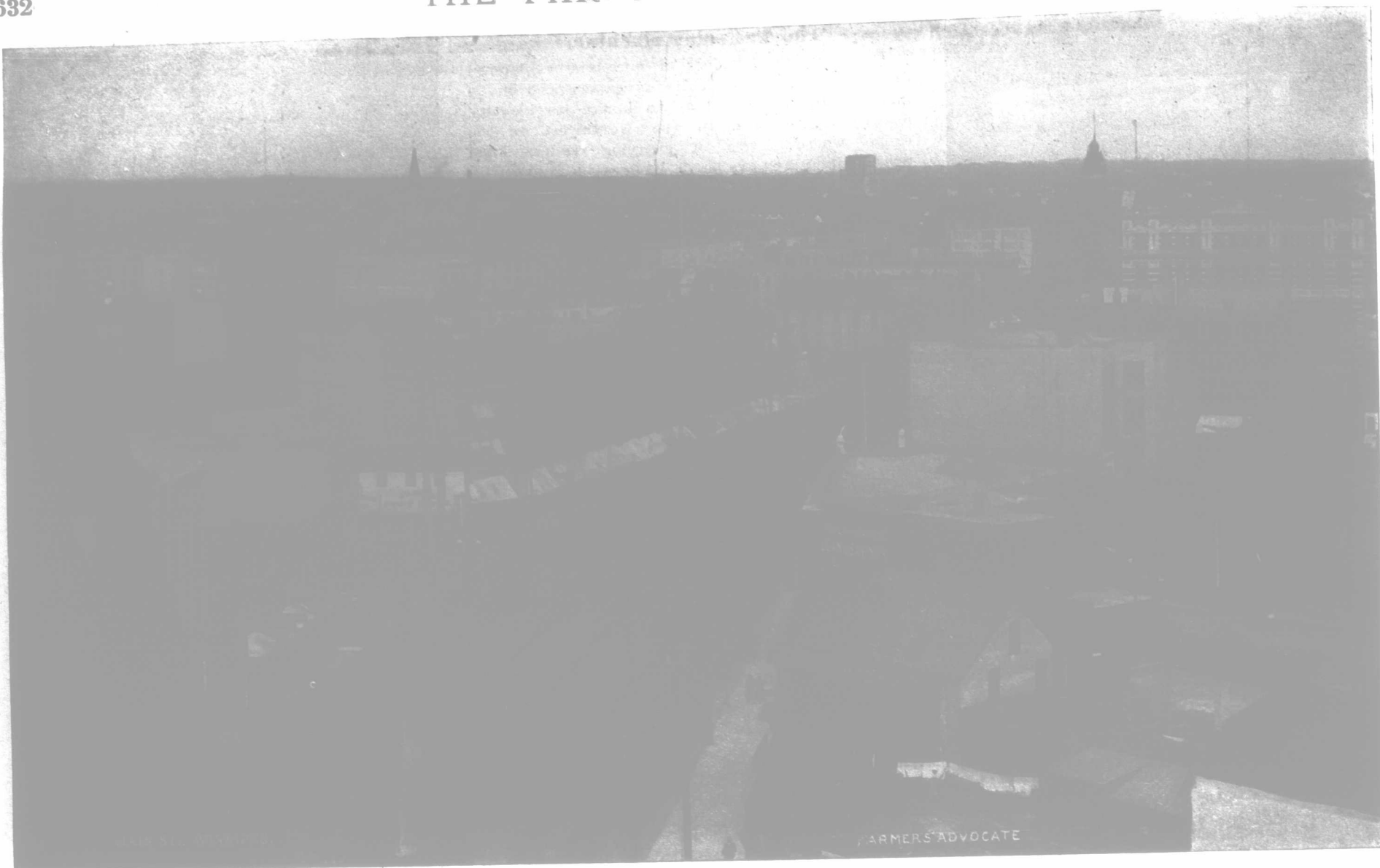




MAIN STREET, WINNIPEG.

FARM.

Road Reform in Ontario.

About twenty-five per cent. of the older municipalities in Ontario have changed their statute labor either by abolishing the system or commuting the labor into a money tax. The prejudice which formerly existed against in any way reforming the system has grown into a strong feeling of sympathy towards any reform that will bring about better results without imposing additional outlay. The objection at first made to the agitation was not so much an opposition to reformed methods as it was to a criticism of the manner in which the work had been performed, and the amount of work produced by the expenditure. This was looked upon as being a condemnation of the work generally performed, not only at the present time, but in the past, during the construction of pioneer roads. As the people became more familiar with the criticism offered, it was readily seen that the agitation was in the public good. Money was being ex-



CHEVELEY EMPEROR.

Yearling Southdown ram. First prize and champion, Royal Show, 1902.
OWNED BY COL. M'CALMONT, M. P.

pendent and labor performed in producing work of such a temporary character as to be lost sight of in a few weeks, only to be repeated almost annually. It was made manifest that the roads of the country were not being maintained by statute labor only, but that the people, in addition, were subscribing very large amounts of money and that our roads were not by any means improving in a manner consistent with this outlay. It became apparent that the present system of roadmaking, embodying an expenditure of

statute labor, and also an additional expenditure of money equaling, as a general thing, a dollar of cash for each day of statute labor, was a sort of compound system which was difficult to control; that the two expenditures were not being united, and could seldom to advantage be properly connected, that in consequence the forces at work were divided; that the money and labor were being scattered to such an extent that it was almost hopeless to expect work of a finished or substantial character. It was clearly seen, in many sections, that men under the statute-labor system performed their work faithfully and well, that much interest was taken in the proper maintenance of their section or beat, while in other parts of the township the greatest indifference prevailed, much of the labor was not expended, and in other instances so much carelessness existed that even the work performed was of little consequence. People engaged in keeping up their own piece of road had reached the conclusion that they had nothing to do with other sections, and as a matter of fact they possessed little knowledge of the nature or extent of the expenditure in their township. They rarely thought that the other sections were of about as much importance to them as their own, and, as a matter of municipal economy, it was their duty to see that in every section due importance was attached to the work and every dollar spent should be spent to the best advantage.

To get the people to understand that the movement was one in their favor, rather than antagonistic to their interests; one of economy, rather than of greater expenditure; that modern implements and labor-saving machinery were just as necessary on the public highway as on the farm; that organization, system, carefully-prepared plans and specifications were as essential in the building of roads as in the building of any other structures or works; that careful supervision and proper direction of the forces employed were of importance, was possibly the most difficult task in connection with the work of road reform.

In most of the townships where changes have been made, they have been of the most revolutionary character, and are about as complete as is necessary for the work in hand. The by-law of the Township of Pelham, which was most carefully prepared, a copy of which I enclose you, is one which has been very much used as a standard. In the remainder of the townships where the old system has not been entirely changed, it has in a great many ways been modified. The number of pathmasters has been reduced, thus concentrating to a greater extent the expenditure; modern implements are employed and are being worked under the management of a commissioner appointed by the council. The money raised by general tax is used for operating machinery, such as

of their farm, but cannot. Dogs there may be that are valuable and perhaps worth their keep, but such appear to be scarce. People have so accustomed themselves to seeing his canine majesty on the door-mat or upon the lawn, that they have learned to think him a necessity. Some keep him to assist in handling stock, and where a well-trained collie can be employed, no objection can be offered. Others harbor a useless member of the tribe only to announce the presence of a stranger within their gates. Two and sometimes more half-starved specimens may be found on hundreds of farms or village lots, for the existence of which no excuse can be given. The havoc that has been wrought by these mongrels need not be discussed; they are known with sorrow to many sheep-owners. The best means to remedy the difficulty is what concerns progressive men most.

Some years ago the Ontario Government gave the municipalities power to pass by-laws taxing all dogs within their jurisdiction. In taking advantage of this, few township councils have set the rate sufficiently high to cause any restriction in the number of curs to be found. It has been suggested, and we believe wisely, that the rate should be at least two dollars for dogs and five for bitches. This would tend to so diminish the latter that a great falling off in the number of both classes would soon take place. In connection with the Ontario law as it at present exists, it is, perhaps, not generally known that where sheep or lambs are killed or injured by dogs the owner of which is unknown, the municipality becomes liable for damages to two-thirds the amount sustained. Dogs, too, other than those belonging to adjacent lots, if found roaming unattended on any farm where sheep are kept, may be shot by the owner of the said farm, without any liability for damages. The rigorous enforcement of these semi-protective measures would do much to improve existing conditions. However, a great awakening is needed. Repeated complaints have been reaching us lately from P. E. I., Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick, as well as other Provinces. The sheep industry is an important one to producing young Canada. The prowling hunters of the midnight hour are claiming supremacy. Which are we to have?

We are well pleased with the "Farmer's Advocate." Although we live in town, the paper is always a welcome visitor to our home. We consider it all and more than it has been represented to be. Since we placed our advertisement in it, six months ago, we have had ready sale for our stock. It is not only valuable as an advertising medium, but is also full of valuable information for the farmer and of wholesome reading for the family whether living on the farm or in town or city.
W. J. SHEAN & CO.

Owen Sound, Ont.