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EDITORIAL.

A Prize Competition.

As announced in the last issue of the FARMER'S ADVOCATE, we are offering three handsome cash prizes for plans and descriptions of improved farm-houses, which we trust will awaken a widespread interest in this important subject. Details of the competition, which is open during the months of July, August and September, appear on the preceding page of this issue; and we look for an early and a very general response. We have made the range of cost all the way from \$1,500 to \$3,000, in order to bring in descriptions suited to different farm requirements. From correspondence we find that the idea already meets with the approbation of our readers. The farmer and his family should enjoy the most comfortable home in the land, and our aim is to bring out the best ideas available. We hope soon to be in receipt of numerous descriptions and plans of model residences.

Harvesting the Grain.

A comparatively light hay harvest in most parts of Eastern Canada, owing to the freezing out of the clover crop last winter, has shortened the season generally required for securing that crop, and given ample time for cultivating and cleaning the corn and root crops. On account of exceptional winter conditions, fall wheat is also a light crop in most sections where it is grown, and will ripen later and more unevenly, and be more liable to rust, than when the crop is a full one. The deficiency in the quantity of fodder for stock from these sources render it all the more important that special attention be given to harvesting the spring grain crops, which, fortunately, are extensive and abundant, at the best time and in the best possible condition to secure a good quality of both straw and grain. If these crops are cut in good time, before the grain is dead ripe, and while there is yet a considerable amount of sap left in the straw, the grain will continue to draw nourishment from this source sufficient to mature itself and to attain its fulness, and will, provided weather conditions are favorable, take on a fresher color than if allowed to fully ripen before being cut, while the straw will be so much more valuable as fodder as to far more than counterbalance any possible shrinkage from the early harvesting, and the loss from shelling, which is considerable in the case of overripe grain, will be much less. Of course, the weather probabilities have to be considered in this connection, as it would be unwise to cut grain crops on the green side and bind it in sheaves if wet weather is likely to prevail, but with a prospect of fair weather, and by binding in small sheaves, it will be found generally advantageous to cut the cereal crops while the grain is in the dough state, and before it has become hardened and fully ripe, but to avoid musting, care must be observed that the straw is thoroughly dry before it is put in the mow or stack. The value of pea straw as fodder for sheep, or to be cut up for use as a part of the roughness in feeding cattle or horses, is greatly enhanced by cutting before fully ripe, and by the use of the modern improved harvester attachment to the mowing machine it is left in such condition that the process of drying and curing is hastened, so that the crop may generally be secured in excellent condition, and made a valuable addition to the supply of winter fodder for stock. The importance of early harvesting in the Northwest is emphasized by the liability to visitations of early frost, and also in central Canada, when the purpose is to follow with fall wheat, in which case a few days may make a very great difference in the preparation of the land for a seed-bed for that crop, as the autumn months are often exceedingly dry, and advantage needs to be taken of the opportunity to utilize every shower that falls by surface cultivation to conserve the moisture in the land.

Tuberculosis Discussed in Parliament.

The members of the Canadian House of Commons spent the greater part of one day's session recently discussing the question of the prevention of tuberculosis in human beings and animals. While it cannot be said that many really new points were made, still the observations of the various M. P.'s and the Minister of Agriculture, Hon. Mr. Fisher, will tend to emphasize certain aspects of the subject that should not be lost sight of, and others regarding which there appears to be danger that the zeal of some persons will run ahead of their judgment and knowledge. The Minister of Agriculture announced that he had taken the precaution to have Canada represented at the late Tuberculosis Congress in Berlin, Germany, by Dr. Farrel, of Halifax, whose report to the Government should throw light upon this disease and its most modern and effective treatment.

Regarding the tuberculin test for cattle, we are inclined to agree with Messrs. W. C. Edwards, M. P., and J. G. Rutherford, M. P., that to encourage its use by the general public would be a mistake. We reach this conclusion after a very careful inquiry into the experience of persons engaged officially in tuberculin-testing in the State of New York and elsewhere. Its use as a diagnostic agent is comparatively a new thing. An error in the quantity or strength of the dose injected may give an incorrect diagnosis of the real condition of the animal operated upon, and under certain natural or exciting conditions the temperature of a perfectly healthy animal may rise. Furthermore, the particular way, as well as the degree, in which the temperature rises must be closely noted, because if it be sudden, followed by a sudden descent, then the cause is some local or accidental disturbance. It has also been found that tuberculous animals, after one or more tests, do not show the reaction. Obviously, then, none but competent experts, officially designated, should be operating this test, which requires scientific exactness.

Dr. Sproul, M. P., touched a point that cannot be too often or too strongly urged, viz., the need for systematic and thorough inspection of the sources of the milk supply of cities and towns. We have no doubt that a great deal of infant mortality is due, not to tuberculous milk, as some alarmists allege, but to milk improperly cared for or low in quality—poor in solids and fat through the agency of the pump, and drawn from cows whose water supply is impure and whose food is often largely made up of refuse from breweries. In other words, the little ones are simply the victims of malnutrition. Our attention has frequently been drawn to the stables of some of these town milkmen that were in a wretchedly unsanitary condition.

Mr. John McMillan, M. P., voiced the sentiment of the more advanced stockmen of Canada when he said that thirty-six years' experience as a farmer had brought him to the conclusion that it was just as necessary to keep the barns and stables disinfected and in a cleanly condition as it was for looking after the sanitation of dwellings for human beings.

Hon. Mr. Fisher briefly reviewed his policy, which had been for two years to disseminate information, to require the testing of imported animals, and making provision for the free testing, by veterinary officers, of Canadian herds for those desiring it, under special regulations. As a result, some 16,000 cattle had been tested with tuberculin, and out of this number only 1,017 reacted, or about 6½ per cent., which was a low percentage when it is borne in mind that it was largely suspected herds, located in unsanitary byres near large cities, that had been tested.

Mr. Clancy, M. P., contended that the disease could not be stamped out while owners were allowed to retain on their premises animals known to be diseased. The policy was half-hearted, and

should be more thoroughgoing in order to minimize the disease and reduce the danger to other stock and human beings.

Judging from the costly, unfortunate and unsatisfactory experience of States that have experimented with the "stamping-out" process by test and slaughter, the Government would certainly be ill-advised to embark upon such a dubious and unnecessary undertaking. Prof. H. W. Conn, Ph. D., of the Storrs Experiment Station, Connecticut, recently made a thorough study of this whole subject in England, France, Holland, Denmark, Switzerland, Germany, and Italy, and his report, reviewed at length in the May 1st issue of the FARMER'S ADVOCATE, stated that while bovine tuberculosis appears, by means of the tuberculin test and slaughter-house examinations, to have largely increased of late years in Europe, yet during the past fifty years human tuberculosis had decreased fifty per cent. He also asserts emphatically what common observation and study indicate, that the passage of this disease from animals to man is not a common method of dissemination; indeed, we are inclined to believe that it is entirely exceptional. The germs of "consumption," as the disease is commonly called, are, we believe, ordinarily communicated by means of germs in the breath or sputa dried and floating in the air from one person to another, usually in the same household, finding their destructive opportunity where the predisposing individual conditions and surroundings are favorable to disease. This, then, naturally suggests the wide legitimate and necessary field for the efforts of physicians and health-reformers.

The patient old cow has in her time been subjected to a good deal of unmerited abuse, and that she is the great source of human tuberculosis we believe to be a slander. She has been charged with taking tuberculosis to countries where, it is alleged, it was not previously known; while if the truth were ascertained the persons who introduced cattle probably took the disease in their own bodies. As Prof. Conn himself states, it is doubtful if the danger of taking the disease would be appreciably less if we should exclude milk and flesh entirely from our diet. Dr. J. H. Reed, V. S., clearly points out, elsewhere in this issue, that different organs of the animal may be affected. There seems to be a general opinion that it is only when the udder is involved that the milk becomes germ-laden. Hon. Mr. Fisher told Parliament that for a year past he and his officers had been searching for cows with definitely affected udders for experimental purposes, but had been unable to find one. The probabilities are, as he stated, that in no country in the world are cattle so free from tubercular disease in any organ as in Canada. But despite all this, we have panicky regulations spasmodically proposed by enthusiasts—well-meaning, perhaps, but ill-informed, or else "worked" by persons who would create a bogus alarm in order to their own professional or personal interest, while the public bears the inconvenience and the expense. At the same time, the farmer or stockman who studies the well-being of his animals, profitable production, and his own interest generally, will take every needed precaution (by breeding stock healthy in every respect, by the use of wholesome food and pure water, reasonable exercise, thorough cleanliness in his stables, plenty of pure air and light) in order to maintain and improve the position we now hold.

The English *Live Stock Journal* states that British imports of bacon rose from £10,856,000 in 1894 to £14,216,000 in 1898, coming from the United States, Denmark, and Canada. Danish bacon sells for double the price of U. S., and Canadian about 70 per cent. more, though still below Denmark, who have gained their place, says the *Journal*, by breeding the bacon type of hogs and curing after the English fashion.