

The Farmer's Advocate AND HOME MAGAZINE.

THE LEADING AGRICULTURAL JOURNAL IN THE
DOMINION.

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demonstrated beyond a doubt. Many farmers if they could get the help would be doing this summer much more drainage work than they can otherwise accomplish. There is room for more ditching machines in some sections of this Province, and certainly a large acreage is in need of tile. A very good system could be put in on most farms for around twenty dollars per acre. This is taking into consideration the fact that not all the land will likely need draining, but that a system sufficient to meet the needs of the farm might be put down for \$1,800 to \$2,000 per hundred acres. It was formerly estimated that \$20 per acre was a fair estimate for the land actually needing drainage. Of course this price has advanced somewhat. It would probably cost \$25 per acre now to do the work, but as all the acres in the farm would not need a complete system, the lower estimate might cover the cost very well indeed. On the face of it it looks like a lot of money, but we have heard of cases where one crop on drained fields would show a difference large enough to pay for putting in the tile. In fact we had a very good instance of this on the Farmer's Advocate farm, Weldwood, last year where a crop of corn, which without drains would have come to very little, ran a heavy yield. We must not lose interest in drainage even though labor is scarce. Plans must be laid to do the work with machinery and to increase the amount of drained land as soon as possible.

Those in charge of the campaign to increase the consumption of fish in Canada, claim that if the people would use more fish it would bring fish prices down. Increased demand does not generally work that way. However, fish dealers claim that they would sell cheaper if they handled more. Up to the present the price of fish has been advancing with other things even though it doesn't cost any more to feed the fishes. In any event Canadians should eat more fish because of its value as a food and because it is plentiful here, it being estimated that only ten per cent. of the fish caught in our waters is consumed at home. Coupled with the campaign to induce people to eat fish should be an extra effort to get the fish to the people at a reasonable price.

Cultivate.

The middle of June marks the beginning of several weeks of cultivating of corn and root crops on the farm. The corn crop and also the roots depend largely on the degree of cultivation given and the scarcity of labor this season will make it more imperative than ever that horse cultivation be more frequent and less hoeing done. For best results roots and corn should at least be cultivated after every rain, or in other words at periods ranging from five to seven days. It pays to start early. As soon as the rows can be followed get the horse cultivators to work and arrange the implements to work as close to the young plants as possible without injury. It is generally better to have the corn, mangels, or turnips put in a little thick so that if a few plants are taken out or covered in the cultivating enough remain to make a good crop. The work must be planned so that the amount of actual hand-hoeing will be at a minimum this year. The check-row system of planting corn, of course, lends itself well to these conditions as the crop may be worked with the horses both ways, and unless the field is very dirty little hoeing is necessary. We have found the crop of corn sown thickly (50 pounds per acre) in rows at Weldwood, and cultivated very close to the rows required very little hoeing, but to get the growth it is necessary to cultivate well and often, first pulling the earth away from the plants a little. A few extra trips through the corn and roots may mean the difference between an abundance of feed and a shortage this fall and next winter, and it is well to start early and thus head off the weeds.

Keep the Boys in September.

It is said that there are 5,000 High School boys and 3,000 girls now at work on the farms of Ontario, each hired for a period of three or four months to help in increasing production. A suggestion has been made by someone that these be allowed to remain with their employers through the month of September, and, on the face of it, this would seem like a very sensible suggestion. If this form of help has made good and the boys and girls have been of value, doubtless employers could use them to good advantage in September, one of the busiest months in the farmer's year, and it might be well for those in authority to consider the proposition of leaving the boys with the farmers as late this fall as possible. Some, however, have suggested that the time lost from school should be made up by teaching on Saturdays and through the Christmas holidays. We would not favor this latter suggestion. If the boys work faithfully during the summer they should be allowed their regular Saturday and Christmas holidays. It would not be wise to owe the amount of work imposed upon willing shoulders.

Nature's Diary.

A. B. KLUGH, M. A.

The American Sparrow Hawk (*Falco sparverius*), breeds from Newfoundland and Labrador to the Pacific Coast. It is one of the commonest hawks and is the most easily identified of all our species because it is far less wary than other hawks and permits a close approach when perching. It is very frequently seen along roads,



Fig. 11—American Sparrow Hawk—Male.

where it perches on the telegraph wires. When seen flying overhead this species may be recognized by its small size, (its length being about thirteen inches), the long pointed wings and long tail, the under surface of the latter having in the male a broad bar near the end and two broken bars further up, and in the female numerous narrow bars.



Fig. 12—American Osprey.

The sexes are quite different in coloration in this species. In the male the crown is ashy-blue with a chestnut patch in the centre, the back is chestnut, the tail bright chestnut above with a white tip and a broad subterminal bar of black, a narrow black patch runs from the eye down to the upper part of the throat,

and another narrow black patch from behind the eye down to the neck, the underparts are white, tinged with buff and sometimes with black spots. In the female the crown is much as in the male, the back is chestnut with numerous, fine, black bars, the tail is chestnut with many blackish bars, the face-patches are less distinct than in the male and the underparts are white, tinged with buff, and with many dark-brown streaks.

The Sparrow Hawk nests in a hole in a tree, often in a deserted Flicker's hole. The eggs are from four to five in number and are yellowish-brown blotched with brown of a darker shade. The main food of this species consists of insects, grasshoppers and crickets being the kinds most frequently taken, though caterpillars and beetles are also eaten in large numbers. Another important item on its bill of fare is mice, upon which it not only feeds during spring and fall, before and after the hey-day of insect-life, but also feeds to its young. One observer records the fact that a family of five Sparrow Hawks were fed four hundred and twenty mice and rats in a month by the parents. Occasionally, but so very rarely as to have little effect in altering its status as a highly beneficial species, the Sparrow Hawk takes small birds and young poultry.

The American Sparrow Hawk arrives in Ontario early in April and leaves early in October.

The American Osprey, more often termed the Fish Hawk, is found about bodies of water from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and as far north as the Arctic Circle. Though thus very generally distributed it is not common in most localities. The Osprey may be recognized when flying overhead by the long wings, short tail, pure white of the underparts and the numerous narrow bars on the tail.

The nest of this species is usually placed in a tree, very frequently in the broken top of a tall, dead tree. Sometimes, however, it is placed in a bush or even on rocks or on the ground. It is composed mainly of sticks, and as it is used year after year, and is added to each season, it often assumes gigantic proportions, sometimes being eight feet in diameter and eight feet deep. Quite frequently small birds, such as Grackles, nest among the sticks which form the foundation of these large nests. The eggs, which are laid in the latter part of May, are from two to four in number. They are very variable in color, ranging from white, through cream to reddish in ground color with markings of brown of different shades. The period of incubation is from twenty-seven to twenty-eight days.

This species feeds exclusively on fish. Its method of fishing is to sail over the water at some height, and when it perceives a fish near the surface to drop down and seize it in its talons. It then flies away with its prey to a tree and devours it. Since it feeds entirely on fish it cannot be considered economically beneficial and might be classed as harmful, but as a matter of fact it is not usually abundant enough in any locality to make much difference in the fish supply.

Why Some Petitions are not Granted.

BY ALLAN MCDAIRMID.

A friend of mine asked me recently why it was that these formal petitions sent in to governments, signed sometimes by thousands of individuals, were so seldom granted. It was only after thinking the matter over for some time that I was able to come to any sort of a reasonable answer to the query, for the fact that these petitions go unheeded for the most part, had made no great impression on my mind. It was something that I must have been taking for granted, apparently.

On looking over a copy of a petition that was presented to Parliament some time ago, I find one thing in it that might account for its failure to get a favorable answer. From its tone it must have been written and signed by some of the most humble, self-effacing and altogether unworthy human beings that ever were permitted to take up room on this earth. The "Honorable Body" addressed, were apparently creatures from some other world who had condescended to come down and straighten out our little tangles for us. The document starts out with, "This petition humbly sheweth"—and ends up with, "And your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray." Now I think that this attitude of one body of men towards another body, or of one individual towards another, is altogether wrong. If all men were not born equal they have the right to become equal; that is, birth or position are no guarantee of character, and that is the final standard of manhood. So, why should anyone say, in effect, to his fellowman, "You are great and powerful. I am mean and unworthy. But grant me this request and I will be your servant forever." It's a relic of barbarism, and no thinking, self-respecting man should be expected to put his name to a document that is worded in this way. But the point is that right here is to be found one of the reasons for the lack of consideration usually given to petitions and requests of this kind. The average man will kick the dog that licks his boots, and the same feeling is inspired in the person before whom we humble ourselves. The inclination is to deny the petition, with little consideration for the feelings of the petitioner. Another reason for the ineffectiveness of this sort of prayers is that they have actually very little solid backing. They do not represent real effort, except perhaps on the part of a very few individuals. It is easier to sign a petition than to refuse to sign it, consequently the majority of names do not stand for any real convictions, or indicate that any of the signers will back up their request by action. Governments know this, and accordingly give the matter little consideration.

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