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EDITORIAL.

Our Teaching and Our Readers.

Once in a long while a reader of "The Farmer's Advocate" decides that he no longer needs this family journal that for almost half a century has endeavored to assist rural Canada by sending out regular budgets of agricultural lore. The editors have prided themselves on being able to lay claim to the fact that our messages are at least practical. Imagine our surprise, therefore, when, a few days ago, we stood face to face with a worthy farmer who said he had read our pages for years, but changed from the happy path less than twelve months ago because "it was the same thing over and over, and much of it was so impractical that not even the editors could take a farm and make money by following the advice."

This straight blow was enough to convince one that "The Farmer's Advocate" had ceased to stand where a leading farm journal should stand. However, we decided to investigate, and see if conversation with our erstwhile subscriber would aid us in mending our ways. It was not long before we decided that even he did not know really why he ceased to be a subscriber. At all events, he had not followed our teaching.

A cheese factory being close by, he endeavors to make most of his money out of a herd of cows, and claimed that cows were the chief money-makers on Ontario farms. Naturally, we expected he handled his herd according to the methods of feeding and breeding followed by successful dairymen, and such noteworthy breeders as Geo. Rice. Not so. He preferred to sell a cow when he was offered a good price, and buy another when he took the notion. Three cows he had kept for a number of years, because they were extra good milkers. When asked if he did not consider he could build up a better herd by breeding these good cows to a superior bull, and keeping the heifer calves, he said he knew he could in less than ten years. But he didn't. Why?

Again, the question of hired help was discussed. Although he had one hundred acres of good land within twenty miles of a city, and tried to have a herd of about fifteen to twenty cows, he thought it unwise to keep a hired man for twelve months in the year. The result was that some summers he found difficulty in securing desirable help, and was obliged to sell half his cows—his money-makers.

Further conversation revealed the fact that he objected to so many articles or letters dealing with Nova Scotia, or Eastern Ontario, or the Niagara Peninsula. It seemed that he wanted everything to be of such nature that it would apply directly to his conditions. To our mind, this showed rather too narrow a view of the office and value of an agricultural journal, one of the great benefits of which is that it extends one's horizon beyond his own farm, and incites to renewed effort by acquainting the reader with the best results attained by his competitors all over the land.

That considerable information is repeated from year to year, we freely admit. This is not for lack of new points to bring up, but is necessary for the information of recent subscribers, and to refresh the memories of older ones. Nevertheless, anyone who reads "The Farmer's Advocate" carefully will find a very large stock of additional information and fresh experience added from year to year.

It was evident that our friend had not followed our advice, and so was not in a position to say

whether or not one could make money on a farm by employing the methods advocated. If he had studied our pages, he would have built up his herd by intelligent and systematic breeding and selection; he would have raised the young stock and fed liberally, thus providing labor for a man the year round; he would have considered that our readers are scattered over all parts of this broad Dominion, and that we have no influence over the varied conditions that exist, but that we must sometimes print items of interest to certain localities, always trusting to the reader to read carefully, and, by learning of other localities, know more of agriculture, and apply what is applicable to his own soil and conditions.

Men who do this seldom drop "The Farmer's Advocate," after they have read a few issues. Besides, they are the men who are classed among Canada's broad-gauged, progressive farmers.

Ontario's Milk Commission.

The campaign for a healthy milk supply in Ontario has developed to such an extent that a Milk Commission has been appointed by the Provincial Government, in accordance with a resolution introduced in the Legislature by W. K. McNaught, M. P. P. for North Toronto, and carried unanimously in the House. The investigation will be conducted by Dr. A. R. Pyne, of Toronto, as chairman, and Messrs. J. R. Dargavel, M. P. P. for Leeds; F. G. Macdiarmid, M. P. P. for West Elgin, and W. F. Nickle, M. P. P. for Kingston.

The resolution, as adopted in the Legislature, suggested a commission composed of persons competent "to inquire into conditions and methods whereby milk is being produced, cared for and supplied to the people of this Province for domestic consumption and manufacturing purposes." The question naturally brings in the man who keeps the cows, and all who handle the milk until it is consumed or is manufactured into a finished product. The presence of Dr. Pyne on the commission insures the detection of defects in the raw product, if such exist. At least two of the remaining three members can be depended upon to probe into the conditions that relate to the farmer. The manufacturing end, also, will be represented by Mr. Dargavel. It would seem, however, that the milk dealers have been left out of consideration. There are many features connected with the handling of milk for town or city trade, in connection with which the knowledge of an experienced dealer would be of great value. A competent man from among that class should be of great service in securing evidence from the dealers' side, as well as in taking up matters over which only the consumers have control. Considerable is known of the troubles between producers and dealers, but the latter also have to contend with neglect on the part of their customers that must be combated before the milk will be consumed in the healthful state which is desired for the welfare of mankind. In fact, the question of milk supply for towns and cities is so vastly different from the manufacture of cheese or butter that it would be of great advantage to have on the commission a man who has had large experience in producing milk for city consumption, as well as one who knows the wholesale and retail end of that branch of dairying.

The commission named can be depended on to do good work. It would seem possible, however, that more information on certain phases of the problem could be secured in less time with the city milk trade more effectively represented.

Weeds at the Tender Stage.

A seedling weed is a tiny thing, an insignificant, unstable plantlet, which may be uprooted or destroyed, along with dozens of its kind, by the mere loosening or pulverizing of the soil. A thistle at this stage will be dislodged and killed by the kick of a boot or the shuffling of a hoe or cultivator tooth through the loose earth.

Wait a week, until the plant has gathered strength, spread out its seedling leaves and struck root downward and outward through the soil, and it will be found to have made astonishing progress towards establishing itself in the land. Another week or two, and the root will have toughened and lengthened, requiring, perchance, a clip with the hoe, or a direct clean cut with the cultivator to root it out of the mellow earth. Henceforth, if unmolested, it will increase its hold decidedly with every passing week, finally necessitating a sharp, deep stroke of hoe or spud to sever its root, and turn the top upside down, to wilt and shrivel in the sun. Quite often, the hoe is not used until the weed has gone to seed, after which we shall have to reckon with the few hundred seedlings, more or less, which may result from three or four thousand seeds, besides the numerous shoots sent up from the running root-stock underground. Thus, troubles multiply.

Now, at a certain stage, the eradication of these hundreds of thistles is one of the easiest tasks imaginable, and one reason it is so often neglected is spelled by the letters of the word, PROCRASTINATION.

Procrastination is the bulwark of the weed evil. If the farmers of Canada were thoroughly alive to the facts concerning weeds, their injury and their means of eradication, and would make use of the proper means, there would not be a weedy field from ocean to ocean. This, of course, presupposes that all would do their part, and that there would be no shiftless ones to produce weed crops to infest neighboring farms. Agriculture and human nature being what they are, we must always expect to reckon with the chances of reinfestation; but even so, the weed problem is capable of comparatively easy solution by almost any farmer who will do three simple things. First, practice a short rotation, bringing the whole or at least most of the arable area under an intercultivated crop every three or four years, the manure being applied before this cultivated crop. Secondly, cut clover in the early blossoming stage, before weeds have gone to seed. Thirdly, make it a point to destroy weeds by cultivation in the vulnerable seedling period of growth. For this purpose, a weeder, judiciously employed, is of almost incredible value. It is of little or no use on hard-crusted land, and will not uproot larger weeds, but to run over a mellow field just after showers, to prevent a crust from forming, and to destroy myriad seedling weeds, it is astonishingly effective. We have seen twenty-ton-to-the-acre crops of ensilage corn grown on fields cultivated with half a dozen strokes of the weeder, two with the riding corn cultivator, and a final one with the scuffer. The hoe was used to cut out any scattering weeds, and the field left perfectly clean in the fall, far better cleaned of weeds than ninety-nine out of one hundred summer-fallows. Similar methods have been followed with roots and potatoes, with equally satisfactory results, the weeder being run first lengthwise and then crosswise of the rows.

The manner in which the weeder seems to discriminate between the sprouting weeds and the plants desired, suggests human intelligence. In