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EDITORIAL.

THE SPLIT-LOG DRAG BRIGADE.

The offer of "The Farmer's Advocate" to lay out one hundred dollars in cash prizes, being a first of twenty-five, a second of fifteen, and a third of ten dollars, for both Eastern and Western Ontario, in order to encourage experimentation this summer with the implement known as the split-log drag, has met with a most encouraging response. Promptly upon publication of the announcement entries commenced to come in, and the numbers increased until the last two days, when there was a rush of applications.

There are, in all, forty-three entries from Western Ontario, and twenty from the region east of the longitude of Yonge St., Toronto, making a total of sixty-three men who have agreed to make a drag and use it at least five times before October 15th on a mile of earth road in the vicinities of their respective farms. The ranks of the split-log-drag brigade include representatives of nearly every county in the Province, from Essex to Glengarry, and from Russell to Welland. The best of it is that, so far as we have been able to ascertain through personal acquaintance and inquiry, they are men of the highest standing in their communities. It sometimes happens that the first to take up with a new idea are those with more enterprise than ballast, and the fact of such persons being identified with a movement rather prejudices the more conservative neighbors against it, even though the idea itself may be excellent. It is therefore especially gratifying to know that the men who have entered our competition are not only enterprising and public-spirited, but are good level-headed, successful farmers.

It is also assuring to know that several of those entered were cautious enough to make and try their drag before sending in their applications. One man from Essex Co. wrote that he had tried the drag in 1906, and found it a success. The only criticism received was from a man who had not tried it. He thought the use of the drag for keeping roads in condition savored of cutting grain with a sickle, or threshing it with a flail. However, his mind is open to conviction, and, as he is trying the drag, we expect to find him converted before autumn. One man, whose application was received too late, said the results of his first trial were an "eye-opener."

There are some who cannot see wherein the split log is better than the old piece of iron-shod timber known as the leveller. We have repeatedly pointed out that the essential difference is in the manner and time of use. The old leveller is used to smooth the roads down when they are crumbling dry; the split-log drag is used to puddle and plaster the mud. It is used before one can work on the land, hence is not so likely to be neglected as is the old-fashioned leveller. There seem to be other points in its favor, too, but we shall reserve judgment until the results of the contest are announced.

We have been asked to institute a split-log-drag competition in Quebec, but the expense of starting the movement in one Province is all we feel warranted in undertaking this year. If successful as expected, there is no reason why the idea should not be pioneered in other Provinces as well, though it is hardly fair to expect "The Farmer's Advocate" to bear the expense of it all. There are other calls on our time and money, and the work of introducing the drag should fall more properly upon the Provincial Departments of Agriculture. In this connection, it is but fair to remind our readers that we are

being cheerfully assisted in the enterprise by the Public Works Department of the Ontario Government. Mr. A. W. Campbell, Provincial Highways Commissioner, and Deputy Minister of Public Works, has undertaken the very considerable expense and responsibility of doing the judging, and his Department is entitled to a full share of the credit.

We desire, also, to acknowledge the aid of many newspapers throughout the Province which freely assisted by drawing attention through their columns to the split-log-drag competition. We have reason to believe that their co-operation has not been unfruitful.

Although entries for the competition are now closed, there is no reason why interest should abate. The fact that over sixty men have decided to comply with the rules of our contest, and have notified us to that effect, is evidence that many others must have been considering the matter, and if the list had remained open longer some of these would have come in. All such are urged to go ahead and construct their drags. Evidence multiplies that the drag is likely to prove an invaluable means of maintaining and improving earth roads, and it is important that this fact should be demonstrated as early and as widely as possible. Again we say, LET US TRY THE SPLIT-LOG DRAG.

THE FIGHT WITH WEEDS.

For a few months the land has had rest from weeds, but with the change in the season, which came suddenly and rather early, with the delightful renewing of vegetable life, the conflict with these foes begins again. Of all the losses from natural causes which the farmer has to endure, —losses from weeds, lightning, hail, flood, drouth, and the like—the toll of weeds, without doubt, takes first place. Who has not been sorely vexed at seeing what would have been a magnificent corn or root crop lessened one-third or more by thick ranks of weeds, breast-high? Who has not seen (to use an Irishism) a field of peas that could not be seen for weeds? Not only are there fields, but whole sections of country where spring crops are hidden in June by the bright bloom of mustard. Ox-eye daisy is crowding out the grass in pasture lands. We heard a farmer not long ago telling of a fifteen-acre field on a farm he had bought, which for years before he got it had lain in grass, or rather daisy, seeding and reseeding itself. His attempt by short rotation to clean it was not very hopeful as yet. He said he could keep the daisies from seeding, but the ground was filled with myriads of seeds, enough of which grew each year to make a full crop. The differences in appearance and manner and season of growth which are observable in weeds are as many, almost, as the long list of weeds itself, but in one respect all are alike—they are robbers, every one. The nutriment they extract from the soil is all taken at the expense of the legitimate crop. If a tithe of the enormous loss thus occasioned were suffered at the hands of human thieves, there would be a very dangerous ferment throughout the country—dangerous for the thieves, we mean. We could wish that there were less complacency in view of what goes on continually in vegetable thievery, and less leniency to the rascals that do the mischief.

The conflict with these, while stern and unrelaxing, need not be hopeless. Many farms there are that are practically clean. Some of these have never been allowed to become dirty. Weeds, as they appeared, have been exterminated, and at a much less annual labor cost than is involved in keeping them in check where they have

been allowed to get strong foothold. Other farms, once foul with weeds, have been cleaned and made models in that respect. Whole sections of our country are noted for their freedom from weed pests, and what has been accomplished in these cases is not impossible in others.

Everyone has noticed that the more noxious weeds, such as bindweed, are to be found in patches more or less widespread. A little reasoning backward will show that a patch began as a single plant, and that the seed of this plant was probably introduced in seed grain, grass or root seeds. Much can be done to prevent trouble by care in the purchase of seeds. Many a lot of cheap seed has proved dear in the end. Mere dearthness, however, does not, of itself, insure freedom from foul seeds. We remember once purchasing a bushel of imported seed oats, which cost enough, but out of which over a hundred wild oats were afterwards hand-picked. But cheap seed should always be viewed with suspicion. It is a good policy, usually, to get seed grain from a clean farm in a good neighborhood. Grass and clover seeds should be carefully scanned through a glass, and only the cleanest chosen. A distinction should, of course, be made between weeds and weeds; some are comparatively harmless, but the seeds of noxious weeds should never be sown.

Some weeds will not stand being plowed, others thrive under such treatment; some grow worst in grass, others in grain, but all suffer grievously in a thoroughly-worked hoe crop. The importance in weed destruction of a regular rotation, in which no two crops of the same kind, except grass, succeed each other, and in which each field in turn is treated to a cultivated crop, can be readily seen. As a matter of observation, it is exactly on farms where such a system prevails that strong crops, getting the full strength of the ground, can be seen, and where the eye of the passer-by is not offended by the spectacle of rank weeds overtopping useful grain. The value of a thick, rank clover crop in smothering weeds is not as fully appreciated as it ought to be. For this reason, as well as for others, clover should have a place in every rotation. Persistently as weeds cling to life under adverse conditions, a strong clover crop is the death of many of them, and weakens those it fails to kill. Besides, when the clover crop is cut at the proper season, the weeds that have escaped are also cut before their seed has matured, and propagation by that means is blocked. Of course, the roots of perennial weeds remain waiting for a better opportunity to extend themselves. If hay-cutting is delayed too long, seeds of pests present are matured, and, though taken into the barn with the crop, eventually find their way to the land there to perpetuate themselves.

Of all the crops grown, a corn or root crop gives the farmer the best opportunity for weed extermination. Years ago it used to be remarked that large, well-cultivated fields of roots invariably indicated clean farms, but as a cleaning crop, corn is the superior even of roots. While they are equal in the earlier stages, yet later on many a weed may lurk unseen under the shelter of turnip or mangel leaves, while a corn crop can be inspected at any stage of its growth, and these lingering specimens destroyed. That Canada thistles can be killed in one season in a corn crop, has been demonstrated again and again. The cultivation that ought to be given during the growing time is almost sufficient of itself for the business, but if supplemented, after the corn is full height, by a couple of tours of inspection, hoe in hand—a task which need not take long—the job is complete. It is not only in the extermination