

The Tendency and Needs of Farming in Ontario.

A SPECIAL PURPOSE SYSTEM TO BE PURSUED UNDER THE NEW CONDITIONS, WITH INTELLIGENCE AND CARE.

(BY G. W. GREEN.)

If I had been asked two years ago to state what was the tendency of farming in Ontario, I could unhesitatingly have replied, "In the direction of increased attention to dairying." Such, indeed, was the tendency then, although not a few words of warning were heard from those who foresaw in the ever-increasing ranks of dairymen the danger in the near future of a lowering of the prices received for their products. That fear has, unfortunately, been realized, and dairying is not now such a remunerative business as it was in years past. It will not be long, however, before it will once again become a valuable branch of farming, always provided that those interested in it unite in taking every possible care to produce nothing but a really first-class article.

The building of the Canadian Pacific Railway across this Continent during the eighties, and the consequent opening up of our great Northwest, created a sort of revolution in Ontario farming, inasmuch as it demonstrated conclusively that it was impossible for us in Ontario to raise wheat for export in competition with the prairie farmer, and make anything out of it. A great many of us had been very partial to wheat-growing, and it was only with reluctance that we gave it up.

Finding ourselves beaten in wheat-growing, a great many turned their attention to cattle raising and feeding, with the best results, financial and otherwise, for some time. It seemed, indeed, as if there would always be a good margin of profit in that industry. The periodical drop in prices, however, came in due time, and, aggravated by the depression which has prevailed all over the world during late years, brought the profits in beef-raising, like those in the departments of farming, down to a vanishing point.

There can be no denial that the position of the farmer in Ontario is by no means an easy one at the present time. With prices for his products as low as they are, it requires hard work to make a living, and the utmost care and intelligence on his part to show a profit at the year's end. What, then, is he doing to meet this state of affairs? Many, I regret to say, are doing nothing but bemoaning their fate. These men are to be found in the ranks of the less progressive agriculturists, who have never tried sincerely to improve their ways. They were satisfied, when times were good, if they made a living, and now that they cannot do that, on account of low prices and their own out-of-date methods of farming, they make no effort to adopt modern conditions of agriculture.

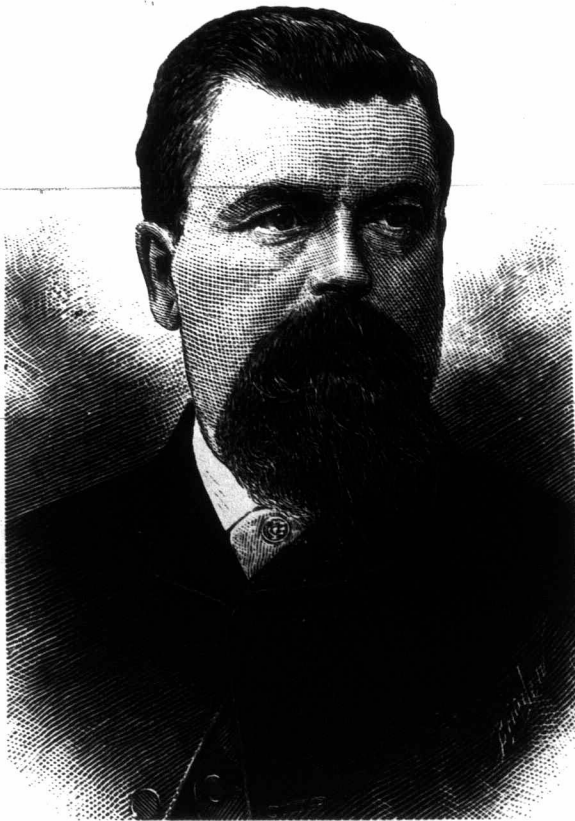
SPECIAL PURPOSE FARMING.

A large proportion of the farmers of this Province, however, are honestly doing their best to adapt their methods of farming to suit present conditions. The tendency at the present time seems to be in the direction of special lines, the line or lines chosen being those best suited to the particular section in which each farmer lives. Thus, in districts along Lakes Ontario and Erie the specialty is fruit; in sections where good crops and good pasture are to be met with, stock-raising for beef purposes or dairying are popular, and the same thing holds good as regards sections where horse, sheep, and swine breeding can be profitably carried on. There are two branches of farming, however, that can be more generally pursued all over the Province than the others named, viz., poultry-raising and bee-keeping. The former of these has received a very large increase of attention by farmers in all parts during the last couple of years, and deservedly so, as it is, though but in a small way, one of the most profitable departments on the farm. So is bee-keeping where the conditions are not adverse, and good profits have been realized from the product of the honey-bee.

The man who has determined to follow out any one of these special lines must exercise due care and forethought in so doing. The attainment of

success depends on each one giving special attention to every detail of his work, small though some of them may be and seemingly insignificant. If we start aright, with a high ideal before us of what is required in our business, and carry out our plans according to these high ideals, we shall reap success, even when times are hard and prices low. Take the fruit-grower, for instance. It would be waste of time for a man to try to grow plums or peaches in sections where other fruit will do much better—he must plant the trees which will do best

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there. I know men to-day in the Niagara Peninsula who are doing well by growing peaches. They do not trouble their heads to grow other fruit for market, for the simple reason that peaches do so much better in that locality. It must be borne in mind, however, in this connection that it is not wise for the fruit-grower to experiment with too many varieties. Two or three of the good standard sorts for which the market calls are better than a dozen varieties and will sell better when your fruit is sold on the ground to one buyer.

fruit put up neatly in a small package will catch the eye, especially of the wealthy consumer—a class it is desirable to reach—much more readily than the same fruit put up carelessly in a larger basket or barrel. The majority of shippers use this latter method, hence the comparison between their fruit and the more neatly-arranged samples is more favorable to the last mentioned, especially if, as should always be done, none but really good fruit is put up in them.

INTELLIGENCE AND CARE.

In the other departments of the farm we must use the same care and intelligence as in fruit-growing. Economy in preventing leaks and in utilizing to the utmost the advantages which we possess must be steadily practiced under existing conditions. In live stock breeding we must continue to use the best sires that we can get and keep our stock up to the same high standard as we maintained when prices were high for them. By so doing and by properly advertising them we shall get fair prices, even if we do not make fortunes out of them at present figures. By studying up feed combinations we can often save feed and obtain equally as good results as we were getting from a more expensive ration. In live stock raising, too, we have the advantage of disposing of a number of bulky products of the farm in a condensed form, thus saving freight on shipments.

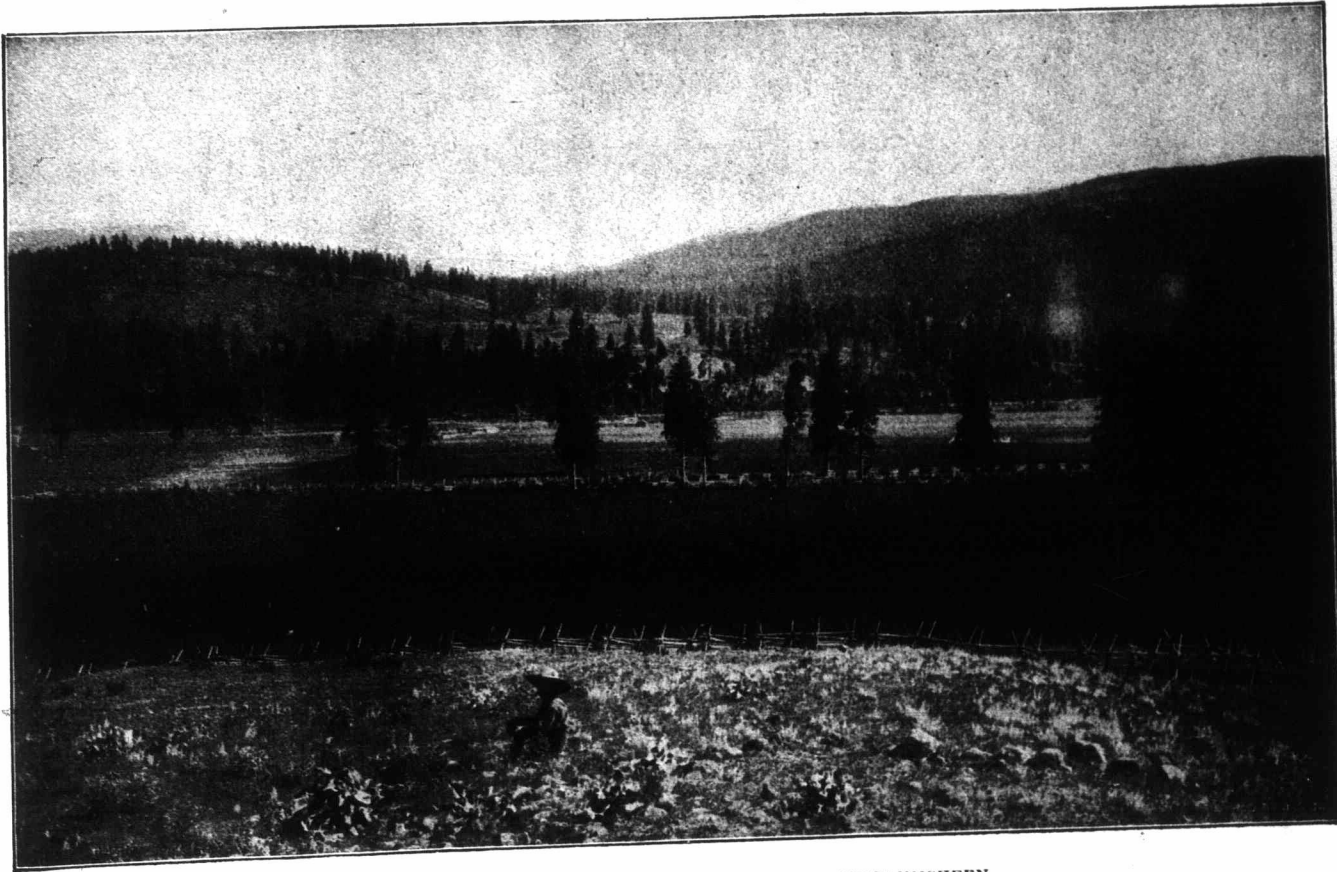
Poultry-raising has made great strides lately in Ontario, but most poultry-raisers have still much to learn. Comfortable quarters, cleanliness, and suitable stock are prime requisites, while two most important points are the food fed and care in marketing the products. The cost of food need not be high, and yet the food may be most suitable for the production of eggs. In this matter we can learn a great deal from successful poultry-raisers. It ought to be unnecessary to state that the best results are obtained when eggs are marketed quite fresh, and when chickens are pushed forward and sold early before the markets are glutted with stock.

EXTENDING TRADE.

Apart from the ways in which the Ontario farmer can by his own exertions improve his condition, much can be done by the Government of Canada to relieve him by means of wise changes in the customs tariff. On commodities such as corn, which our feeders require to finish off their fat cattle for the British markets, and which our American cousins can grow to much better advantage than we can, the tariff should be nil. Then those harassing quarantine regulations on both sides of the line, which cripple the live stock trade between the two countries, should be done away with. We need freer intercourse in the matter of farm products with our neighbors to the south of us, and we should endeavor to secure this, if possible, by mutual concessions. In this connection I would strongly urge the importance of farmers being properly represented before the Tariff Commission, so that the Government at Ottawa, when they come to revise the tariff, may be thoroughly conversant with farmers' needs.

THE SKIES BRIGHTENING.

Although times are quiet now, I believe that there is an era of prosperity before our farmers in Ontario. There is a hopeful tone pervading the country, and loan companies report farm lands as already stiffening in value. Although times of depression are disagreeable, yet we often learn useful lessons from them which we can make use of to good advantage when a more prosperous era comes, as it must in time. We are fortunate in having in our Dominion and Ontario Ministers of Agriculture, Hon. Sydney Fisher and Hon. Jno. Dryden, two gentlemen who are fully alive to the needs of agriculture, thoroughly in sympathy with it, and ready to do what they can to assist



VIEW ON ROAD BETWEEN SALMON RIVER AND SPALLUMCHEEN.
YALE DISTRICT, SALMON VALLEY, BRITISH COLUMBIA.

When once orchards are planted we must carefully attend to our trees, pruning and spraying them at the proper seasons. Spraying has now become a necessary function of fruit-growing if we wish to harvest crops of first-class fruit. During some years, it is true, it does not seem so necessary as in others, but its use always ensures a larger crop of marketable fruit. In marketing fruit ourselves it is always best to get it before the customer as tastefully as possible. A sample of

the farmer in placing his products on distant markets in the best condition. When the cold storage system gets into proper operation and we have the benefit of a fast freight line to Great Britain we need fear the competition of no country in her markets. Our cheese has a first-class reputation there already, our butter is rapidly acquiring the same, while our horses, beef, mutton, bacon, eggs, fruit, poultry, and honey can all be rated as A 1 if only we take care to ship nothing inferior thither.