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EDITORIAL.

The Breed Society Meetings.

That there is need for an awakening on the part of the executive and directorate of most of the breed societies in Canada, is evidenced by the fact that the dates for the annual meetings, which are usually held early in February, have not been publicly announced before the middle of January, and that inquiries as to when they are to be held this year have reached this office from different and distant parts of the Dominion. The directors do not appear to be seized of the fact that this is a country of magnificent distances, that even transcontinental and imperial limited trains do not always, in a Canadian winter, make schedule time in the delivery of His Majesty's mails, and that members located in the Provinces distant from the center of gravity of the societies, as at present arranged, are entitled to at least as early notice as those in the few counties immediately contiguous to the place of meeting, and where the officers and directors have their homes. Early and sufficient notice is due members in outlying districts, whether they are disposed to avail themselves of the privilege of attending or not. And as not a few of the members in the Western Provinces take advantage of the leisure of the winter months to make business or social visits to the East, they should have timely intimation of the dates of the meetings. In order to a better understanding in this regard, it would appear to be practicable to have a permanently-fixed date, if not of the day, at least of the week in which these meetings are to be held, so that parties living in the outlying Provinces might lay their plans to make their visits from the East or the West at that season, exact information of the day and place of meeting to be mailed the members in ample time, as well as given in the public press. A continued effort on the part of the officials of all these associations might also result in special reduced transportation rates being secured from the railways for those attending the meetings. This is the more probable owing to the meetings being held in the month when the volume of travelling is at a minimum. Among questions which arise in this connection is whether more time could not be profitably utilized at these annual meetings were the programme extended, and not, as at present, compressed into a few hours, precluding the possibility of mature consideration or intelligent discussion of matters of interest to the membership.

The question of representation of the various Provinces on the directorate, and the method of their election, would appear to deserve consideration, if the sympathy and hearty co-operation of the members in all sections be desired. In the past the directors for Provinces have been elected by the members present at the annual meeting, which, in the case of nearly all the societies, is held in Ontario, and attended almost entirely by Ontario breeders. The complaint has been made that this course does not afford a satisfactory representation, and it has been suggested that, owing to the expense incident to the attendance of members from distant Provinces, the vote for Provincial directors might be secured by mail, the secretary of live-stock associations for those Provinces being furnished with a list of the paid-up members, to be mailed to them, with instructions to mark the names of those they favor for the position of directors for their Province, and

return to the secretary before a named date. Whether this plan is practicable, or whether a better can be devised, is an open question, but one thing that we presume will appeal to all is that the good British principle of "no taxation without representation" should prevail, and an honest effort should be made to give satisfactory representation in the councils of each association, even if it be found necessary or expedient to provide for the payment of the expenses, or at least a portion of the expenses of directors living at a long distance from the place of meeting when attending the annual meeting, where he may present the claims and wishes or needs of the breeders in the Province he represents.

Some of the cattle breed societies have appointed as their secretary men familiar with the breed, who are expected to devote time and energy to the work of pushing the interests of the breed and advertising its claims to public favor, reasonable remuneration being allowed him for his work in this regard. This is wise, and the example may profitably be followed by other societies whose financial resources are such as to justify the action. In this age of strong competition, the breed society which acts promptly and vigorously in an enterprising spirit in making known the practical merits of the breed, will make most headway in extending its sphere of usefulness, enlarging the demand for the particular class of stock, and enhancing prices for the same.

The dairy-breed societies which have adopted the system of official tests of milk and butter production, and an advanced Record of Performance, have done wisely, and this course, if persistently followed, is bound to accomplish great good in improving the productive capabilities of our cows, thus adding enormously to the profits of our dairymen. And if the dual-purpose cow is to make good, it is up to those who claim to have faith in her future to show their faith by their works, by seeking to induce the breed societies interested to encourage the production and development of that class by establishing Records of Merit, and offering a liberal list of prizes for superior performance in milk-production, the neglect of which must ultimately count seriously against any breed of cattle, as indeed it does against any class of live stock.

In conclusion, let us remind the members of the breed societies that, if the business of these organizations is not being conducted as they think it should, if selfish interests are being promoted by cliques or combinations, or if officials are neglectful, or unnecessary delays occur in the clerical department, improvement will not be effected by those dissatisfied absenting themselves from the annual meetings and grumbling at home, or by sitting silent when present, but rather by a full attendance, by preconcerted action and by vigorous protest and properly-presented resolutions, calculated to provoke discussion and compel men to place themselves on record by their votes. This thing of allowing a coterie of old-stagers to transact all the business, including nominating each other to succeed themselves in office from year to year, ought not to be allowed to continue indefinitely. A little new blood of the right kind, progressive and, if need be, aggressive, or at least defensive of the right, may add much to the interest of the meetings and to the usefulness of the societies. Let there, therefore, be a large attendance of members at the coming meetings.

If your question has not been answered within reasonable time in the paper, probably you omitted to sign your name.

Record of Performance for Shorthorns.

At the approaching meeting of the Dominion Shorthorn Breeders' Association there is one subject overshadowing all others in importance that should be earnestly discussed, and energetic action taken accordingly. That is, provision for the establishment of a Record of Performance for milking Shorthorns. Such a record would not take the place of ordinary herdbook registration, nor would it result in the development of a distinct breed. It would merely be a means of indicating those individuals or strains of the breed which have proven under official yearly test their superior capabilities in dairy production. It would be the means of developing the milking quality of certain strains, without alienating these from the purely beef stock. Every animal entered in the Record of Performance would be of registered pure breeding, hence there should always remain sufficient homogeneity of origin between the beef and the milking strains that a bull of the one might at any time be chosen to strengthen the beef type or the milking quality, as the case might be, in the other. We need not pause to restate the arguments for more attention to milk on the part of Shorthorn breeders. It has been neglected too long, and we are already suffering the consequences of having pursued the easy way, which has come all too near leading us to the milkless cow. It is time to retrace our steps some little distance, and endeavor to bring the grand old breed, generally, nearer to the dual-purpose standard. Action to this end has been taken in Britain and the United States, where special records are being kept for milking Shorthorns. Surely Canada will not lag behind!

There is still room for the purely beef type of Shorthorn out on the ranch, and in other places where land is cheaper than labor. Probably there always will be a limited demand for such stock, but it will become more limited in Canada as time goes on. Our main beef supply must be produced under a more economical system than all-beef farming. The general farmer has no use for a cow that will not raise her calf, and unless he can get true dual-purpose sires, he will look with increasing favor on the dairy breeds.

If Canadian Shorthorn breeders are to increase or hold their field, they will be obliged to pay more attention to milk, and it is to the interest of the breeder who goes in purely for beef that some, at least, of his brother breeders should cater to the dual-purpose standard, thus lessening the competition in his particular sphere. Every Shorthorn breeder is interested in this movement, whether he proposes to go in for milk or not.

Granted that we need more attention to milk, the conclusion follows that a Record of Performance is the key to the situation. Dairy breeders cannot judge milking quality reliably by appearance. They have to fall back on records. Much less can we gauge by appearance the dairy quality of a dual-purpose breed, for here the selection is complicated by a second factor. We have not even the insufficient guides of the dairymen. If we seek to breed milking Shorthorns according to a dual-purpose type, without relying on records, we shall at best obtain an unsatisfactory compromise. In all probability we would develop a strain of weeds, inferior for beef, and not much better for milk.

What must be done—and experience indicates that by persistent effort it can be done—is to develop the milking propensity in cows approaching the approved beef type. It must be done by careful mating and selection, and by studious development of heifers for several generations. To work intelligently along these lines, we require a means of knowing the actual performance of the individuals in the strains we propose to use. The Record of Performance is the guide to be followed. Let us have it and get to work.