

THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE AND HOME MAGAZINE.

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THE DOMINION.

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Co-operation Amongst French Farmers.

Co-operation amongst European farmers is of recent development, and originated in Switzerland about 1888, but its extension in that country has been such that there are now some 300 working societies. In practice the system usually adopted is as follows: Some fifteen or twenty peasants in a parish combine together to purchase a pure-bred bull, which becomes their collective property. A herd book is opened and each member of the society is expected to register for service the name of at least one breeding cow of pure blood, recognized as such by a committee of experts. The finest of the calves thus procured are inscribed in the herd book as breeding animals, the others are sold. The expert committee periodically inspects the breeding animals to see that they are well kept and that the young animals are properly reared. By such means the value of the herd is materially increased. A somewhat similar system, as outlined by the British Journal of Agriculture, more in favor in French societies, appears to be the purchase of stallions and bulls of good quality, which are put up to auction among the members. The use of these animals for service is also generally either limited to the members of the society or else only available to outsiders upon a payment of a higher fee.

A curious instance of association for the common ownership of a herd is recorded from Castellar, near the Italian frontier. The care of the collective herd (which consists of draft oxen, she asses, and some milch cows) devolves upon each of the members in turn for one week, he during that time enjoying the service and produce of the herd. The animals are pastured on the land belonging to the members of the commune, or on private enclosures where the owner permits. When a member dies or retires from the Association the herd is divided up and the society re-formed. If an animal is sold or dies the price or loss is divided among the members in proportion to the interest of each in the herd. Mutual insurance of cattle has considerably developed of late years in France, and in one department alone fifty-five associations have been established for the purpose.

In several districts in France agriculturists have succeeded in dispensing with the services of the miller by the formation of co-operative milling associations. The charge made by the society for threshing, winnowing, and milling the grain is about six and three-quarter pence per hundred-weight of grain. The net profits at the end of the year are divided as follows: Twenty per cent. is placed to the reserve fund, five per cent. goes to the shareholders or associates who have spent eight shillings at least in milling or other work. Under the existing arrangements each member receives

back the flour made from his own grain, but it is hoped that in the future it may be possible to put all the grain into a common stock. In another society twenty-five per cent. of the profits is divided among the shareholders proportionately to the amount of grain delivered during the year, and a further twenty-five per cent. is divided among the co-operative and other bakeries which have affiliated themselves to the mill in order to insure a sufficient outlet for the flour. Co-operative bakeries are numerous in France. Generally speaking, they are consumers' associations buying the flour required; but there are some country districts where these associations receive the farmer's wheat as is necessary for the food of his family and give an equivalent of bread in return: whatever the price of grain, the member receives sixty-five pounds of bread for every seventy-eight pounds of wheat. A second syndicate, the members of which pay no subscription, takes the wheat from the farmer, grades it, and passes it on to the miller. The wheat is valued once a month according to current quotations, and the farmer receives a ticket for bread to the value placed on his wheat. The price of bread is also determined once a month, by a committee, based on the net results of the month's trading.

In many districts of France the farmers have found it necessary to have recourse to combined action to protect their growing crops from destruction by insect and fungoid attacks. Usually the members of a syndicate contribute to its funds in proportion to the area they cultivate, while children are paid by the association to collect the grubs and mature insects—a halfpenny per pound being a not uncommon price. Other plans of destruction exist by means of sulphate of copper solutions. The destruction by frost is combated by burning some material yielding a heavy, thick smoke, and so cover the vineyards, etc., with an artificial cloud. Other syndicates exist for protecting the crops against the depredations of game, for maintaining country roads in good order, and other purposes. Mutual insurance by co-operation among the inhabitants of a locality against the destruction of crops by hail is not considered practicable, on account of the heavy risks and the too limited area covered by such associations. But syndicates can usefully negotiate with hail insurance companies to secure advantageous terms for their members, and this has been successfully done in many districts.

Preservation of fruits and vegetables on a co-operative basis is also in vogue, either by evaporation or by canning. The manufacture of wool, too, is done on a co-operative basis. Each member receives a ticket, on which is entered the quantity of greasy wool delivered by him to the manufacturer; the wool is washed, and the weight of the washed wool is also entered on the ticket, as well as the quality. In June or soon after the manufacturer submits a number of patterns to the committee of the syndicate, who decide on the types to be reproduced, and the wool is then worked up into the various kinds of cloth selected for reproduction. The quantity of cloth made in 1894-5 was about 1,200 yards. The syndicate is endeavoring to form a reserve fund, which will allow of prompt payment upon delivery of the wool to such flock owners as stand in need of it.

Fair Management Discussed.

To the Editor FARMER'S ADVOCATE:

SIR,—Pardon me for not sooner writing to express my high appreciation of the very valuable and interesting reports of the leading fairs which have appeared in the FARMER'S ADVOCATE during the last two months. The report of our fair was admirably written, and I have heard it highly spoken of in many quarters. I have just been reading the article on "Fair Management" in your issue of 1st October, and I heartily concur in many of the remarks contained therein. What you say in regard to judges and judging is very appropriate, for I can assure you that a fair management usually goes to a good deal of trouble to secure honest, capable, and impartial judges. I hope that many exhibitors will read your article on this subject, because it contains the best of advice. I note what you say in regard to a circuit. Do you not think that inasmuch as the weather gets cold down here earlier than it does in Toronto or London, that for that reason the Montreal Exhibition should precede that of either London or Toronto? I know that there is a serious difficulty on the part of exhibitors from the West in coming to Montreal first; but, on the other hand, we have nearly always had unfavorable weather when our exhibition was held in September; and more than this, we have had cold weather, which is always a great drawback to our exhibitions. I thoroughly agree with you, however, that there should be a definite understanding in order that exhibitors who prepare stock might

have an opportunity of getting from one exhibition to the other without loss of time and with the least possible delay. It is proposed next year to hold an exhibition in Quebec, and it has been proposed to me that some arrangement might be made whereby Montreal, Sherbrooke, Quebec, and Three Rivers might make a circuit, with Ottawa coming afterwards; but in any case the matter should be carefully considered before dates are fixed, and I am glad that you have drawn attention to this subject. The greatest difficulty that we experience is in getting exhibitors to make their entries in proper time, and although our entries closed only a week before the opening of the exhibition this year, nearly three-quarters of the entries were received after the date fixed for closing. This delay causes us a great deal of trouble and renders it impossible to publish a reliable catalogue, which we would so much like to do. Do you not think it would be fair to charge exhibitors who are thus tardy double entry fees? Unquestionably much good is effected by means of exhibitions, and they exert a valuable educational influence; but I would like if you would kindly aid us in securing a large number of exhibitors from the farming classes, properly so-called. My observation leads me to the conclusion that the ordinary farmer is more and more withdrawing, and that exhibiting is left to what I might call the professional exhibitor or breeder. While these men go to great trouble and expense to produce fine specimens in each breed, it is sometimes a question if our exhibitions are bringing out the average farmer and showing what he is doing as much as they ought. Excuse me for writing such a long letter. I wished merely to express my thanks for your articles on exhibitions. Yours very truly,

S. C. STEVENSON,
Manager and Secretary Montreal Exposition,
October 5th, 1897.

[NOTE.—The subject dealt with by Mr. Stevenson in the foregoing letter is one of very great importance, that will bear considerable additional discussion by others interested, both exhibitors and those upon whom devolves the responsibility of managing the larger exhibitions. We desire—and this was our object in taking up the question at the outset—to see such arrangements made as will be mutually as advantageous as possible for all concerned, and Mr. Stevenson is entitled to thanks for the fair and suggestive way in which he has opened the discussion. We shall be glad to hear from others on the subject. In so far as the Winnipeg Industrial and other large Manitoba summer shows are concerned, dates do not conflict with those in the East, as the former are held in July or early August.—EDITOR.]

The Impending Deficiency of Breadstuffs.

As the relation of supply to demand very largely influences the price of any commodity, in order to arrive at the probable condition of future price of breadstuffs, such as wheat, rye, etc., a view of the situation as it is revealed by universal statistical evidence should cast considerable light upon the future condition of agriculture. In the *Forum* for October Mr. C. Wood Davis points out, in an exhaustive article, that the production of breadstuffs is rapidly falling behind the rate at which the "bread-eating" population of the world is increasing.

The population of European lineage has increased since 1871 37.5 per cent. Owing to the cessation of war among the nations of European blood, greater freedom from destructive epidemics and improved sanitary conditions, the bread-eaters are increasing at a much greater rate than ever, and annual additions are nearly one-half greater than twenty-five years ago. Such an increase of the consuming element necessitates progressively greater annual additions to the areas employed in growing the bread-making grains, and current additions, instead of being nil, as they have been during the last thirteen years, should be nearly one-half greater than in the earlier seventies. Of the greater populations, those of the United States, Russia, Hungary, Germany, Great Britain and Ireland, Austria, Italy, and France increase at rates diminishing in the order named. With the notable exception of Russia, and possibly Turkey, the economic condition of the "bread-eating" populations has improved in all Europe since 1870. In the United Kingdom, for instance, the dietary of the industrial classes has long been a comparatively high one, yet unit consumption of wheat has there been four per cent. greater in the six years ending 1895 than in the preceding six; while unit consumption of meats, fruits and dairy products has increased in even greater measure. At the same time unit consumption of potatoes and other low or cheap forms of food has diminished in a relative degree. In France the unit consumption of wheat rose from 7.2 bushels per annum, in the eighth decade, to 8.01 bushels for the five years ending with 1895; while the consumption of rye, maslin, buckwheat, and potatoes declined in unit consumption in much the same measure.

Since 1871 Europe's population has increased 30 per cent., while European rye fields have shrunk 15 per cent.; those under spelt and maslin 23 per cent., and buckwheat 40 per cent., while the average of potatoes has increased 27 per cent. All Scandinavia has been exceptionally prosperous, and shows great advance in the quality of food