

THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE

AND HOME MAGAZINE

* AGRICULTURE, STOCK, DAIRY, POULTRY, HORTICULTURE, VETERINARY, HOME CIRCLE.*

Vol. XXXII.

LONDON, ONT., AND WINNIPEG, MAN., NOVEMBER 15, 1897.

No. 442.

EDITORIAL.

Observations from the Standpoint of the Stockman and Farmer on the Conduct of the Dominion Experimental Farms.

The recent discovery of tuberculosis among the cattle stock of the Central Experimental Farm at Ottawa, and the resignation of Mr. John Craig, the Horticulturist—second editions of such unfortunate circumstances there—revive public interest in that institution and bring to the front a subject which the FARMER'S ADVOCATE does not feel justified to pass over in silence. One would naturally suppose, in the light of the lengthy experience gained with the tuberculosis trouble five or six years ago, when a large number of the cattle were found affected and slaughtered and others experimented with, that care would have been taken by the authorities to prevent its reappearance and spread (providing they really considered it a serious matter) by applying the advice contained in Bulletin No. 20, issued in Feb., 1894, after three years' experience, and in the annual reports of 1894 and 1896, which cover the experience at the branch farms, where it was carried from the Central Farm. It was announced in Bulletin No. 20 that this work had confirmed the reliability of tuberculin as a means of diagnosis. Farmers were thus being enlightened as to the insidious nature of the disease, the means of prevention, detection, and general precautions. Surely the Government herd, right under the shadow of the capital, would have been closely watched, frequently examined, the new purchases of stock thoroughly tested, and the progress of the disease, if found to exist, noted and made the subject of study for the benefit of those who foot the bills! Fancy the feeling of surprise, to put it mildly, with which hard-working farmers and careful stockmen have read the announcement that on a recent test, out of 55 animals 26 were found diseased and two suspicious! Simultaneous with this discreditable news appeared another stirring bulletin from the Dominion Veterinarian, Dr. McEachran, warning farmers to watch their herds, not to depend on sight or sound, but apply the official tuberculin test, by which the ravages of the dread bacilli can be detected. What wonder the layman exclaims, "Physician, heal thyself," and is amazed that the medicine so strongly recommended to him was not sooner applied at headquarters, so that this second shocking example would have been avoided.

As far back as 1895 the FARMER'S ADVOCATE complained of the lack of attention to live stock husbandry at the Central Farm, noting the fact, for example, that throughout the entire system only two sheep (Dorsets), at Agassiz, B. C., were to be found. At some of the branch farms we have seen very inferior animals sent out from headquarters. So little attention, comparatively, has been given to this fundamental branch of Canadian agriculture that the Central Farm has lagged in the procession to such an extent as to become almost a back number instead of doing pioneer work. This is not strange when, with all its officials, the farm is yet practically destitute of an acknowledged agriculturist having practical knowledge of advanced methods of live stock husbandry in its various lines. The institution is thus lamentably weak at a vital point. Is it credible that a capable stockman, with a practiced eye and hand and the experience that the institution had already undergone, would have allowed affairs to drift into the deplorable state reported the other day, when, as Hon. Mr. Fisher, the new Minister of Agriculture, tells us, the existence of the disease was discovered through the herdsman accidentally killing a bull by giving it saltpetre instead of Glauber's salts! Sixteen of the reacting animals were condemned

to slaughter and ten reserved for experiment, most of them under the direction of Dr. McEachran at Montreal, where Dr. Adami, of McGill University, will conduct bacteriological investigations with the milk of these cows, which will also be fed to pigs, calves, etc., to determine its effects. A number of the animals the Minister has reserved for curative treatment, so that the truths shown in connection with this disease may be properly exemplified to the general advantage without inaugurating a newspaper "scare" or a crusade by the professional cow-killer.

Under Hon. Mr. Fisher as Minister we look for better things at these institutions. It is satisfactory to note that the recent purchases of pure-bred stock (Guernseys) for the Central and Nappan Farms are reported perfectly sound. The remedy for past occurrences is not, we submit, a high-flying, fat-salaried live stock commissioner, industriously boomed in certain quarters. The fact that elaborately-prepared petitions were scattered broadcast through the country, the recipients being urged to sign and send them in to the Minister of Agriculture, need not be taken as an indication that there was any "long-felt" need for the creation of such an office. It was a small compliment to the Minister, himself a live stock-man, to meet him at the outset of his work with such a proposal. He has shown commendable enterprise and zeal for trade extension of farm products and cold storage transportation. This, with the raising of the cattle quarantine and minor reforms, is a fair share of work for the comparatively short period of his administration. The pure-bred live stock trade of Canada is now in a decidedly healthy condition, and safe in the hands of the intelligent officers and members of the various breeders' associations, who are not pining for a live stock commissioner to sacrifice himself on their behalf at the Canadian Capital City.

The management of the Experimental Farms deserves, and will doubtlessly receive, Hon. Mr. Fisher's careful consideration, particularly in the direction indicated above. We are free to confess our admiration for the many eminent attainments of Dr. Saunders, the Director, an able man of the highest integrity, with fine executive ability, devoting infinite care to his work; an enthusiast and a success in his many specialties, such as horticulture, insect life, cross-fertilization, chemistry, etc., and deserving of praise for his success in making the wilderness of drifting sand selected for the Central Farm to blossom as a rose; but, withal, we feel sure he would be the last man who would claim to know it all or desire to do it all, but would gladly be relieved of the responsibility of actively directing the department of farm management and live stock.

Most of the branch farms have done good work in the provinces in which they are located. The Manitoba Station at Brandon, under the able superintendence of Mr. Bedford, who has developed very marked capabilities, making the farm distinctly useful to the Province in the testing of fruits, trees, grains, grasses, and various methods of cultivation, etc., and has, through the agricultural press and in scores of other ways, kept himself in touch with the farmer. Mr. Mackay, the superintendent at Indian Head, a man of many practical qualifications and rare good judgment, is doing grand work in many lines, especially in arboriculture and the testing of grains and seeds most applicable to Territorial conditions, stock-keeping, the production of fodder crops, etc. Mr. Sharpe, at Agassiz, is doing splendid work in fruit-growing and orchard culture, but has little encouragement or hope for success in experiments with grain or stock on a location the selection of which was about as unfortunate as that of the Central Farm, having reference to its suitability for general

farming. The Station at Nappan, N. S., has been unfortunate in its management and has made an indifferent record, but from the late appointment of Mr. Robertson to the superintendency, a practical stockman and dairyman, and a successful farmer, we may reasonably hope for an improvement in the not distant future.

The farmers of the Western Provinces are anxious that the Minister of Agriculture should ere long personally inspect those important portions of the Dominion and look into the working of the Experiment Stations, but are making due allowance for the multiplicity of his duties, and hoping to see him in the West during the coming year.

In the meantime the Central Farm is easily under his eye, and the public feel that there is room for improvement in the management of the stock and the farm proper, and that a thorough investigation will probably indicate the need of giving greater scope to specialists in the work of their departments, as well as bringing those receiving less attention in the past more into harmony with the methods of advanced agriculture which the times demand at such institutions.

A Furore in the Western Hog Camp.

The United States Department of Agriculture, under Secretary Wilson, has stirred up a hornet's nest among the Western States hog breeders and feeders. Envious eyes have been cast at Canada's high-class trade, and in order to get a share of the fancy British demand, literature has been scattered westward, favoring the bacon hog and discounting Western wholesale methods and corn feeding.

The *Swine Breeders' Journal* is mad and merry by turns over the suggestion of "15-cent bacon from Tamworths without corn!"—a joke good enough for Puck, but the "S. J." can see no other good use for it. The *Breeders' Gazette*, a strong Wilson organ, favors a middle course, holding their present low-grade trade in Britain and capturing a slice of the 15-cent business as well. But the *Swine Breeders' Journal* will have none of it, and concludes with this bit of sarcasm:

"Corn being so cheap to raise, will not be such a great loss when farmers are producing a Tamworth streak of lean and fat bacon from a combination of autumn zephyrs, hoar frosts and beech-nuts. The farmers of this country should feel gratified at the attention they are receiving from their Agricultural Department. The insinuations that the past efforts of farmer, breeder and bacon-raiser have been failures should not annoy them any. But they should carefully observe all the instructions from the Department. Introduce the razor-back: Try the Tamworth: Try a cross of yellow dog: Discard corn and introduce, outside of Kansas, the wind pump, if it is necessary, to down Denmark in bacon-raising." Whew!

After ridiculing the idea of the great American Republic catering to the taste of a "few rich people in England," considering it more profitable to cater to the poor of that country because they consume far greater quantities, the eagle reaches its highest flight in the following sentence: "It has been the observation of the *Journal* that the farther away the American people get from English methods in farming, from English breeds and strains of hogs, the greater their success."

Elsewhere we give vigorous, readable and "meaty" chapters on this highly important subject to the Canadian farmer, from the pens of the president of the Wm. Davies Packing Company, and Mr. Fearman, of Hamilton, who touch nearly every phase of the question from the standpoint of the packer, dealer and exporter.

Most Up-to-Date in Canada.

ROBERT MALCOLM, Colchester Co., N. S., in renewing, writes:—"I am well pleased with the FARMER'S ADVOCATE. It is the most up-to-date paper published in the interests of the farmers of the Dominion that I get hold of."