

Sheep Breeding.

Sheep breeding is becoming an industry of importance in sections of Manitoba and the Territories. In some portions of the Territories especially, the country is remarkably adapted to raising sheep, and it is an industry which will no doubt assume large proportions here in the future. A meeting was recently held at Toronto, Ontario, to organize a sheep breeder's association for Canada, at which a very interesting speech was made by Mr. John Hallam, wool dealer, etc., of Toronto and Winnipeg. This speech contains so many points of interest to sheep raisers, that we deem it worthy a place in these columns. At the commencement of the establishment of an industry, it is important that it should be properly understood. Sheep raisers will do well to read carefully the speech. Mr. Hallam said:—

I am pleased to be with you to-day to assist in the formation of a sheep breeders' association for the Dominion of Canada. Though not a sheep breeder, and knowing little about sheep except a savory leg of mutton or a good fleece of wool, I am largely interested in the products of the sheep; here we meet on common ground and our interests should be mutual, for I stand between the producer and the manufacturer. An organization of this kind will materially develop the interests of sheep breeders with a lively president and members working to that end.

Various associations are being formed in trade to protect and forward the interests they represent. On this line there is every reason for a sheep breeders' association, as sheep husbandry is one of the most ancient and honorable on record. I want it to be distinctly understood that I do not come here to speak in favor of any particular breed of sheep or to come in conflict with any member of the society who may have pet ideas on fancy sheep breeding, but to give you my experience, from a wool dealer's standpoint, on the kind of wool that will produce the best results to the farmer and manufacturer. In doing this I may be treading on dangerous grounds and clash with some ideas as to the merits of the various classes of wools grown in this country.

Those farmers must remember, who have been complaining of the low price of wool, that all lustre wools have been low for a long time. Some ten or twelve years ago, fashion changed and demoralised the lustre dress goods business, in which our long lustrous combing wool was used; there is every reason to believe that this class of goods is coming into favor again, there will then be a better demand for this wool at a higher figure. There are other reasons why the coarse and medium wools are low priced in Canada, which largely depends on the sheep breeders themselves.

Fully one fourth of the clip from the sheep grown in Ontario is offered in an unmarketable condition. The wool is cotted, chaffy and

MIXED WITH SEEDS AND HURRS,

which lessens the value from four to five cents a pound to the manufacturer; if a little more care was taken by farmers to prevent their sheep from running at large, feeding around straw stacks and amongst thistles, to choose clean places for washing and shearing so as to keep the wool free from these impurities, I am sure the value of the entire clip would be increased from one to two cents per pound. In 1887 we imported, principally from Great Britain and her colonies, 12,033,693 pounds of wool valued at \$1,875,651, and exported to the United States 1,297,667 pounds of coming wool valued at \$238,256. Our exports of wool are getting less year by year. The reason for this, in my opinion, is that the breeders of thoroughbred stock in Ontario have been doing a large and profitable business in selling their stock to the farmers of the United States. The result is that they are now growing more combing

wools, thus supplying their own market. The statistical returns of the imports and exports of raw material to and from Canada are very delusive. I think I can safely say that we do not buy one pound of domestic wool grown in the United States.

Many farmers ask why we do not grow more fine wools in Canada and import less. My reply to this is that we cannot grow the finer grades in Canada to pay and compete with Cape, Australia, Buenos Ayres and Montevideo wools. Hence we have to import them, as they are necessary to the success of our manufacturers. We can

grow long and medium wools and find a ready and profitable market for both the mutton and the wool. If I were a farmer in Ontario, and had the means and inclination to be a stock breeder, I would seize upon one leading breed of sheep, such as Leicester Shropshire or Southdown, and run it for all it was worth, for I think there is nothing so profitable to the farmer as sheep breeding when carried on economically and with a determination to succeed.

Farmers often ask the question why from 40 to 50 per cent. is taken off unwashed wools and think there is not that difference between unwashed and washed wools. In bygone days the usual reduction was one-third, but our manufacturers complained that it was not enough, owing to the unsatisfactory condition of the wool, and insisted that it should be at least 40 per cent. From my own experience in handling unwashed wool I think they were about right. If our manufacturers were better off and could afford to use washing machines I would advise them to buy unwashed wool, not because it would come lower in price to them but because it is better for all practical purposes. The long coarse wools when clipped unwashed from thoroughbred sheep, when we feed and taken care of, will lose fully from 40 to 50 per cent. The grade sheep do not carry so much grease and do not shrink so much in washing.

We have a demand for all our unwashed combing wools in the United States, combers prefer it in that condition, if it were not for the absurdity of the Government placing the same duty per pound on unwashed as they do on washed wool. For instance, the present price of washed wool is 22 cents per pound, and the duty 10 cents, which is about 45 per cent; the present price of unwashed wool to our manufacturer is 12 cents, and, if we had to send it to the United States, there would be a duty of 10 cents per pound, or over 83 per cent. This practically

PROHIBITS THE SHIPPING

of this wool to the United States, hence we have only a local market with the disadvantages above named. This is one of the beauties of taxing raw material; under these circumstances I would not advise the farmers to clip their wool unwashed. The opening up of the great Northwest of Canada is developing a new feature in the sheep industry of this country. The broad prairies east of the Rocky Mountains and skirting the Bow River are highly suitable for sheep raising. There are now to be seen large flocks of Montana sheep grazing on the luxurious grasses of these plains. This sheep is of the Merino type, close-wooled, hardy and seem well adapted to the country. The wool is fine medium and desirable, but I think it might be greatly improved by judicious crossing with some of the English thoroughbreds, which would produce a wool, if not finer, of a stronger staple and better suited for flannels, hosiery and knitted goods, and would in the near future replace considerable wool that we now import. The pelt is not so valuable as that of the Leicester, Cotswold or other breeds of this type, owing to its being wrinkled on the neck, and, if anything, more tender; it is of less value for leather purposes.

THE FLOCK MASTERS

of the Northwest are endeavoring to introduce this breed of sheep by crossing the Montana ewes with thoroughbred rams such as the Leicester, Merino, Shropshire and Southdown.

No doubt they will succeed in producing a type of sheep superior to the Montana Merino if they are only careful to breed on the line of selection best suited for wool and mutton, and not interbreed, as is too often the case, with feeders of grade sheep, to the detriment of both wool and mutton.

Sheep husbandry is meeting with keen competition, not only with regard to the production of wool, but of the mutton also. The question now is, which is the best sheep that will give the greatest amount of profit and pay for the labor expended on its care? This, in my opinion, depends very much on the climate and soil where the sheep are to be kept and the readiness to a market for the sale of the mutton and wool. The sheep masters of Alberta are at a disadvantage here, as the C. P. R. subjects them to such outrageous rates for conveying sheep and wool from Calgary and stations east, in some instances charging as high as 3c per pound on unwashed wool to Toronto.

This brings me to a very curious question. What effect has climate and soil on wools? I find in different districts that wool clipped from Leicester, Cotswold and Shropshire is finer and more lustrous than the wool clipped from the same class of sheep in other districts, and is worth fully two cents per pound more for exportation. I am not prepared to say whether it is the climate or soil that causes this difference, but such is the case. In my opinion the best classes of sheep for the farmers of Ontario for both wool and mutton are the Leicester, Shropshire, Cotswold and Southdown. If the wool is low they have a fine carcass of mutton, which always commands a high price both for home consumption and for exportation to Great Britain. Merinos may do very well for crossing with some of the more robust kind, but as grade sheep they would not be so profitable.

Eau Claire Lumber Company, of Calgary, will be permitted to purchase the land now leased from the Dominion Government, upon which its mill stands, at a certain valuation fixed irrespective of the buildings and improvements placed on the lands by the company, and the additional value the lands may have gained thereby. The application of the company to be allowed to construct a dam across the Bow river, has been referred to the Department of Public Works. The Eau Claire company contemplates the erection of a roller flour mill at Calgary, but before doing so, wishes to attain the ownership of the leased lands now used by the company, and also to acquire the right to construct a dam on the river.

The Free Press of Ottawa, Ont., says: James McLaren, mill owner, of Buckingham, is sending a gang of men to his recently acquired timber limits in British Columbia. The term of their engagement is two years. The wages range from \$40 to \$75 per month for choppers, blacksmiths, teamsters, etc., with their fares paid. This will refer to the property of the Ross, McLaren Lumber Co., in B. C. The company will build a mill on the Fraser river.

Leamy & Kyle, Vancouver, B. C., contemplate putting in increased power and machinery in their mills, on False Creek, including a Corliss engine.

In all imitations of the Myrtle Navy tobacco yet attempted, either inferior stock has been used or the plug has been made a trifle lighter in weight. The latter defect is apt to escape the attention of the consumer until he finds that he is smoking a greater number of plugs than before. The Myrtle Navy is made three plugs to the pound, and each plug is carefully weighed.