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EDITORIAL.

Value of the Corn Plant.

The rank and file of Canadian farmers have, we believe, as yet, failed to realize the paramount importance and value of the Indian corn plant as a food for farm stock. To our neighbors of the United States it is the mainstay of their farming operations, and one of the main secrets of their success as a wealth-producing people. It is maize, more than any other factor, that gives them an advantage over us in the cattle markets of the mother country, to which we both cater. It is true they have a larger area of country especially adapted to the growth of corn, owing to climatic and other conditions, but we are confident the time is coming when this great feeding crop will be grown in Canada on a much larger scale than at present. American farmers now flocking into our Northwest Provinces, and who have had experience in corn-growing in the Western States, are not without faith that when our prairie lands are generally cultivated and drained, and the earliest maturing varieties of corn are propagated, this crop will yet be successfully grown northward far beyond its present limits. And in our Eastern Provinces, when farmers more generally come to properly appreciate the value of the clover plant as an improver of the condition of the soil as well as a stock food, the combination of clover and corn in a short rotation of crops, will be generally acknowledged as essential to the most successful agriculture. With reasonable care in the selection of seed and cultivation there is no surer crop than corn, and no other crop furnishes so great a bulk of grain and fodder combined. In the sections of the country where corn ripens before autumn frosts come, the grain is found a convenient, wholesome and fattening food, and, fed in combination with oats or bran and clover, makes a fairly well-balanced ration for any class of stock, while the stalks may also be used to good advantage as fodder. But to the great majority of our farmers the ensilaging of corn is the surest and safest method of handling the crop satisfactorily, and is the plan most in favor and most likely to be generally adopted. The necessary preparation of the land for a corn crop requires no great amount of time or labor; the cultivation is well over, as a rule, before the hay and grain harvest. No other crop will thrive and grow so rapidly in hot, dry weather, and the harvesting comes at a season when the other farm work is not pressing. A stave silo costs comparatively little, and if on a good foundation and anchored to a building to prevent blowing over, will serve the purpose admirably for a good many years; while a cement silo, though costing more at first, is good for a lifetime. The crop once in the silo, is easy of access in all kinds of weather, and if the corn be well matured before cutting the silage will be sweet, palatable and nutritious, giving good results either in the case of dairy cows or fattening cattle, when fed in combination with roughage in the form of hay or straw, and with concentrated foods in the finishing period.

In the average summer season there comes a time, when, owing to drouth, pastures fail, when cattle lose flesh and shrink in their milk supply—a time when supplemental food is needed, in order to avoid loss in the income from a herd, and there is certainly no way in which this emergency can be so well met as by having a small silo for summer use in addition to the usual supply for winter feeding. With this in view it is well to build two silos of moderate size rather than one

large one, as the larger surface exposed in warm weather and when less of the silage is being used, results in loss from exposure to atmosphere. With a summer silo, the milk flow may be kept steady, and the flesh of feeding cattle maintained through a period of drouth—an important consideration, as weight lost must be made up before gain can be realized.

To those who have not used ensilage, it is safe to advise the growing of corn and making provision for a silo or two during the coming summer. Study the question of the most suitable variety of corn for your section, test your seed before planting, read or enquire regarding the best methods of cultivation, and join the procession of successful cattle feeders, as this is the sheet anchor of successful farming in most sections of Eastern Canada at least.

The King of Italy's Co-operative Project.

Great minds continue to address themselves to similar problems. Canadian orchardists are busy working out the details of the successful co-operative growth, packing and sale of fruit. Mr. A. L. McCredie is talking to the farmers of this country through the "Farmer's Advocate" on the subject of co-operation, and his contribution in this issue is likely to set people thinking. And now Prof. G. Montemartini, of Rome, Italy, writes us that our friend, Victor Emmanuel III., King of Italy, desires publicity given to his proposal for the establishment of an International Chamber of Agriculture, which is to be largely co-operative in its plan and purpose. The preliminary congress is to be held in Rome in May next. The King believes that much benefit would be derived from "an international institution absolutely non-political in its aims, which would have before it the conditions of agriculture" in every country, and which would publish periodical announcements of "the quantity and quality of the crops in hand," and would thereby facilitate production of needed crops, and help to the attainment of better prices. "This institution, acting in unison with the various national associations already constituted for similar purposes, would also furnish reliable information as to the demand and supply of agricultural labor" in different quarters of the globe; "would promote those agreements necessary for collective reference against diseases of plants and domestic animals," and, finally, "would exercise a timely influence on the development of societies for rural co-operation, for agricultural insurance, and for agrarian credit."

The precise form of this chamber and its place of permanency necessarily remain to be developed, but the design comprises two chambers, one in which the agricultural interests of each country shall be represented in proportion to their magnitude, by representatives of agricultural organizations; the other in which every nation shall have equal representation, the appointments to be made by the respective Governments. This, as it will be seen, in a measure reproduces our own House of Commons and Senate, of which someone has observed that the Senate served the purpose of saucer to the House's cup—overhot resolutions being poured therein to cool. In providing for the future "ways and means," or the "sinews of war," it is proposed that expenditures might be met by, 1st, appropriations from the nations, in proportion to representation; 2nd, charges for bulletin announcements and display of samples; and 3rd, in the event of exchanges being adopted, by a commission on sales.

Boiled down, it means International, National and Local organization. It looks like a big project, but Victor Emmanuel combines the shrewdness of the Italian with the optimism and energy of comparative youth, and he and many others with him in this movement believe that the dis-united individual element of the agricultural masses scattered throughout the world can thus co-operate to their great advantage, especially in their defence against commercial and transportation trusts.

Governmental Handling of Public Utilities.

In the House of Commons a short time ago the question of "Rural Delivery of Mail" was debated. The Postmaster-General expressed himself as opposed to the scheme in Canada, on the score of expense, quoted the U. S. experiment as a costly one, and incidentally expressed the hope that the telephone system would be extended to farmers, and possibly come under Government control. At his request a special committee was appointed to investigate and report upon the subject. Two M. P.'s (Lambton and West Kent) pointed out that the farmers of Canada are asking for rural free delivery of mail. It is well to study the cost of such mail delivery in the U. S., and for that purpose we cite from a reliable U. S. contemporary as follows:

"Between June 30, 1904, the end of the fiscal year, and March 1, 1905, the post office department established 5,432 rural free mail delivery routes. This made the total number of such routes 29,998. The State having the most rural routes is Illinois, which had on March 1, 2,450, an increase since June 30, 1904, of 326. Ohio had 2,161, and Iowa 2,048.

"Illinois' lead as a rural-mail-delivery State is partly due to the zeal and activity shown by her senators and representatives in furthering the interests of their constituents, but it is mainly owing to conditions existing in the agricultural sections. It is essential to the success of rural delivery that the districts in which it is tried shall be thickly settled. It would fail in Arizona or New Mexico, because a carrier might have to ride all day to deliver mail at one or two ranches. The rural districts of Illinois, on the other hand, have become so thickly populated that a carrier may deliver mail daily to one or two hundred families. The post office department requires roads on the rural routes to be kept in good condition. The highways of Illinois, while generally far from perfect, are, as a whole, better than those of many other States.

"The rural delivery system already costs the Government \$7,000,000 annually more than it earns; and every time a route is added the chronic excess of postal expenditures over receipts is increased \$25 a year. Nevertheless, public opinion sustains the post office department in steadily extending rural delivery. It does not yet pay the Government financially, but it is earning large dividends as a social investment. It has done much to ameliorate the loneliness of farm life. Enabling the farmer's family to get letters, newspapers and magazines as regularly and almost as quickly as persons living in cities, it tends powerfully to stimulate and broaden the national intelligence."

From our own experience, we would suggest that the Post Office Department improve on their present methods, preparatory to looking for fresh avenues of activity.

While the theory of Governmental control of public utilities is a popular one, it is well to reflect whether in the practical working of such a theory, the scheme is to be preferred to that in operation now, efficiency being in the former case too frequently sacrificed in the hope of cheaper service. To make a comparison we cite the C.