

The

Farmer's Advocate

and Home Magazine.

"PERSEVERE AND SUCCEED"

ESTABLISHED 1866

REGISTERED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE COPYRIGHT ACT OF 1875.

Vol. XL

LONDON, ONT., AND WINNIPEG, MAN., MAY 18, 1905

No. 660

EDITORIAL.

Regulation of Railway Rates.

As at present constituted, provision is made for an appeal from the decisions of the Canadian Railway Commission to the Governor-in-Council on matters of fact, and to the Supreme Court on matters of law. Thus far our new Railway Act has proven an efficient instrument, doing useful work. Some day a pronouncement will be made, probably on a most important matter, which the railways will resist, but there is, apparently, no good reason for any protracted delay in the redress of a grievance that should be summarily disposed of. Our American friends are realizing the need of a more complete subvention on the part of their Inter-State Commerce Commission, an instrument which, although it has done much to reform high rates, discrimination, and other transportation abuses, finds itself hampered by the courts, which virtually have the power of veto on all its decisions. Note the remarks of President Roosevelt, addressing the Chamber of Commerce, at Denver, Col., May 8th. After advocating the policy of extending the powers of the Commission and of giving it, particularly, the power to fix rates and have those rates go into effect practically at once, he continued:

"In the days of the fathers of the oldest among you, the highways of commerce for civilized nations were waterways and roads open to all who chose to travel upon them. Now the typical highway of commerce is the railroad, and under this changed system we see highways of commerce grow up, each of which is controlled by a single corporation or individual; sometimes several of them being controlled in combination by corporations or by a few individuals. When such is the case, in my judgment, it is absolutely necessary that the nation should assume a supervisory and regulatory function over the great corporations, which practically control the highways of commerce."

And a couple of days later U. S. Secretary Taft, at a dinner given by the American Railway Association, emphatically declared that railway rate legislation must come, and if the railway men of the country were wise they would aid, not hinder it; that the sentiment of the country was such that failure of proper regulation meant a campaign on the subject that would do no good to the railways. Though positively against Government ownership, he reminded his hearers that the public have rights which must be regarded. "You cannot run railroads," said he, "as you run a private business. You must respond to the public demand. If there is danger of discrimination, then you must allow the establishment of some tribunal that will remedy that discrimination."

In Canada of late we have had the opportunity of witnessing the concern of a prominent railway man, lest the vested rights of capital should be ignored by the rapidly crystallizing public opinion, to the detriment of the country's development through the timidity of investors. No one wishes to deny the capitalist the legitimate fruits of his enterprise, but the conviction is warranted that the moneyed classes have displayed a signal capacity to look after themselves, that they have, indeed, through their sovereign privileges, obtained rather more than is coming to them. It is time someone has the temerity to remind the capitalists that the country has a vested right in the railroads, by virtue of the millions of dollars of subsidies

granted them, to say nothing of the privilege the companies possess of levying on the commerce and industry of the community. By reason of the limited number of railways which a given territory can support, competition in land transportation is not usually a practicable remedy for grievances, hence the necessity for artificial control of a business which the ordinary laws of commerce are inadequate to regulate.

The franchises of the Canadian railways constitute an asset of enormous and ever-increasing value, and entitle the country to some voice in the regulation of tariffs which affect its prosperity more vitally even than that of the railways themselves. The carrying corporations derive, approximately, the same net profit from high rates on a small volume of traffic as from low rates on an increased volume, consequently they have no motive except good will to induce them to risk a dollar of possible revenue, by keeping rates low. Not so with the public, who have everything to gain from a reduction of tolls, and are thus interested in maintenance of rock-bottom charges. Only an impartial tribunal, with the most complete information and powers, is competent to adjust rates so as to secure to the public maximum concessions, without violating the legitimate rights of the railroad stockholders. Such an authoritative body we are supposed to have in the Railway Commission, and the country will expect it to exercise its functions with a fair but unflinching hand.

The Mission of the Cream Separator.

Elsewhere in this issue of the "Farmer's Advocate," Miss Laura Rose gives an interesting and helpful review of what the centrifugal cream separator has done for Canadian dairying. She has not overestimated the advantage that has come to the buttermaker through the application of this wonderful discovery whereby cream can be immediately extracted from milk, instead of depending upon the slow process of gravitation, with its attendant disabilities. In our report of a Quebec dairy meeting, Mr. A. A. Ayer, the Montreal produce exporter, condemned the farm separator system in creamery buttermaking, and commended the plan of having the whole milk separated at the factory, or, at all events, at large skimming stations. Where the milk supply is reasonably adjacent to the factory, the whole milk system has much to commend it. Miss Rose presents the case from the viewpoint of the farmer, and we apprehend that under a very wide range of conditions, he will be disposed to agree with her. In our judgment, the farm separator is here to stay. The problem is how to make the best of it. It is a permanency, because of its advantages to the farmer in securing more fat from the milk, a better quality of cream for farm buttermaking or other purposes, and what, with many, counts even more, because it assures sweet, fresh milk, for which the rising generation of calves and pigs are devoutly thankful.

Miss Rose does not shut her eyes to the obstacles likely to arise, but she credits the Canadian farmer with sufficient intelligence and determination to overcome them. Nor does she stop there; she sets forth in a very practical way how the farm separator should be used, and if her advice is faithfully carried out, we believe it will add materially to the life and efficiency of the separator on the farm, and also assist the creameryman most materially in his efforts to produce a uniform product of excellent quality under the gathered-cream system.

Why Do We Cultivate?

In this issue we print several letters from corn-growers, which we would advise others to read and ponder in the light of their own experience. It would seem that many have failed to grasp the importance of inter-tillage of growing crops, through not understanding the specific objects to be gained. Asked why they cultivate such crops, most men content themselves by saying that cultivation kills weeds, conserves moisture, and liberates plant food. The further question to ask ourselves is how cultivation liberates plant food. Without going into scientific details, we may simply enunciate the principle that tillage liberates plant food, indirectly, by bringing about in the soil laboratory physical conditions of heat, aeration and moisture favorable to the various bacterial and chemical processes by which the elements of fertility are made available to plant roots. Of the three essentials named, heat is supplied by the sun; air and moisture are also abundantly provided under primeval conditions, where a mulch of loose mould covers a soil filled with humus, which keeps it pervious and holds large quantities of moisture. Under field conditions, however, where the natural provisions have been destroyed, and the soil more or less depleted of its humus content, cultivation is necessary to prevent baking of the surface, thus serving the two purposes of admitting air and preserving the moisture below from the evaporating influences above. The importance of water, especially, can hardly be overestimated, for it serves a double function. Not only are hundreds of tons of it transpired by the plant, but, as pointed out above, the presence of considerable soil moisture is essential for the chemical changes by which fertility is made available. From the foregoing we can see clearly the urgent importance of frequent cultivation to prevent the formation of a crust, and keep the field continually covered with two or three inches of loose soil.

To this end, and also to destroy germinating weed seeds, nothing can equal that simple implement misnamed the weeder, which, though useless for rooting out large plants, is astonishingly efficacious as a weed preventive, and if used persistently on ordinary fall-plowed land, will almost obviate the necessity of the scuffer. With the weeder and a good horse, a man or boy can cover twelve or fifteen acres a day, and this, if done once or twice before the crop is up, and four or five times after, will keep the field cleaner, and do much more to promote the growth of corn or roots than an equal amount of time spent with a one-horse scuffer in the old-fashioned manner. Of course, best results will be obtained by employing both weeder and cultivator.

We are convinced that if farmers would do more calculating as to the probable advantages attending their various field operations, it would induce a greater readiness in discarding old, laborious methods. We are well aware that it is impossible to estimate exactly how much benefit will be derived from a proposed stroke with the cultivator, but the thrifty farmer should at least essay to satisfy himself whether his work is likely to be profitable or not, and the mental exercise will be attended by a number of indirect benefits. Among other things, it would induce, in many cases, the lengthening of rounds, and hasten the adoption of two indispensable adjuncts of economical corn culture, viz., the weeder and the two-horse cultivator; and, with conditions made favorable for the expeditious use of these, the result will be greater yields, with easier