

Competition in Flock Management.

At the annual meeting the Ontario Sheep Breeders' Association, held in Toronto in February, James Douglas, of Caledonia, the president of the Association, suggested that a competition be started among the sheep breeders similar to the Field Crop Competition which has done so much during the past few years to improve the quality of crops grown in Ontario. At the meeting the idea met with favor and the matter was left in the hands of the Executive. This body of men acted quickly, and already have worked out rules and regulations for a competition and drafted a score-card for judging the flocks. A number of flocks have already been entered in the competition but there is no reason why practically every flock in the Province should not compete for the liberal prizes which the Association have offered.

The Province is divided into twelve districts for the competition. They are: 1, Carleton and Lanark Counties; 2, Renfrew County; 3, Durham, Northumberland and Peterboro; 4, Ontario and Victoria; 5, Parry Sound and Muskoka; 6, Dufferin and Simcoe; 7, Bruce and Grey; 8, Huron and Middlesex; 9, Essex and Kent; 10, Manitoulin Island; 11, Temiskaming, Sudbury and Nipissing District; 12, Algoma, Rainy River and Thunder Bay Districts. The conditions of entry are that the competitors must be members of the Ontario Sheep Breeders' Association, and must agree to sell their wool through this Association in order that points for wool, on the score card, may be awarded on its preparation and condition. In awarding the prizes, the following points will be taken into consideration; health of the flock, dipping, docking, castrating, winter care, lamb crop, type of ram used, and condition and preparation of wool when shipped to Guelph for sale. With the exception of the type of ram, the possible score for each item is ten, and for the type of ram twenty. Owners of grade or pure-bred, large or small, flocks could enter the competition and the rivalry, which would naturally be created, should tend toward better care of the flock and in more modern methods of handling the golden hoof being adopted. The score card which the Association has drafted puts a premium on type, uniformity, quality and cleanliness of the fleece, fleshing, lamb crop, general conditions, etc. Sheep owners entering the competition will naturally examine their flocks to see if improvement can be made. This will tend to culling of the breeding flock, to the use of better rams, to caring for the flock so as to produce the best quality of wool, and to make provision for keeping the fleeces free from burs and dirt. Lambs will be docked at the right time and none of the bucks will be castrated. All this will tend to improve the sheep industry of the Province.

We believe the idea is to secure men to do the scoring who are capable to holding demonstrations in docking, castrating, fleece tying, etc., and who are in a position to give breeders, amateurs in particular, valuable information in flock management.

Could not a similar competition be inaugurated with beef cattle, dairy cattle and swine? It would undoubtedly tend toward improvement in the herds. Many of the young men just starting for themselves would enter such competitions and through them gain information which they could make use of in their breeding and feeding operations. Individual and group classes in the show-ring have brought results. Let us have more flock and herd competitions open to the breeder of grade stock, as well as the breeder of pure-breds.

Canada's Live Stock Position Never Better.

In a recent issue of "The Farmer's Advocate" it was announced that H. S. Arkell, Live Stock Commissioner, would shortly return to Canada after spending some time in Great Britain closely studying the possibilities of extending the development of Canada's live-stock industry to meet after-the-war conditions in the markets of Great Britain and other European countries. Mr. Arkell returned to Ottawa on Tuesday, April 8, and it was our pleasure to talk with him on the following day. There is no doubt in the mind of the Live-Stock Commissioner as to the future of our live-stock industry. There is no disposition on his part to gloss over any deficiencies in our marketing or production methods for the purpose of encouraging Canadian live-stock men. He is, rather, more inclined to view with pleasure the splendid opportunities for a development of our export trade in live stock and live-stock products and at the same time to recognize that these opportunities will be lost to us unless we immediately take advantage of them. Notwithstanding the unreasonable and unnecessary delay on the part of the Dominion Government in dispatching a man overseas to watch our live-stock interests in the British markets, we gather that there is an evident desire to strengthen trade relations within the Empire, on the part of the people of Great Britain. The majority of these opportunities are still open to Canadians. The war is, we hope, over, and European affairs are very greatly demoralized so that, to speak very plainly, Canadians must seize the present favorable circumstances and turn them to the very best possible account while our advantage of nearness to European markets may still be considered of paramount importance. That is to say, a careful canvass of the live-stock situation by those qualified to draw accurate conclusions, will show that in some things Canada can compete, with increasing satisfaction on the British market, while in others, not so well represented there in the past, we must proceed with the greatest care and thoughtfulness consistent with the necessity for quick action. The fact must be driven

home to both Government and people that live-stock production must be encouraged along sane lines. There are no two courses for Canada in this regard. Farmers, everywhere, if Mr. Arkell has accurately interpreted live-stock conditions in Europe, must be made acquainted with the facts and, further, they must be convinced that the facts are facts. To this end there is a tremendous responsibility to be borne by all, if we are to take advantage of the apparent opportunities.

The horse industry, for instance, is generally considered to be about as reliable a barometer of live-stock conditions as may be found. It is no secret that need be veiled in obscurity, that for some years the horse industry in Canada has not been particularly flourishing. While there have been other causes than a growing popularity of motor vehicles and machinery, it is nevertheless true that chronic pessimists and mournful Job's comforters have gone up the sideroads and down again, pushing the horse from his former place and relegating him to the back acres. Fortunately, habitual depression is not a common characteristic of all the people so that there are still a few good horses in Canada and material for breeding more. That they can be sold on a good market seems to be Mr. Arkell's well formed opinion. He is convinced that Canadian horsemen can find a ready market in Great Britain and other countries within the next few years for good, heavy, clean-limbed horses, provided that in our haste to take advantage of this market we do not spoil it by unscrupulous exploitation. Army horses are being sold in considerable numbers it is true, but even the pick of these are not the type required by large transportation companies in the large cities of Great Britain. This particular market will take the pick of our draft horses, and London was never so short of horses as at present, in Mr. Arkell's opinion. Horses of good quality have found and doubtless can still find a market there at prices ranging around £160. We have in Canada a considerable quantity of light farm horses which are of a type that move rather slowly. Poland offers us a market for horses of this type just as soon as finances can be stabilized. Her requirements of these horses weighing from 1,100 pounds and up, were stated to the Live-Stock Commissioner, on the best of authority, to be about 600,000 head. Naturally, therefore, if we organize to meet this demand at the moment it confronts us, we may rid Canada of many light farm horses we do not need.

The beef situation is interesting to say the least. It is equally important and to a certain degree complicated. It is well to acknowledge at the outset, that in the past we have suffered severely because of competition from the Argentine and Australia, as well as having to meet other competition from Brazil, South Africa and New Zealand. Before the war, the Argentine for example, supplied the British market with a very heavy carcass, steers dressing up to 800 pounds and exceedingly well bred. These weights yield very heavy carcasses and are in excess of those exported from this country. However, we have plenty of opportunity if we develop it, in spite of the fact that it is doubtful if we can compete in cost of production with Argentina. Careful investigation will be needed to ascertain whether the former preference for heavy cuts of beef will continue in Britain, because bacon and beef have been distributed so generally in England, according to Mr. Arkell, as since the signing of the armistice. This is not a purely temporary condition due to reaction from food control. British workmen are more favorably situated financially than ever before and the present trend of industrial relations points to a continuance of these conditions. This being the case it is probable that smaller cuts will be in demand, which will provide a market for 24 to 30 months old steers weighing 1,300 to 1,500 pounds. This condition then, calls for the most closely applied thought and investigation, to determine our most favorable position with regard to the meat trade.

There is another consideration with regard to beef that lies with the export of stocker and feeder cattle to Great Britain. Mr. Arkell recognizes that it is highly desirable that we market our cattle well finished and in the shape of chilled meat to the greatest possible extent. But one must also consider the fact, he argues, that thousands of live cattle are now being exported from Canada to the United States, which would serve us better if marketed in the same way in England. If the latter were done, we would possess the advantage of an alternative market for Canadian beef, a condition that would, it is thought, tend to free the Canadian farmer from undue control by the large packers. This is a matter which is dependent, of course, upon the removal of the British embargo, but strong efforts are being made in this direction, the success of which is somewhat problematical as yet. British sentiment is ready to favor trade with Canada and there is this much in our favor.

Not much of a market should be anticipated in Roumania, Serbia, Greece and other Balkan States for dead meat. France, too, does not want to send much money out of the country. Therefore, so far as these nations are concerned, we should count on nothing more than a more or less temporary demand for breeding stock. Those people will eat largely of cereals.

So far as bacon is concerned we have never had so favorable an opportunity to establish ourselves. The supply at present coming from Denmark and Holland is nil. American bacon is distinctly out of favor; and at the present time Canadian packers have more orders than they can fill. The Commissioner is fully convinced that there will be a market for all the Canadian bacon we can produce for some time to come at profitable prices. But it must be remembered that this bacon must be "Wiltshire" bacon and all that this

implies in quality and a guaranteed product. Stock sheep, too, can find a ready market, says Mr. Arkell, if the embargo can be removed.

Our egg business is on a sound footing so far as demand is concerned. The reduction of poultry in Russia, France, The Balkans, Egypt, Holland and Denmark is enormous and there is no egg supply to be anticipated from these countries for some time to come.

What must we do to meet the situation? We were told that three things seem of immediate importance now: first, the completion of organization in Canada to supply to the British market what we know it demands and further to ascertain facts that require investigation. Second, we need a publicity campaign of some effective sort to put the facts before the Canadian people; and third, we must develop special export organizations to take care of whatever export business in live animals may be open to us, particularly with regard to horses. Needless to say, if we are to fall heir to a trade with Great Britain and the rest of Europe such as has been sketched above, we need in Great Britain a permanent man who will look after our interests. There should have been one there months ago and he is needed more than ever now.

THE FARM.

The Rural School Problem.

EDITOR "THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE":

"What is wrong with the rural school?" is a question you have editorially asked in a recent issue. Much is wrong; but the chief difficulty, at the present time, is that few are really concerned about the question at all, and consequently it is not being properly investigated. The first thing that should be done is to arouse an interest in the whole matter. Get farmers and their wives thinking about it, and a beginning will have been made.

S. B. McCready, in a recent article, states that a thorough and complete diagnosis of rural education would reveal the following condition:—

1. A lack of idealism.
2. Rural education is inadequate.
3. It has been non-progressive.
4. It is incomplete.
5. It is not native of the soil.
6. The teaching force is weak.
7. It lacks the organized support of women.
8. It is poorly supported financially.

A sweeping indictment surely; and one pretty well justified, as one will see on reading Prof. McCready's article! What is to be done? The first thing as I said, is to begin to investigate and discuss, and then to agitate. But we must see clearly what we wait before we begin to agitate. There is no use in mere "knocking." We must generally agree upon a forward policy, and then some headway may be looked for. Meanwhile, I venture to make a few general observations for the purpose of provoking thought and discussion.

In the first place, I am disposed to think that a good deal will depend upon agriculture's getting a square deal from an economic point of view. If agriculture becomes sufficiently attractive to draw labor and capital, and if thereby we get a relatively permanent rural population who are not looking elsewhere for their satisfactions, attention will naturally be given to all rural institutions, the school included. But if rural depopulation is not checked, in fact, if it is not reversed, there isn't much hope of mending matters so far as education goes. A decadent industrial class cannot be expected to do much in the way of helping themselves, and the same is true in imposing a "system" upon them that they don't want. But, on the other hand, we must remember that the school in itself is a factor in regenerating rural life, and while its efficiency depends upon general economic conditions, it will have an important influence in shaping those conditions. The relationship between the social life of a community and that community's institutions is extremely close, and neither one can prosper or deteriorate without reacting upon the other. "Action and Reaction are equal and opposite."

In the second place, I would suggest that the Ontario farmer do not depend upon the Provincial Department of Education for much in the way of leading and guidance. Officialdom inevitably tends towards conservatism and stagnation, and politicians will not risk office in order to strike out along new (and for a time unpopular) lines. We ought to get assistance from the Education Department; but we shall be wise not to lean upon them. Better take the matter into our own hands and canvas the whole situation. The women's organizations in particular have a keen interest in this question, and we can, I think, look to them to keep the matter to the fore.

My own views upon the question of rural education have been fairly definite for a long time, but I have not given expression to them in recent years. Permit me now to outline these views in brief.

In the first place, I think we should have distinctly an *Education for Country Life*. This would imply that life in the country was, in itself, eminently desirable, and offered abundant scope for all kinds of activities. And it would imply that our rural education should be framed with such in mind. It would not imply, of course, that anyone should be educated solely for farm life, or that we should have nothing but technical instruction in agriculture. We are all citizens, urban and rural alike, and we are all human. We must, therefore, have a great many interests in common, which would be provided for by having the curricula

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