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EDITORIAL.

Registration Standards.

Considerable discussion has taken place in the agricultural press in recent years regarding the standard of registration for pure-bred stock in Canadian and United States records, and especially those for Shorthorn cattle. The standard of the English herdbook for that breed admits to registry approved animals having five crosses by pure-bred registered sires of the same breed. This rule has been a standing one since the establishment of the herdbook, and causes no serious complaint in the country which is the home of the breed. The editing committee of the Shorthorn Association, we understand, receives evidence and passes judgment upon applications for the admission of foundation stock for new families, but we are informed there have been very few such applications in recent years, and that abuses of the privilege have been exceedingly rare. An equally liberal standard obtains in the conduct of other pedigree records in Great Britain, notably those for the heavy draft breed of horses. When the first Canadian Shorthorn Herdbook was instituted, the standard was made uniform with that of the English herdbook, and there was little cause for complaint of the admission of inferior animals with short pedigrees, but the United States being our best market for that class of stock, and their herdbook being at that time of a somewhat higher standard in some respects, a new record association, namely, the British American, afterwards the Dominion, was organized by Canadian breeders, and a new herdbook founded, the standard of which admitted only animals tracing in all lines to animals imported from Great Britain. This ruling proved a great hardship and loss to many breeders who then had excellent stock having a cross of one or more of the short-pedigree sires, in some cases practically wiping a whole herd from the record, and placing them on a par with grades in selling value. This action proved to be much more drastic in its effect than its promoters anticipated, proving disastrous to many breeders, and, in fact, entailing an injustice which probably would not have been inflicted had its final effect been fully foreseen. The standard at that time adopted was really higher than that of the American herdbook, the pedigrees of some cattle in that book being ineligible to the Canadian record. And while the two books to-day have practically an identical standard for new registrations, there are yet pedigrees on record in the American book that are barred from the Canadian, owing to their origin, and the Canadian record now has really the highest standard of any on either side of the sea.

A rule of both the Canadian and American herdbooks is that no recorded animals in the English herdbook that have not ancestors on record, or eligible to record, previous to Volume 21 of the E. H. B. will be admitted to registry in these records. Volume 21 of the English herdbook was published in 1874, thirty years ago, and there are now fifty volumes in print. Why the line has been drawn at Volume 21, or the year 1874, does not appear clear to the casual observer, but, assuming that this rule was considered safe and satisfactory to the directorate of the Shorthorn Breeders' Associations at the time it was adopted, which must have been nearly twenty years ago, it would appear to be a reasonable proposition to advance the line of demarkation by ten or fifteen volumes, or as many years, which we verily believe might be done to the great advantage of the breed and the

interest of the breeders of this country. As the case stands at present, Canadian and United States breeders in purchasing Shorthorns in Great Britain for importation have to pass by some of the best animals, some that have been winners at the Royal and other leading shows, because they do not conform to this rule requiring that they have ancestry on record previous to 1874. There are animals of this class in some of the most noted herds in England and Scotland, and they are among the very best individuals in those herds. Many of the leading breeders in Britain and America firmly believe that the rule of the English herdbook, admitting new blood through the well safeguarded channel of short-pedigree sires or dams, has a saving influence on the breed, serving to offset the enervating effect of close or consanguineous breeding, imparting virility and maintaining the constitutional vigor of the stock. If the effect of this liberal regulation has proved satisfactory to British breeders, to whom we look for seed stock to renew the vigor and improve the character of our cattle, why should we not place ourselves in a position to share in their best by modifying our registration rules to the extent of admitting these to our herdbook. The only objection we have heard advanced is that until or unless the directors of the American herdbook modify their rules to the same effect and extent, American breeders would not buy cattle having in their veins the blood of this class, for the reason that they would not register in the American herdbook. The question for Canadian breeders to decide is whether they shall lead or follow in this matter, whether they shall wait the pleasure of the close corporation governing the American herdbook, which taxes its own patrons by imposing a one-hundred-dollar entry fee on animals imported from Britain, and circumscribes their field for selection of seed stock by antiquated registration rules, or whether we shall go our own way, building up our stock to a high standard of individual excellence on intelligent lines of breeding. It is reasonably certain that in the future, as in the past, United States breeders will look to Canada for fresh blood and vigorous seed stock to renew the constitutional sturdiness of their cattle, which, under their system of feeding so freely with heating corn, are burnt out and constantly degenerating. The history of American herds and show-rings clearly indicates that but for the fresh blood brought in from Britain and Canada they would make but a sorry show in these lines. We are strongly inclined to the belief that by adopting the advanced registration rules indicated Canadian breeders would make a forward movement in their own interest, and that it would be only a question of time when United States breeders of Shorthorns would rise in their might and shake off the incubus in the shape of a herdbook directorate which holds its position by the possession of proxies, and fails to fairly represent the rank and file of the breeders of that country.

No Tax Wanted on Fencing Wire.

Disquieting rumors have reached the "Farmer's Advocate" that when the Dominion Government starts its Tariff Commission upon a mission of enquiry it will somewhere encounter a proposal to hothouse into existence a new industry, viz., the manufacture of wire. For fencing purposes, the farmers of Canada now practically depend wholly upon this material. Putting wire upon the free list a few years ago was a sane and sagacious step, and because one or two concerns, without either the facilities or the experience requisite to supply the demand, would like

to make a "preserve" of this trade, we fail to see that the time has come for a reversal of the present policy. To clap on a tariff of twenty-five or thirty per cent. would simply mean a tax of about \$150 extra on the fencing required on a medium-sized farm, for a very moderate tariff would advance the cost of fencing from ten cents to fifteen cents per rod. If anybody were now making the wire required, and had the plant and process that would enable them to supply farmers and the large number of establishments now successfully engaged in the manufacture of wire fencing, there might be some excuse for a policy that would conserve a home industry and compel United States concerns to set up their plants in this country. But this is not the case, and it would simply dislocate a genuine industry, hamper farmers in the older sections, and seriously embarrass the settler. We have a modest tariff of fifteen per cent. upon manufactured fencing, and despite the fact of a high rate of wages for labor, etc., prices have been tending downward, because of competition and in sympathy with the declining cost of wire in the States, ever since the organization of the U. S. steel trust. Barbed wire is free under the tariff, and also Nos. 9, 12 and 13 smooth galvanized wire, the sorts chiefly used in wire-fence manufacture, while on Nos. 7 and 11 there is a duty of twenty per cent. In our opinion, this should be wiped out also, and the revenue would not suffer, for these grades are not extensively imported, but if they were free farmers would be enabled to get a very much stronger and more satisfactory style of fence without enhancing the cost. Under present conditions a wire tariff would be injurious to the interest of the farmer. It would demoralize the fence-manufacturing industry for which wire is a raw material, and by forcing up the cost of fencing would curtail production and consumption, and hinder farmers everywhere throughout Canada in making improvement upon their farms. The Canadian Government received a very decisive mandate from the people at the recent general elections, which we apprehend they will not interpret as authorizing a tax on wire. The farmer is not unreasonable. In respect to the building up of Canada and its industries, he believes in "live and let live," but he does not propose to be strangled. If the parties behind the sinister design are wise they will take the advice of the "Farmer's Advocate," and drop it until some more auspicious occasion.

Improving Opportunities.

Evidence is not wanting that the country has awakened to the significance of technical education as applied to the science of farming. There is an increasing interest taken by the public at large in the business of agriculture. Those actually engaged in the profession are finding it more and more to their advantage to discuss problems relating to their occupation, to the exclusion of the more general topics, such as the weather, war, politics, etc. And why should they not? For too long agriculture has suffered for want of a more specific knowledge of the subject and for want of the application of scientific truths. Now, the forces that have been at work to assist the producers of the greatest source of wealth the country has, have begun to be felt, and those most concerned are taking a greater pleasure out of the pursuit of their occupation through having acquired a fuller knowledge of the principles underlying their work. The great majority of men have learned to distinguish more clearly the distinctive characteristics of live stock and crops, and have come to realize that improvement is