

LIVE STOCK.

Our Scottish Letter.

Agriculturally, 1910 has not been a bad year for Scottish agriculture as a whole. It is, however, impossible to generalize. The harvest made only a moderate start, but it mended, and for the greater part, if not the whole, of the lowland parts of Scotland, so far as weather was concerned, it was one of the best on record. But what can be said of the uniformity of Scottish agriculture, when one is told in the first week of December that the oat crop in some of the higher districts of the country had not even then been harvested. The weather broke about the end or middle of October, and it has mended very little since. Those who farm in the uplands have a rough time of it. Their crops take long to ripen, and even when they are ripe, they are sometimes not worth reaping. As a matter of fact, corn is scarcely grown there for the sake of the grain; the more valuable part is the straw, upon which the young stock is largely wintered. When, therefore, the crop must rot in the fields, the disaster is great, for the fodder is short, and the rearing of the young cattle becomes costly.

THE DAIRY INTERESTS.

Dairy farming has not been nearly so prosperous as in some recent years. The rank and file of cheesemakers will have been producing their cheese at a loss. The price, except for really high-class, gilt-edged lots, has never got beyond a moderate figure. The position is that, unless makers chose to aim at the production of this really high-class, gilt-edged quality, they compete with the overseas supplies, and as these are graded to a uniform quality, the results are not favorable to the home producer. The adulteration of cheese does not exist, but the adulteration of butter so as to secure high profits for little outlay has been reduced to a fine art. The British produce market has to a large extent been captured by a particularly mean type of foreign speculator. He has nothing at all that does duty for a conscience, and the public is easily gulled by a toothsome article. The Irish Department are taking energetic steps to put down this kind of thing, and some ingenious attempts at legislation have been made. Whether this will be successful, is at present in doubt. The "liberty of the subject" is an idol much worshipped in this country. In the United States and Canada, as well as in Denmark and Holland, the said "liberty" counts for very little if the public good is at stake. We will need to be equally merciless in this country, or there will soon be no "liberty of the subject" to conserve.

CANADIAN LOW TARIFF.

Personally, I am much interested in this movement of the Canadian farmers against Protection, in favor of Free Trade with the Mother Country. Here there is in many quarters a disposition among farmers to flirt with Protection. There can be little doubt that a restrictive tariff on grain and meat and dairy produce would enhance the value of home produce of every kind. But the same principle would operate adversely to the farming interest if a tariff was levied on unmanufactured goods. The position of farmers in Great Britain at present is that which the Canadian Northwest farmers seemed to desire. They want an open market for the importation of machinery, and in this way to reciprocate the action of the Mother Country in throwing her ports open to the producers of all lands. My impression is that this Mother Country cannot possibly, in her own interests, do anything else. By improved methods of cultivation and co-operation, we can increase production, while cheapening its cost; but after we have done our very utmost in this way, we cannot feed our population with what is produced in these islands in the North Sea. Our millions must be fed, and our agriculture could not, unaided, feed them. Hence, my conviction that whatever the British artisan may do to protect his own labor by possibly putting a tariff on manufactured goods, he will never consent to levying a revenue duty on any of the necessities of life. There is always plenty of room at the top, and if we here will only endeavor to produce the best, we can always command the best market in the world. There is great need for a general advance in technical training, especially with a view to reduction in cost, and enhancing the quality of production in this country. Gradually this fact is being recognized, and, although the movement is slow, it has been singularly steady. There has been no going back, and the prospects all are that there will be progress all along the line.

BRITISH ELECTIONS AND FARMING.

We have had a General Election—the second in the year 1910—perhaps a unique experience for most of us who are on the electoral roll at the present day. Agriculture gets a poor show in the new Parliament. It consists of 670 members, and among these there are only nine farmers. I wonder what the proportions are in the

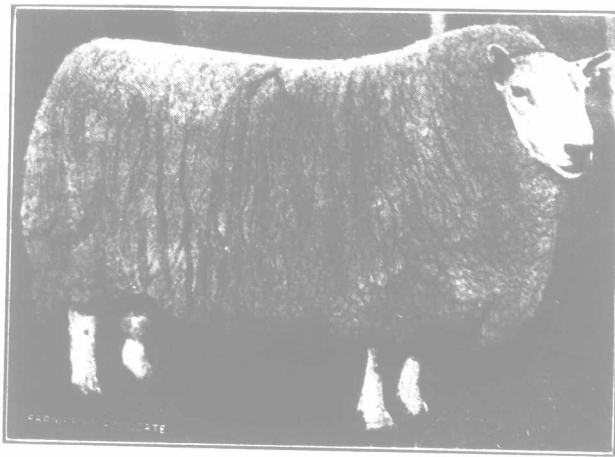
Dominion Parliament? All sorts of securities here have receded in value, and the blame is being placed on the shoulders of the present Government. Land is being threatened with increased taxation, and in many quarters there is a disposition to deal somewhat drastically with the private ownership of land. Whether the present depression in land values is due to a temporary scare, unwarranted by anything in the policy of the Government, or is really a sound estimate of what is impending, we cannot say, but for the present no one is keen to invest in land, and all speculation along that line is at a standstill. It ought to be admitted that for some years past there was undue speculation. Houses were built far in excess of the public demand, and to-day many hundreds are standing unoccupied in this city. So far, the disposition of all concerned at present is to "wait and see" what the next move of the political game will be.

DEVELOPMENT COMMISSIONS.

The year closing will be remembered for one notable advance in the recognition of agriculture by the State. The Finance Act, which caused so much stir, and was the issue at the January election, contained provision for the appointment of Development Commissioners. Their duty is to consider the value of schemes for the promotion of agricultural research and experiment, which will be entitled to subsidies from the fund of £45,000 per annum, placed at the disposal of the Commissioners. This is an entirely new departure in British statecraft. Hitherto the idea has been to let agriculture "paddle its own canoe." The Commissioners are a strong body, and, so far as one may judge from present appearances, they are well acquainted with the objects which come under their notice. Agriculture has a pretty strong representative in A. D. Hall, F. R. S., the Director of Rothamsted Experimental Station. He is a man of exceptional ability, and may be trusted to keep steadily in view the lines of research and experiment which are calculated to yield the best results in the future.

AID TO HORSE-BREEDING.

The only thing the Commissioners have settled is the allocation of a sum of about £20,000 to encourage horse-breeding. The idea is to make



A Prizewinning Cheviot Ram.

it worth the farmer's while to breed army horses. In the opinion of many practical men the scheme which has been formulated begins at the wrong end. The way to encourage farmers along the line aimed at is for the War Office to pay a decent price for the horses after they are bred and reared. There is no provision for this in the scheme, which is probably regarded as a matter which concerns the War Office, and not the Board of Agriculture and the Development Commissioners. But it is the crux of the whole business.

THE SHOWS.

The Fat-stock Shows for 1910 are well over. They have been unusually interesting. In some past years there have been exhibited animals of more pronounced individual merit, but I am not sure that there has ever been exhibited a better illustration all round of the kind of animals butchers are calling for to supply their customers. The Aberdeen-Angus breed has once more proved invincible on hoof. The Aberdeen-Angus-Short-horn cross has again proved in the carcass competitions to be the kind of animal which supplies the butcher with the beef that pleases his customers. The Galloway sold best of all the pure breeds on hoof. He is a favorite with the London butcher, and enjoys an excellent reputation for killing profitably. In this respect he is run a close second by the Highlander, which indeed surpasses all breeds in favor with the London West End butcher, but, unfortunately, his commercial value to the feeder is considerably lessened by the fact that it takes a year longer to put him on the market than any of the other breeds. In the carcass competitions for mutton, the Southdown was a clear champion, with the Cheviot a strong reserve. The popular mutton with the West End butcher at present appears to be the Suffolk-Cheviot cross, but, unfortunately,

it has the same drawback as the Highlander—it is not commercially so valuable to the feeder. This important distinction is sometimes overlooked. It is one thing to know that beef or mutton of a particular grade is what the public most desire, and another thing altogether to determine which combination of breeds will yield the best commercial returns to the feeder. The public do not always pay the excess demanded by enhanced cost of production in the case of the kinds of meat they chiefly demand. It is the same with milk, at least in this country. The public will pay exactly the same price for milk of a high standard in butter-fat as they will for milk of a low standard. The farmer has, therefore, no inducement to put a higher quality upon the market. There is great need for the education of the popular taste in the matter of quality in all kinds of food products.

So far as pork is concerned, the recent fat-stock shows record a sweeping victory for the Berkshire. No other breed had any show against these small, compact, level-fleshed black pigs. The only cross which once or twice broke the uniformity of their victory was the Berkshire-Tamworth cross. It does not appear to us that the farming public quite recognize the importance of bacon-raising. This is specially the case in Scotland, where, to be quite candid about it, the pig, or hog, is somewhat despised. But there is more money in pig-breeding at present than in any other department of stock-breeding. Wisdom is profitable to direct, and next season may witness a notable advance in the attention paid to bacon-raising in North Britain.

THE HORSE TRADE.

The position of the horse-breeding industry during 1910 has been wholly satisfactory. Farmers have had a good time, and stallion owners are likely to reap the benefit. During the past six months, nearly a dozen of the best Clydesdale horses have been hired for 1912. This is an unprecedented experience, and it proves how healthy the draft-horse-breeding business is at the present time. The Clydesdale Horse Society is determined to show its sense of indebtedness to the Canadian patrons of the breed. Gold medals have been donated for competition at the principal fairs and exhibitions from St. John, N. B., to New Westminster, B. C., in 1911, and the surplus capital of the Society has been invested in Dominion 3½-per-cent. stock. The Clydesdale men know who are their friends, and they mean to reciprocate in respect of what Canada has done for the Clydesdale. Thus far 1910. The writer wishes all the readers of "The Farmer's Advocate" a prosperous year in 1911.

"SCOTLAND YET"

Dairy Heifer Breeding as an Industry.

In good grazing sections more or less distant from cities or towns men have made returns that satisfy them in rearing stocker cattle for sale, to be finished by others on more high-priced lands. If there be money in this process, is there not as much or more in making a business, under such local conditions, of raising for sale dairy-bred heifers to, say, two years old? The enormous growth of urban population in the United States and Canada creates an unprecedented demand for milk and its products, with which production seems unable to keep pace, even at the expense of curtailing exports to Great Britain, the world's great eating-house. All over America, men in the whole-milk trade do not pretend to rear their own cows. They have not the time nor the by-product, skim milk. To buy them becomes increasingly difficult and costly. But they must be got, for milk is demanded all the year round. In many factory sections, calves are yet slaughtered at birth, and, to renew the herds in spring, farmers depend on drovers' auction sales. Unless we have a change in policy, we shall see a famine in dairy cows, just as there is in good beef stock. A large New York dairy farmer told "The Farmer's Advocate" lately, that last year he went into the next State, where he understood grade Ayrshires were plentiful, and could be got at moderate prices, but, landed in his stables, they "stood him out" \$75 or \$80 each. Now, it is not enough for one or two men in a township to embark in rearing "fresh" or in-calf milkers. The district should develop a reputation, so that competing buyers will be attracted, and cows can be picked up by the car lot. Jefferson County, Wisconsin, has done this, chiefly with Guernseys and Holsteins, and is shipping out for buyers from Illinois, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, and other States, \$400,000 worth of stock per year, in addition to about \$2,000,000 worth of dairy products. Grade cows sell at from \$10 to \$100 each, the common price for a good one being \$75, and, apart from the cost of foundation stock, it costs no more to produce them than it does the \$35 type of animal. Land in Jefferson County is now worth from \$125 to \$150 per acre. Chas. Nelson, of the Minnesota Farmers' Institute corps, who made a special study of the subject on the ground, says these results have been attained by making a real business of it, and sticking to one or other of the dairy breeds, and regularly using