal of bonding privilege, so often threatened by the Americans. Its all-Canadian character appeals favorably to the national aspirations of the country. Apart altogether from the question of reducing rates, the appearance of the Grand Trunk Pacific in the West will prove an immense boon in providing new and improved service, both for the farming and business classes of the community. It should be of advantage in bringing the timber supplies of New Ontario and Northern British Columbia within easier reach of Manitoba and the Territories. Port Simpson, being one of the finest natural harbors on the Pacific coast, and hundreds of miles