

THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE AND HOME MAGAZINE.

THE LEADING AGRICULTURAL JOURNAL IN THE
DOMINION.

PUBLISHED WEEKLY BY
THE WILLIAM WELD COMPANY (LIMITED).

TWO DISTINCT PUBLICATIONS—EASTERN AND WESTERN

EASTERN OFFICE:
CARLING STREET, LONDON, ONT.

WESTERN OFFICE:
IMPERIAL BANK BLOCK, CORNER BATHURST AVE. AND MAIN ST.,
WINNIPEG, MANITOBA.

BRANCH OFFICE: CALGARY, ALBERTA, N.-W. T.
LONDON (ENGLAND) OFFICE:
W. W. CHAPMAN, Agent, Mowbray House, Norfolk Street,
London, W. C., England.

JOHN WELD, MANAGER.

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"Shall We Cut Out the Smaller Fairs?"

Resolutions passed by the Central Ontario and the Western District Fairs Associations have raised the question of the advisability of inserting in the Agriculture and Arts Act of the Ontario Statutes a clause to the effect that the Government should not make a grant to agricultural societies which expend less than \$300 or \$400 a year for agricultural purposes.

In the Northwest Territories a society is not entitled to a grant unless it expends at least \$250 in this way, whereas in Ontario we have some societies getting \$140 which give less than that amount for agricultural purposes, one society during the last three years having spent slightly less than \$50. The fact is that some of our annual fall fairs have degenerated into a sort of combination horse-race and circus, with just enough of the agricultural feature to entitle them to the Government sop. Indeed, it has often seemed to us that many of the fairs have outlived their usefulness. Just what benefit accrues to anyone from attending a township show, looking at the meagre display of farm products, or examining the very ordinary and often crudely classified sections of live stock, we would like to have pointed out by someone more enamored of such institutions than we are. Small affairs and ordinary exhibits tend to narrow ideas and low ideals. Now that cheap travelling has made the large centers accessible from nearly all parts, would it not be wise to let some of the smaller fairs go down, their places to be taken by the large ones, where the people can learn something and see things and people beyond the circles of their everyday acquaintance? Of course, in remote sections, such as parts of New Ontario, where there is a small show or none, the withholding of a grant might be a hardship, but even here it would seem that any show which could not afford at least \$300 for prizes for farm products was scarcely worth encouraging.

The aim and effect of the proposed clause

would be two-fold; it would ensure more attention to the agricultural end of certain exhibitions, and it would tend to eliminate some of the smaller ones, to the advantage of those remaining. The only doubt in our mind is whether it is well to attempt to bring this change about by legislation or allow it to be effected by natural means, although, seeing that Government funds are now being devoted to the maintenance of these shows, it is a pertinent subject for consideration whether the objects justify the outlay, and whether it would not be well to commit ourselves to the policy of withholding aid from those societies which do not offer a respectable amount of money for the encouragement of agriculture. Let every reader, particularly those who have had to do with the running of agricultural societies, ponder this matter in a broad public spirit, and ask himself if the small shows are worth the price.

As action along the line suggested at the beginning of this article is being contemplated, now is the time for an all-sided discussion through the "Farmer's Advocate," as we are informed that the views of individual farmers expressed through our columns will have an important influence in shaping whatever legislation may be eventually introduced.

Hint to "Nature Study" Teachers.

To the Editor "Farmer's Advocate":

Sir,—Respecting Mr. H. Groh's interesting letter on page 974, July 6th issue, entitled "Nature Study and Birds-nesting," I beg to suggest that a subscriber in each school district—and there is probably one such in every Canadian school section—send or lend the letter, or a marked copy of the "Farmer's Advocate" containing it, to the teacher to read to the pupils, or otherwise use, shortly after school opens.

The kind of bird study which is based on collections of skins and eggs may be ornithology, but it is not nature study in the pedagogical sense. Emerson put the nature-study spirit in these words:

"Hast thou named all the birds without a gun?
Then be my friend and teach me to be thine."

London Normal School. J. DEARNESS.

Commenting on the proposal to exempt farm wood-lots from taxation, set forth in the "Farmer's Advocate," the St. Paul Farmer says: "Since a large proportion of the forests has been cleared away, the winter winds pile up the deep snow that usually falls in that country into enormous drifts, which in many instances make traffic practically impossible for a time, not only on the railroads, but also on the public highways. The idea could well be applied to this country. It is simply alarming the extent to which our forests are being cut away. Everything legitimate should be done to encourage growing the trees and timber that are going to be so greatly needed in the future."

HORSES.

Fitting and Mannering Horses for the Show-ring.

The following article has been written for the "Farmer's Advocate" by Mr. R. P. Stericker, who is himself a breeder of horses, and known all over the continent as a light-horse judge at the leading exhibitions. A sequel to this article will be one on the Handling of Horses in the Ring.—Editor.

There is no question that a moderately good horse, well fitted, mannered and shown, will, before the average judge, come out ahead of a really first-class animal shown in plain, everyday condition, and lacking the requisite manners. It would, therefore, seem to me of paramount importance that animals intended for "showing" should have both condition and manners.

A colt, say up to three years of age, will probably be shown on the line, and whether of draft, coach, saddle or roadster breeding, he should for at least two or three months before the show be fed liberally and be given a half-hour's exercise every day (Sunday, of course, excepted) in the manner in which he will be shown. If to halter simply, he must be taught to "lead up," or, in other words, not to lag behind his groom, for nothing looks worse than the horse hanging back when he should be right up and a little ahead of his leader, who should walk

or run, as he may be required, on a level with the point of the horse's shoulder. In case a bridle is used, care should be taken that the colt is not afraid of the bit, which should not be of too severe a character. If the colt be of a naturally lazy disposition, the probabilities are that he will never make a high-class show horse, as nothing appeals more to any judge than a prompt, sprightly animal, that is always right up, willing and desirous of appearing at his best at all times when on exhibition. Some horses, even if of a sluggish disposition, can be greatly improved by good condition and judicious handling; it does no harm to such animals to have a man or a boy follow them with a whip when at their daily exercise, just to remind them it is necessary to keep where they belong, and that they must put their best foot forward, and show the best that is in them. Too often one hears in the show-ring "This colt has not been handled much." No colt should go to a show unless he has been handled, and I want to say that many a prize is lost for lack of a half-hour-per-day handling during the fitting period. I cannot too strongly impress this point upon your readers.

With regard to "conditioning," I could not lay down any hard-and-fast rules. Much depends, of course, on the kind of horse. If of the draft breeds, greater bulk of food should be given, if of the roadster or coaching type, less bulk and more dry feed. But whatever kind of horse is to be "fitted," it should not be turned out on pasture to fight flies and get sunburnt; a good roomy box-stall is the best place, with shaded windows so the flies don't bother. Then feed all the horse can reasonably eat three times a day, say of crushed oats and bran, with good clean hay twice a day, supplemented with a little fresh-cut grass or other green stuff once or twice daily; some feed milk, boiled feed, and condition powders. The two former I do not advocate, as there is danger of getting the digestive organs out of shape with both, and consequently a predisposition to colic, partial paralysis, and in some cases even death. No harm can ensue if good condition powders be used judiciously, or, in place of them, a pint of raw linseed oil, with a little sweet spirits of nitre, once every two or three weeks, preceded by a bran mash the night before, thus keeping the digestive and other organs in good order. Good, liberal, regular feeding is what counts, and with ordinary common sense and observation it is not hard to put any animal into good condition, when, as a matter of course, the hair or coat will naturally become soft and glossy. I do not advocate a great deal of currying or brushing until within, say, two or three weeks of the show, then go at him tooth and nail, and always rub the hair towards the tail.

I have indicated above that the colt should be handled for a half hour daily in the way he is to be shown, and should be encouraged in every way and not jerked round or whipped so he does not know what is required of him; a colt will soon learn if given the opportunity and his teacher be reasonably patient with him and not wish him to learn all at one lesson.

The continual handling every day is what is needed, and naturally makes manners. Of course, the horse should be taught to stand still when required, and show his paces properly when asked to do so. This is indispensable to successful showing.

In case of roadsters, a colt over two years old would best be driven a half hour daily, or even longer, but never so long as to tire him out. Mature horses should be worked about twice as long as colts, but never long enough to take off the condition you are seeking to put on. All harness horses should be driven daily, made to stand still, back when asked to, and start promptly. The same general rules in feeding apply as in the case of colts, only more "dry" or concentrated food may be used.

If, after two or three months' working and conditioning, some horses do not "come on" as they should, these should be discarded, or disappointments will result. Look well to individuality and soundness, and be sure not to show any horse unless he has good feet and legs; a man can build on a body, but unless the proper kind of legs and feet are there to commence with, it is little use to try to make a show horse of the animal in hand. Great care should also be taken in having the animal properly and suitably shod; spare no trouble in going to the best blacksmith within reach, study the horse's way of going, and have him shod accordingly.

To sum up, show nothing but good individuals, clear of blemishes; feed liberally, work regularly, and you will have "manners," and something that is a credit to yourself and the show at which you exhibit, whether you get to the front or not.

N. J.

R. P. STERICKER.

At the last meeting of the board of regents of the Wisconsin University there was created a department of horse-breeding, and Dr. A. S. Alexander was placed in charge of it, with a full professorship.