

Essex Notes.

Owing to climatic conditions, which, rendered the roads practically impassable, highway traffic and farming operations were almost suspended for weeks during the autumn months. From the latter part of September until the beginning of the new year, this section was constantly drenched with rain. Heavy showers following one another almost daily, turned the fields into lakes, while the roads became seas of mud and slush. Happily, conditions have altered materially since the opening of 1912, and business has assumed a normal aspect. For nearly a fortnight (January 15) the weather has been the severest for several years, macadamizing our roads by a natural process. Corn-husking has been proceeded with under serious difficulties. Many fields are still standing in the shock, unhusked, while a goodly number are uncut. Fall plowing was very much interfered with, and scarcely any farmers have sufficient acreage plowed to meet the demand for oat seeding. Owing to this fact, it is possible that a much larger area will be planted to corn this year. Corn is still the staple product of Essex, despite what a Toronto newspaper correspondent has said to the contrary. The majority of Essex farmers are loud in their manifestations of loyalty to King Corn.

Tobacco-growing, while adopted somewhat extensively, is only a side line in our many valuable products. It presents too many complications in connection with its production to make it a formidable rival of corn. The expenses of many tobacco-raisers has demonstrated its unstableness as a marketable product. There are also serious objections raised against tobacco as a paying crop, that cannot be produced in opposition to several other money-making investments, open to agriculturists. The necessity of manuring heavily with either barnyard or artificial fertilizers; the time and labor required to bring the soil into proper condition; the constant care and watchfulness necessary to ward off ravages which might be committed by cut-worm, grubs or weeds; the tediousness connected with the process of cutting, curing, and preparing for market. Also the fact that the labor of a whole season may be lost in a few minutes by a little carelessness or injudicious handling while curing, makes tobacco-rearing something of an anxiety to the producer. Nevertheless, with prices about one-third less than 1910, many farmers have received splendid returns for their labor. It is not uncommon to hear about parties netting from \$200 to \$300 per acre. Yet, taking all things into consideration, there are other products of the farm which outrank the weed as financial investments in southern Essex.

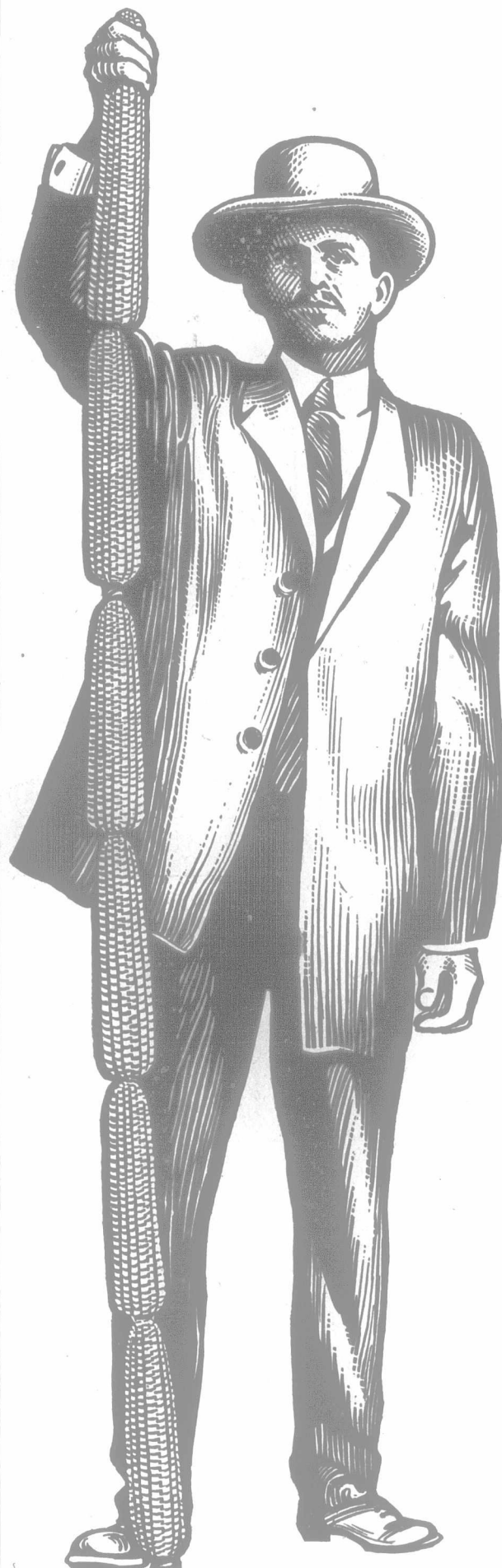
While a large acreage will in all likelihood be planted to tobacco in 1912, there is a growing sentiment in favor of tomatoes, cucumbers, strawberries, onions, and such fruits and vegetables as are required by canning factories.

The ease with which tomatoes may be produced; their adaptability to all kinds of soil; the shortness of the season between planting and receiving of returns, coupled with the fact that they may be grown upon the same plot of ground for several years in succession, is making tomato-growing more than a mere item of gardening. Hundreds of acres would be planted in tomatoes this year, were facilities for handling them such as to warrant farmers in believing that their produce would not remain upon their hands.

Many localities are considering the advisability of erecting canning factories wherever conditions are favorable, while others are asking for shipping depots connected with factories already in existence. If the scheme, said to be advocated by certain C. P. R. officials, is genuine, and properly directed, it will prove a valuable asset to northern Essex. The scheme mentioned that of lands in the immediate vicinity of River Thames and Lake St. Clair being turned into celery and onion gardens, has been fostered in the minds of many, but owing to lack of funds never matured.

The agitation for good-roads systems is worthy of commendation, and should re-

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**U. S. Department
of Agriculture**

Farmers' Bulletin No. 308, among other things, says that **the best farmers have a better understanding of the value and use of commercial fertilizers in growing large crops of superior quality. Also that the importance of taking into consideration all the factors which influence the use of fertilizers can hardly be over-estimated. A plant must have all the essential fertilizer constituents present in available form or its growth will be hindered in proportion to the deficiency of the lacking constituent.**

The above statement shows the importance of using commercial fertilizers, which are one of the chief needs of modern farming.

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The prevailing rains of autumn demonstrated in practical form the value of underdraining in our clay lands. During a period of unusually heavy showers when fields untiled were axle deep in mud for weeks together, those properly drained

were passably dry, and farm work could be carried on between showers. Farmers finding it impossible to secure their corn in cribs, through wet weather and scarcity of laborers, have fed it directly to hogs, the result being that great numbers have been hurried forward to market in an unmatured condition, thus

seriously affecting the prospective output of the future. Stock markets, although duller than a year ago, are showing some improvement. Horses especially are in greater demand, prices ranging from \$175 to \$250 apiece, according to weight and fitness.

Essex Co., Ont.

A. E.