

The Farmer's Advocate and Home Magazine

"Persevere and
Succeed."

Established
1866

Vol. XLIV.

REGISTERED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE COPYRIGHT ACT OF 1874.

LONDON, ONTARIO, DECEMBER 2, 1909

No. 897

EDITORIAL.

Unless a man is willing, sometimes, to pocket his pride, a lawyer will pocket his dollars.

Talk about the goose that laid the golden egg! If prices of shell-fruit keep soaring as they have been doing, she won't be in it with the modern hen.

Seed selection, a splendid and interesting line of work for retired farmers, is suggested in Foyston Bros.' excellent contribution, published elsewhere in this issue. We commend the idea heartily. We also invite others to send us their experience in this important line of work.

The quality of the 1909 crop of clover seed in Ontario is high. The supply will not, however, be as large as hoped for. The summer was too dry for best yields, and, owing to shortage of pasture, cattle had to be turned on to many fields intended to be reserved for seed.

Exports of cheese from Montreal up to the second week of November were 1,790,000 boxes, as against 1,696,000 a year previous. This fine increase is somewhat modified by the decline in exports of butter, which this season have been only 40,000 boxes, against 93,000 in 1908. However, taken in conjunction with the increase of home consumption, and the recent development of an export cream business, the net showing is quite encouraging.

Hamar Greenwood, M. P., a prominent Canadian member of the present British House of Commons, in a recent speech, said he was proud of the fact that England was practically the only free-trade country in Europe. "This country," he said, "is the only one that pays its way; it flies the free-trade flag at the masthead; the other countries fly the three brass balls." "We think it better to tax the dead rich than to tax the living poor," was another of his sayings, in defending the increased death-duties feature of the Budget.

Noting the fact that cattle in Chicago had reached \$9.25, or within 5 cents per cwt. of the top in 1882, when the summit was the highest since war times, the Live-stock Report propounds the query, "How high will Christmas beves sell?" All signs, it thinks, point to a very high market. There are fewer prime finished beves back in the country than in years, and industrial conditions are again normal. High prices all winter are predicted by well-posted men in the trade across the line.

The National Transcontinental Railway is swelling our annual Government estimates by quite a pretty penny. There is this consolation, however, that in the end we will own a railroad, whereas if the money, or even a considerable proportion of it, were granted as subsidies, we would have nothing of our own possession to show for it. Perhaps, on the whole, it is just as well we have such a national project on foot to absorb part of the revenue and enforce some regard for economy in other matters on which the money might be spent, with little or no prospect of return.

Potentialities of Underdrainage.

Seventeen teams waiting at midnight on a Sunday evening to get drain tile from a Lambton County kiln that was to be opened on Monday morning, with more teams coming up and loading during the latter part of the night, so that by morning there was not a tile in sight, is a fact cited by Wm. H. Day, the enterprising Professor of Physics and Expert on Drainage at the Ontario Ag'l College, to show the fever-heat interest in tiling manifested in the South-western Peninsula of Ontario. The growing interest in this fundamentally important matter, fostered and promoted by the drainage-survey work of Prof. Day's Department, stimulated further by "The Farmer's Advocate" and other agricultural papers, and climaxed this year by a saturating May and June, which set spring work back a month or more in many districts, has aroused unprecedented interest in tiling, so that the above instance, in the Township of Dawn, is only typical of what has occurred at many other brickyards. Not only fields, but roads, are being underdrained on an extensive scale, it being now realized that a firm, dry road-bed is as essential to the maintenance of a good driveway as a lowered water-table is for the advantageous and profitable tillage of the land.

Having identified himself so resolutely, and after such a practical fashion, with the cause of underdrainage, by means of the free drainage-survey work, inaugurated under the regime of his predecessor, Prof. Reynolds, Prof. Day has been making some inquiries and calculations concerning the results. From reports of records of tile manufactured in Ontario, kept by the Department of Lands, Forests and Mines, Toronto, we learn that the number in 1900 was 19,544,000, gradually decreasing to fifteen million in 1905. Since then it has risen to 24,800,000, in 1908, and letters received from tilemen give ground for the estimate that in 1909 it will be approximately 29,000,000, or almost twice what it was when the O. A. C. drainage campaign was begun, in 1905. As the output was decreasing up to 1905, Prof. Day is inclined to admit that the accumulated increase in tile output since 1905 represents the benefit to the Province of the work done by the Department of Physics in this one line. This accumulated increase amounts to 27,078,000 feet of tile, which would drain 53,178 acres.

Inquiries among farmers in different counties who have done underdrainage indicate an annual increase in the value of field crops on their drained, as compared with their undrained, soil of \$21.65 per acre. This looks pretty large, but is the average of figures actually submitted in writing. In some cases it represents land which formerly produced only poor pasturage. The drained area on which the averages were based was not all thoroughly drained, but simply tilled more or less closely. For the sake of even numbers, let us put the increase in value of crops at \$20.00 per acre. This gives us \$1,063,560 as the annual value of the increase in crop value on the extra amount of land tiled since 1905, as a result of the O. A. C. propaganda. Allow some deduction for tile employed for draining roads, and for the effect of other agencies, such as wet seasons and the agricultural press, and there still remains probably half a million dollars or more to credit to the O. A. C.

As affording some sort of concrete idea of the scope for drainage work, here is another calculation. A great many practical men consulted place the proportion of agricultural land in Ontario that needs underdrainage to give fair results in cropping, at from a quarter to a half. Nobodys says less than a quarter, and Prof. Day himself is inclined to place it at a third of the total cleared and slashed area. In Essex, Kent

and Lambton, in the West, and Russell and other counties in the East, a large percentage of the land needs drainage badly. Now, the cleared and slashed land in Ontario is nearly 16,500,000 acres. A third of this is 5,500,000, which, if yielding \$20 an acre more by drainage, would then give us \$110,000,000. If that looks like romancing, do as we did before, and cut the estimate in two, calling it fifty-five millions. The total value of field crops in Ontario in 1908 was some \$185,000,000. Fifty-five millions is an increase of over 33 per cent., which we might easily expect to add by underdrainage of our wet lands. And no doubt we can add much more, for the probability is that almost every acre in the country may some day be tiled at a profit. Excepting the annual interest on the cost of drainage, the extra value of crops represents, in many cases, almost clear profit, for the greater ease and facility in cultivation and seeding almost compensates for the extra labor of harvesting the larger crops.

During the past summer, the O. A. C. Physics Department has had four men engaged in drainage survey for farmers, working with an appropriation of \$1,000. At that, they have as many applications ahead as have been attended to this season, so that, to overtake arrears and provide for the annual increase in demands, they ought to have between four and five times the staff, and five times the appropriation. It is to be hoped they will get it, for no more enduring and practical work was ever undertaken at the O. A. C. or any other college. The need is urgent, and the possibilities immense.

A Practical Agricultural Journal.

Few other influences has the cause of better farming been more retarded than by the writings and speaking of impractical men—men who, from lack of intimate experience and knowledge of their subject, offer unworkable recommendations, or, mayhap, suggest good-enough theories, but fail to back their preaching up with successful practice. The arm-chair philosopher, he who propounds plausible theories for others to test, merits the inattention he receives.

Agricultural speakers and writers should be, above all else, rational and practical; and the agricultural journal which is not edited by practical men is liable to do more harm than good, by reflecting upon the whole profession. Finding one piece of printed advice unworkable, the reader is prone to discount others. There are still too many writers like the editor in the joke, who advised against keeping pigs in the apple orchard, lest they should climb the trees and eat the fruit. The most mischievous writers of all, however, are those who advance plausible theories which fail to work out when put to the test. There are many men who have but the merest superficial knowledge of their subject, yet write with assurance, as though they knew it all.

"The Farmer's Advocate" has always made it a special point to found its advice on the bed-rock of practical experience, either of its own editors, or else of other well-proved and reliable men. It has consistently sought contributions from men who have done things—those who have had experience, and know what they are talking about. Not content with seeking such contributors, it has demanded editors who were likewise practical. Of the four members at present on its staff—not to mention the experienced and versatile editor of the Home Magazine, who also hails from the country—every one was born and raised on a farm, and has thorough knowledge of the common details of farm work, from field husbandry and gardening, to stock breeding and feeding. None belong to the "kid-glove" class. Two of