

### Our Scottish Letter.

September is always a very crowded month, and this year it appears to have been unusually so. Harvest in many places was completed early. An unusual event is recorded from not a few farms—the whole crop threshed right out of the stook, and the grain and straw despatched right away, without trouble or delay. In other places the harvest has been almost unduly prolonged. The weather has broken down; heavy, soaking rains have fallen, and even where there has been no rain, the atmosphere has been moist, and there have been thick fogs. It was bad weather for the potatoes; being so close and warm and moist, disease was almost inevitable, but so far no deadly complaints have reached us. The truth is the crop was so abundant that growers are not at all sorry to see the bulk reduced. It pays better to have a moderate crop and high prices, than to have a bumper crop and low prices. Last year's prices ruled so low that even the bumper crop, with little or no disease, failed to yield an adequate profit. Brother Jonathan's charitable policy of preventing his own people from getting plenty of food at a low rate hit our potato-growers badly. They had plenty to spare, but Jonathan said, "You won't send them here." A good many were sent, and both the American and the Briton were pleased. But the American would have been better pleased had he purchased his potatoes less the duty, and the Briton could have sold more. Free trade in foodstuffs helps everybody and harms nobody. It is foolishness to hurt oneself in order to maintain a fiscal policy.

Many would no doubt be tariff reformers here if they could see how they are to hit the foreign and the colonial preference holder, and at the same time not hit themselves. In the meantime, we are having political discussion ad nauseam. The big battle is about the Finance Bill, land tax, road improvement, agricultural development, and all the rest of it. As an outsider in political affairs, what impresses me is the apparent absence of any definite ideas in the minds of the Government as to how their policy is to be carried out. What they mean to do is excellent, but how it is to be done is a thing upon which they have no sort of fixed notions. The Finance Bill to-day bears little resemblance to the bill which the Chancellor introduced, and somehow one gets the impression that the Government is riding for a fall.

### THE ROAD PROBLEM.

Roads in this old country were never made for motor traffic. The rapid development of that kind of traffic has wrought havoc upon our highways, and now we are face to face with a proposal on the part of the Treasury to set aside £50,000 per annum for road maintenance and improvement. Strange to say, those in authority are determined that the making of new roads will have priority in the matter, and the Parliamentary proposal so far is that these new roads will be for motor traffic only. This is a novel proposition. Such a suggestion has never before been made in the interests of one section of the community, and that section a minority. A railway company has power to acquire land compulsorily, but such land is to be used for a purpose in which the whole community shares. Under the road policy of the Governments, public money is to be expended and land compulsorily acquired under legal sanction, for the accommodation and benefit of a small portion of the community. This is unfair to agriculture, and to the vast body of the public who do not use motors, and probably would not care to use them if they could. What is really wanted here is the straightening and levelling of existing roads; their treatment in some way which will obviate the dust and the mud nuisance; the making of new road sections so as to avoid carrying motor traffic through congested areas, and the abolition of dangerous bridges and corners at bridges, with the fencing and embanking of dangerous roads along hillsides. At present, motorists ruin roads, and do nothing for their maintenance. What is wanted is a system whereby they will be compelled to maintain and repair the highways which they so greatly abuse. Unfortunately, so many of our legislators are themselves motorists that the interests of the general public are in this rather likely to be sacrificed.

The Government, among other things, has introduced a bill for the creation of a Department of Agriculture for Scotland. So the thing is termed. But, as a matter of fact, what is proposed is not a Department of Agriculture at all, but the transference of certain duties relating to Scotland, resting on the Board of Agriculture at present, to a sub-section of the Scotch office, under the control of the Secretary for Scotland. And we are expected to become enthusiastic about this? Nobody is so, and it is hardly likely anybody will ever become so. To transfer the care of Scottish agriculture from a board whose primary duty it is to look after agriculture, to a department of State which is already overburdened and does very badly what should be its chief care, is the sort of proposal one expects to hear from men who are graduating for Bedlam. There is

no more overburdened department than the Scots office, and the existing Secretary of State for Scotland is commonplace to a degree. But for the accident of his position, he is the sort of person whom men might expect to see occupying a secondary position among the subordinates in a mercantile office. It is truly deplorable to see agriculture trifled with in Parliament.

### DREADNOUGHTS AND WASTE FIELDS.

There is something melancholy in witnessing the resemblance between ancient Rome and modern Britain. She was busy importing corn from Africa while the Goths were thundering at her gates. We are busy building dreadnoughts while our wheat areas are lying waste, and land is going out of cultivation all round. One could see the folly of driving people off the land, but it might be greater folly to attempt now to resettle people on that same land. The great question is, Would it pay to do so? In many cases it would not, but in likely circumstances something practical could be done, and both individuals and the nation, in its corporate capacity, would benefit.

### STOCK SALES.

Stock matters have been very busy. We have had the autumn ram sales, the autumn Aberdeen-Angus sales, the sales of several herds of Short-horns, and one or two public sales of various kinds of horses. Clydesdales are in great demand for export purposes, and since the beginning of the year we have had about 1,000 head through our hands for export pedigree purposes. Shipments have been made almost weekly by both the Donaldson and the Allan line to Montreal. Canada has been by far the biggest customer. Rams have been selling remarkably well, considering the low prices ruling for mutton and wool. The latter is hardening all the time, and not much complaint can be made regarding its price at present. But so far as mutton is concerned, one is almost driven to the conclusion that people have ceased to eat it. Still, rams of all breeds met a profitable trade, and the extraordinary figure of £250 was reached at Lanark for a Blackface shearing ram. He was bred in the north of Ireland by H. D. M. Barton, The Bush, Antrim, and his purchaser is Charles Howatson, of Glenbuck, who was the first man in Scotland to pay £100 for a Blackface ram. The sheep on that occasion was Reformer, bred by the late John Fleming, Low Ploughland, Darvel, Lanarkshire. This time Ireland provides the animal, but the ancestry is wholly Scots. The sheep's sire was bred on Crossflatt, the next farm to Glenbuck, and up to a few years ago, in Mr. Howatson's hands, also. The dam of the ram was bred by Mr. Barton, and was got by a high-priced ram bred by Messrs. Cadgow, Borland, Biggar. Five shearlings bred by this firm, at Lanark sale this year, made an average of £80 each. Another lot from M. G. Hamilton's farm of Woolfords, made £19 8s.; and five from Glenbuck made £10 8s. apiece. The other mountain breed of Scotland, the Cheviots, have their headquarters at Hawick, at the foot of the Cheviots. The Cheviot is not so hardy as the Blackface, but is a splendid sheep, with the class of wool which makes up into the very best sort of tweed for gentlemen's wear. The highest price made by rams of this breed this season was £46, at which figure both the great four-year-old champion sheep Humble and his son, The White Knight, were sold out of the Hindhope lot. Curiously enough, while Blackfaces for breeding purposes find a market as lambs (at Lanark this year fully as many lambs were sold as shearlings), Cheviots are not popular when sold as dimmots—that is, one-year-olds. The reason of this may be found in the necessity for acclimatizing Blackfaces; and, therefore, the younger they are when put upon strange pastures, the better.

The great crossing breed of Scotland is the Border-Leicester. This year, fancy prices were not in evidence at Kelso. The highest prices were £110 and £100, and the highest average was £25 16s., made by a comparatively young flock, that of Mr. Forsyth, at New Smailholm, Kelso. Other averages were: £21 2s., made by Mr. Mark, Sunnyside, and £22, made by Alex. Cross, of Knockdon, a West-of-Scotland breeder, and also a great breeder of Ayrshire cattle. In days past, the Shroeshire seemed likely to contest the position of the Border-Leicester as a crossing sheep, but now that phase has passed away, and were it not for the zeal and pertinacity of Tom L. Buttar, Corston, Coupar-Angus, few Shroeshires would now be seen north of the Tweed. This year he sold 35 shearlings at an average of £10 11s. 2d. each, which is pretty good, although short of what has sometimes been obtained in the past. The Oxford Down is the conquering southerner; these days. He has rushed far north, and is extensively used for mating with half-bred ewes. That is, ewes got by a Border-Leicester sire, out of a Cheviot ewe. This is a most profitable type of lamb to rear.

### ABERDEEN ANGUS SALES.

At the Aberdeen Angus sales, conducted in Scotland and England during the month, good trade was experienced, but prices were not at all sensational. Mr. Chalmers, of Alder, Bishie, &

very old breeder, sold five heifers at an average of £11 11s. each; Careston Castle herd, in the same district, had an average of £12 15s. 1d. for 32 head. Mr. Bainbridge, in the North of England, had an average of £32 16s. 5d. for 29 head, and away down in Buckingham, Mr. Bolden, at Preston, Bissett, got £30 1s. 6d. for 38 head. The Auchnaguir herd, up in the Perthshire hills, was dispersed, and there 55 head made £31 18s. of an average.

We have also had a great sale of Shetland ponies at Earlshall, in Perthshire, where 89 of these small creatures made the splendid average of £23 2s. 1d. each.

"SCOTLAND YET."

### A Packer's View of the Pork Tariff.

Interviewed by "The Farmer's Advocate" regarding the points discussed in the editorial, "Ineffective Protection for the Hog-raiser," a leading pork-packer, whose position on the pork-tariff question differs from that of some other packers, frankly expressed the opinion that, while an increase of duty on pork products coming into Canada might be of some advantage to the Canadian packer, the present duty of two cents a pound is as much as should be levied, having regard for the general interest; and that if the production of hogs in Canada cannot be maintained on a profitable basis with a duty of two cents a pound, it is not a sufficiently natural product of the country to be maintained.

"It is difficult," remarked the author of our interview, "to give complete and authoritative information regarding comparative wholesale and retail prices of hogs and pork in the different countries, but the conditions under which the trade is carried on in these countries are so different, and the cuts commonly used vary so greatly, that even if these prices were known, and could be definitely stated, it would not assist materially in arriving at a sound judgment.

"Believing firmly in the policy of moderate protection to Canadian industries, I favored the agitation which led to the tariff on lard and meats being placed on the basis on which it now stands. The selfish interests of the packers would likely be furthered by an added duty, as that would preserve to us a greater share of the Canadian market. But, to be fair to all concerned, two cents per pound duty is as much as should be levied, as importing districts, particularly those of the far West, might feel they were being harshly treated if a higher rate were established. If the production of hogs cannot be profitably maintained under the present import duty, then it is not a sufficiently natural product of the country to deserve to be maintained.

"The underlying principles associated with sound business have not received sufficient attention in the discussions of the question in recent years. Under unrestricted competitive conditions, trade in any article sooner or later finds its natural level. The important question is not as to relative prices in another country, but, is the business, in the country concerned, being operated under artificial or natural conditions? What is to be feared is that, by combination or agreement, or by some form of understanding, or through agitation founded upon an untrue conception of the facts, artificial relations may be established, which not only destroy initiative and effort, but are the cause of fair play being denied to all identified with the industry. If no such untoward conditions exist, but business is being carried on under free and open competition, it may be taken for granted that, in any lengthened period, every one connected with the industry will receive a fair share of the profits that accrue.

"For years the packing industry has been under fierce criticism, and men have honestly believed that some improper relations of an unnatural character were being established by packers, which denied to the producer of hogs his fair proportion of profit. I have believed that all such suspicions and representations are untrue. I have believed that they have been responsible for unnatural and unwise agitation, and that because of them, men have turned from the consideration of how to produce hogs profitably, and have spent much energy inquiring how they could be relieved from imaginary evils.

"Remedy should not be sought in an increase of duty, nor by agitation that the producer of hogs is not securing his fair share, but by an honest examination into the cost of the production of hogs. The price at which hogs will be sold, if determined as it has been in the past, will be, on the whole, on the soundest basis, namely, free, open, unrestricted competition. If the business of raising hogs will not bear examination and show profitable results under such conditions, it means that it is not a natural or healthy business for the Canadian farmer, and he should be neither scolded, coerced or coerced into attempting to raise hogs which it will not pay him to produce. If, on the other hand, the production of hogs under such conditions is a profitable enterprise over a period of years, it seems unfortunate that a valuable trade for Canada should be further impeded, and public attention