

CHOOSING A FARM.

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What is known as a farm is an area of land used to produce materials necessary for the sustenance of the human race.

The methods adopted in the choosing and management of the farm are the products of the ages. Ever since the site of the first farm was chosen and planted "Eastward in Eden," every generation of farmers has been choosing farms. It has been estimated that the average farm changes from one owner to another three times every century.

Almost every country has tons and tons of records describing the boundaries and areas of farms. The details of the purchase are set forth in minute detail but the reasons which led up to the sale and purchase cannot be found in the office of the Registrar of Deeds, and very few books are available on the subject.

Instructors in the Canadian Khaki Colleges have frequently been asked for suggestions that would enable a man to invest his time and money most advantageously. From every quarter the same question is asked. How am I to choose a farm? A few general principles are suggested in this article, which we hope will be some help to the thousands who are now troubled with this important problem.

Importance of Choice.

Take your own time in choosing a farm. Don't be hurried by any one. It is the most important decision in connection with your business that you have to make and second only to the choice of your life helpmate. When possible, visit any farm that you propose to buy at several different seasons of the year. Go over it very carefully each time and make notes on the features that appeal to you and those that are objectionable. If possible or convenient, arrange to work on the farm or in the neighbourhood so that you may study the advantages and disadvantages of the farm and the locality for your own special purpose. Every farm must be judged on its own merits and on its condition at the time of purchase. The character and sociability of the neighbours will be of much greater importance to you than the character and fertility of the adjoining farms. Many farms are heavily



cropped without being adequately manured or cultivated (soil mining describes the practice) and then sold on the record of their performance during the period. The man who buys on that basis starts his business under a very heavy handicap.

The Community.

It is taken for granted that in the choice of the particular community you are prospecting for a suitable farm you have satisfied yourself that the seasons, rainfall, sunshine and climate generally are suitable to the line of farming you plan to follow. That the region is healthy. That you avoid locations subject to late and early frosts when growing tender plants. That it is near enough to store and markets for your purpose. That there is a satisfactory school and church for your family, and that other community

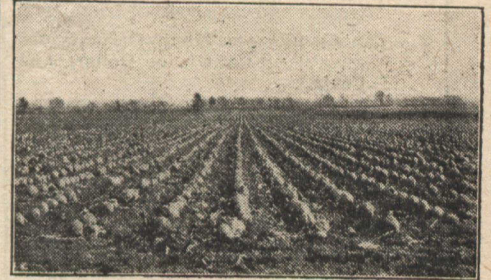


essentials such as a reliable family doctor, a blacksmith, cobbler and other tradesmen are near. That the mail, telephone and telegraph service come within easy reach. That the roads are suitable and good of their kind, and that shipping facilities by water, trolley or railway are either adequate or that they are about to be constructed. When any of these necessities have to be supplied it is well to remember that the industries of the community eventually pay for them. In a farming community the farms pay for them; though the payment be deferred and may only appear as interest on invested capital. It is true on the other hand that every community improvement adds to the land value of every farm in the district. In some regions a large part of the farmers' wealth comes from this source. The holding of such land is a business investment the same as owning a factory, store or ship.

What to Look For.

You alone know just what you are looking for. Every farm is HOME to the children, and the character of the community is more important than profits from that standpoint. The innumerable types of farms and farm-

ing places a detailed description of any one farm outside the scope of this article. Everyone should look for a good deed unless purchasing through the Soldier Settlement Board. Have a competent lawyer make a search of the title. It will be money well spent. Look for fertile land or land that you know can be made fertile by the investment of money, labour and brains. To the average



man this is the most important point of all. Specialists can farm special soils and produce good profits, but the ordinary man should not accept a handicap at the start. Look for the District Representative or the Superintendent of the nearest Experimental Station. Ask him about the community and the land. Get a soil auger and go over the property, investigating the character of the soil and sub-soil. Make a plan of the fields and take to him any of the soil samples that you are doubtful about. Look for a friable mellow soil that can be easily worked under unfavourable conditions, and when unfavourable conditions occur can still be handled safely with a reasonable expenditure of labour. It is always safe to choose land that is naturally good. If nature through the ages has grown good strong crops and allowed them to decay and produce better crops you may safely count on such land feeding your plants and stock under normal conditions. Look for water and make sure it is pure and in sufficient quantities throughout the year for your requirements on the farm. Find out how much it will cost to pump or convey the water needed for one year's farm operations.

Look for strong, vigorous growth during the growing season. Large vigorous trees, shrubs and plants always indicate that conditions for plant growth are favourable. The habit of growth of weeds is often a good indicator of the value of the land. In certain localities the presence of certain plants are said to indicate fertility, other plants are said to indicate the presence of acid in the soil, while some plants are always known locally as "poverty weeds." The last group are hardy and will grow under very adverse conditions. Their presence is generally said to indicate poor soils, but they may also be found in fertile places. Plants that are not considered hardy when found in abundance are said to indicate rich soils, but any one of them may also be found growing on poor soils. How then can plants help you in choosing a farm? Simply forget individuals and look for groups. In fertile land the following plants grow vigorously and when within their natural zone they grow abundantly: Clover, corn, wheat, Kentucky blue-grass, ash, maple, walnut, crab apple, couch (or quack) grass and Canada thistles. Poor land is likely to have a predominance of the following plants: Red-top, rye, buckwheat, chesnut, pine, hemlock, spruce, daisy, cinque foil, hawkweeds, sorrel and golden rod.

(Continued on page 9.)