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EDITORIAL.

The Rural Telephone.

The telephone and the trolley are two agencies that tend to equalize town and country conditions. The latter facilitates the rapid and economical transit of people and produce over the main travelled highways. Rural electric car lines are branching out in all directions, and will continue to do so. We are glad to notice the steady growth in cities and towns of a saner sentiment in regard to the true value of sunlight, pure air, and generally healthful surroundings, unclouded by smoke and dust, such as obtain in the country. The people of cities and towns are beginning to reach out eagerly for these conditions, and the telephone and the trolley both facilitate the movement. We hope before the next census is taken to see the tide of population flowing countryward. The telephone gives the country the advantage of town conditions in many ways. It is the greatest time-saver and annihilator of distance in modern life. Think of the thousands of miles of weary travelling every day by men, women and children and horses, and the incalculable time, that it saves! In a great many localities throughout Canada, physicians have been the first to establish local telephone systems for the benefit of the patrons, and these lines are, of course, used for more purposes than "calling the doctor" or the minister. Neighbors four or five miles apart talk to each other on business matters over the 'phone, groceries are ordered from the village store, grain or stock can be bought or sold that way, hired help engaged, and ladies can do their "calling" over the wire instead of tramping or driving for miles over a muddy road. Many large farms now have telephones to different departments connected with the residence of the owner or manager. In some cases two neighbors have a line between them and the country store, and in others there will be six or seven on the circuit. Often the line runs to a village where there is a railway station and telegraph service, which greatly extends the sphere of its usefulness without falling into the hands of the general telephone system of the country. As to the cost of local telephone lines, we are furnished the following statement: Depending upon the locality, good cedar posts about 20 feet long will cost from 25 to 50 cents each. They are put down four feet in the ground, 10 rods apart, or 32 posts to the mile. Then there will be the cost of hauling and putting them in. Porcelain insulators cost two cents each, and, in addition, small iron spikes or screws to fasten them to the posts or crosspieces. Glass insulators and blocks cost about six cents each. No. 12 galvanized wire will answer, and will require from 125 to 150 lbs. to the mile, costing from \$3.25 to \$3.50 per 100 lbs. Two men will put up a mile of wire per day. The instruments cost \$12.50 each, besides which some insulated wire and window tubes for the houses will be required. From time to time the water in the batteries will need renewing. Care must be taken that the lines are kept perfectly insulated at all points.

To such an extent has the country-telephone idea developed in the United States, that telephone-supply companies have been organized, doing a large and, we understand, a successful business. In Canada, the instruments have usually been obtained from the Bell Telephone Co. The duty on instruments imported into Canada is 25 per cent.

The Horse Show Problem.

The buoyant condition of the horse trade at the present time invests the question of horse shows with unusual interest. That the spring shows held in Toronto in the last few years, under the joint auspices of the Breeders' Association and the Hunt Club, have served and are serving a very useful purpose in setting a high standard of types and inspiring a love for and admiration of the better classes of horses is clearly apparent in the great improvement witnessed from year to year in the exhibits brought out. These exhibitions have served to enlist the co-operation of men of means in adding to their interest by investing in high-class saddle and harness horses and paying good prices for them, and have encouraged the breeders and importers of these classes to bring in such sires as are calculated to produce the desired stamp of horses for these purposes, while the steady demand at good paying prices for these has induced farmers and fanciers more generally to go into the breeding of the type that will meet this demand. The Toronto Show, which has been admirably conducted by the present management, reflecting credit on all its officers, has become decidedly popular with city people, who have patronized it liberally and loyally, and have doubtless felt well repaid for all that it has cost them by the pleasure experienced in witnessing such magnificent displays of highly-bred and well-trained animals. And the breeders, so far as we can see, have little, if any, cause for complaint of the position and part given them in the programme and arrangement of the show. The prize list has been fairly liberal, and the facilities for advertising their stock all that could reasonably be required. But the breeders of some classes have felt that a show held at so late a date in the spring, and having necessarily only a limited place in a programme so full of events that they could not reasonably ask for more in the short space of the three days allotted to it, fails to afford the opportunity for business, for the sale and purchase of sires for stud purposes, and are moving to secure some arrangement whereby, without detracting from the popularity and usefulness of the present well-established spring show at Toronto, they may hold at an earlier date a distinct show for heavy-draft stallions especially, and, we presume, for other classes (if their breeders so desire), at which selections and sales of sires may be made before the season arrives when their services are required and their circuits arranged.

While we should deplore any action that would detract from the interest and usefulness of the present established show, we see no valid reason why the breeders may not inaugurate a separate and special show for breeding stock at some point where a building suitable for stabling as well as for showing the stock is provided, where business may be facilitated and where judging competitions for young farmers may be arranged and lectures given, as at the Winter Fair at Guelph, thus making the event an educational as well as a business one. It is doubtful whether in mid-winter, and with breeding classes only, a show can be made popular with city people and a financial success, but, as in all educational enterprises, that is but a secondary consideration, and we think the Government will be justified in granting assistance in providing a prize list for breeding stock at both the winter and the spring shows,

while the two are not likely to seriously conflict, and both may serve a useful purpose in stimulating the improvement of our horses, which now hold a good reputation, and if bred on intelligent and up-to-date lines may continue to prove a valuable asset to the country. Every reasonable encouragement should be given the breeders, who have shown commendable enterprise in importing and placing at the service of the farmers high-class sires, and if some provision can be made whereby premiums may be given for the introduction of still better stallions than importers have felt warranted in bringing out, the effort may be well worth making and the necessary funds well expended.

Bran Should be a Staple Food.

One of the tendencies shown nowadays by the man wishing to be progressive is the being on the lookout for new grains and forage crops that will promise larger yields than the old standard varieties. While this ambition is a laudable one, and is ably assisted by the various experiment stations, the feeder and farmer in the enthusiasm over new feeds is apt to overlook some of the older kinds that cannot be surpassed.

Bran is a feed too often overlooked and underestimated, especially by Western people, and it is unfortunate that such is the case. If it were feasible, it would be of great benefit to Western agriculture if all the bran produced from wheat grown in the West were fed in the West, instead of being shipped east. No feed of the grains is more valuable for the growth of bone and muscle in young stock or for the production of milk, and yet many seem to consider it as little better than sawdust. Bran is not only valuable as a nutrient, but as a corrective and laxative for animals, and is a most valuable adjunct fed along with other grain. In the feeding of horses, bran added to oats in the proportion of one quart of the former to three of the latter will be found very useful and profitable. For young live stock, colts, calves, lambs, etc., bran is an essential to profitable raising, and should be bought by the ton, in place of by the sack. The stocker can be wintered better by the addition of bran to the straw ration than it can be without, and the touch of that animal will be much improved by this addition to its diet.

The practical man knows the feeding value of bran, and is backed up in that opinion by the feeding tests and analyses of the animal husbandman and agricultural chemist. Henry says that "the inner surface of the bran flakes is made of the aleurone layer of the wheat grain, which is very rich in protein, and in addition carries some starch." Bran contains, also, mineral matter, and when fed with another grain will prevent stock stalling (becoming cloyed), as they will do on a single-grain ration.

The series of enquiries from one of our subscribers in India, dealt with in our Questions and Answers Department of this issue, indicates how closely observant men in all quarters of the globe are studying the conditions under which agricultural operations may be successfully prosecuted. These are the days of close enquiry into every detail of the farmer's business, and we are not insensible to the evident appreciation of our readers of the efforts we are making in searching out trustworthy information and giving prudent advice, so far as we can judge, in the difficulties presented.