

# The Farmer's Advocate and Home Magazine

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## EDITORIAL.

### The Horse-breeding Industry in Canada.

The great demand and prevailing high prices for horses, consequent upon the rapid settlement of the hitherto unoccupied agricultural lands of the Dominion, the rapid growth of our cities and towns, and also owing to the excellent export trade, has served to direct the attention of farmers more definitely to the scarcity of the supply, and to the question of the need and possible profit of engaging more extensively in the breeding and raising of the classes of horses most sought for at present and likely to continue in demand.

The recent series of letters from practical farmers and breeders, discussing this question, in "The Farmer's Advocate," will, it is hoped, serve to throw light on the subject, and anticipates, to some extent, the intention of the Minister of Agriculture for Ontario, Hon. Mr. Monteith, to ask the Legislature to sanction an appropriation for the expense of a commission to investigate the horse-breeding business in the Province, with a view to evolving a policy for his department for the encouragement of the industry on the most desirable lines. In the breeding and rearing of horses all classes of farmers are more or less interested, and there will doubtless be general approval of any reasonable expenditure of public funds in promoting this important industry, which means so much to so large a proportion of the people of the Province. A preliminary matter in connection with such an investigation is the method of enquiry most likely to elicit the necessary information and indicate the most desirable plan of campaign for the encouragement of horse-breeding on intelligent lines. Whether this object may be best accomplished by the appointment of a royal commission of enquiry, similar to that of the Ontario Government of some twenty years ago, whether simply by a departmental enquiry from well-informed farmers in all the representative horse-breeding districts, or whether by a commission working on the lines of the Dominion Tariff Commission, visiting the principal centers, and publicly inviting farmers and breeders to present their views upon the subject, is open to discussion. We are disposed to favor the last-named method as affording opportunity for the widest range of expression of opinion, at a minimum of expense, to those interested, and most likely to secure a consensus of opinion of the largest number of those immediately interested.

The question of the types of horses most desirable and suitable for farm use and the home and foreign trade, has been intelligently discussed in these columns, and the weight of opinion appears to be that the two principal and most profitable classes for the Ontario farmers to raise are the heavy-draft and the heavy-harness or carriage types, for both of which there is an active demand, and both of which may be used to advantage on the farm, the former for home work and for sale for city-dray use, and the latter for general purposes, including farm work on the lighter soils, hauling medium-weight loads on the roads, and meeting the demand for high-class carriage horses, always in demand for city purposes, and selling at profitable prices.

One of the advantages claimed for the heavy-draft class is that they may be safely worked, with care, at two years old, and made to more than pay for their keep until they arrive at the best selling age. Another is that, if, from accidental or other causes, they develop slight blemishes, they are yet useful on the farm, and will sell fairly well, and, in the case of mares, if these blemishes be not congenital or hereditary, they may still be used for breeding purposes. These

reasons, together with the fact that good heavy horses are always in demand at fairly paying prices, would seem to practically settle the question that, for the majority of general farmers, and the general class of mares in the country, the heavy-draft sire is most desirable to use. A considerable proportion of farmers have a fancy for the lighter types of horses, and, with the exercise of good judgment in selection and breeding, make it profitable to raise that class, and these men may, with reasonable safety, invest in and rear the high-class carriage and saddle types, which are always admired, and for which there is generally a profitable trade. For the production of this class, the Hackney sire is at present the most generally popular, being, as a rule, sound, attractive, enduring, of good disposition and prepotent. The Thoroughbred has yet many faithful friends, and, crossed upon strong grade mares, frequently produces a good type of carriage or saddle horse, selling for the top price, but the sire in this class, as in all, should be carefully selected and mated.

As to the best methods to be adopted for encouragement of the breeding of more and better horses, it may be worth considering whether special Government aid to Agricultural Societies, or groups of Societies, towards prizes for pure-bred stallions at spring shows, would not serve to stir up interest and afford opportunities for the selection of sires. The local spring stallion shows in years gone by, we believe, were very useful in this respect, and were probably abandoned in most cases because the income from gate receipts was not sufficient to cover the prize-list and other expenses. These spring fairs are still continued in some districts, and are appreciated by farmers generally. If, in connection with spring shows, the Scottish system of district societies hiring sires for the season could be adopted, it would appear to be well worth a trial, as the system has grown in favor in the Old Land; so much so that the services of a sire are, in some instances, engaged a year or two in advance, competition for securing the best sires being exceedingly keen. In case hiring is not found practicable here, the system of forming a local company, society or syndicate for the purchase of a sire to stand or travel in the district under suitable regulations should, if well managed, work out with reasonable satisfaction.

Failing in the adoption of any co-operative scheme, the encouragement of private enterprise in introducing first-class sires, whether by a Government or a Society bonus, or by private patronage by the payment of remunerative service fees, should commend itself to all farmers interested in raising horse stock. The men who risk their money in the importation and keeping of high-class sires for the use of the public, are certainly deserving of more encouragement than they generally receive. A horse is perishable property, and hence liable to drop out before he has paid for his cost. Suitable managers are scarce, and demand high wages; the competition of cheap horses held at low service fees cut into the revenue of a good horse severely, and few men make big profits from the ownership of a stallion. These facts doubtless account for so few first-class horses being imported or held for service, and any reasonable means that may be suggested for improving the situation should be carefully considered, with an open mind to the general good. The plan adopted by the council of the old Agriculture and Arts Association, some thirty years ago, of duplicating or triplicating, as they did, the first-prize money, if won by an imported stallion or male animal in any class that had not previously been exhibited here, had a good effect in encouraging the importation of first-class animals and in improving the stock of the country. Could not this

or some similar scheme be devised to bring out the best of sires, which are none too good for the prospect lying before Canadian breeders at this juncture. One thing certain is that there is urgent need of a vigorous forward movement for the improvement of our horse stock to meet the assured demand for both the home and the export trade. The settlement of the millions of acres of our new farm lands, and the building of so many new railways, will surely require horses to the full number that Canadian farmers can produce for many years. And it should never be forgotten that it costs no more to raise the class that sell for the highest price than to rear the inferior class that are not wanted, and must be sold at much lower figures.

### Let Us Husband Our Natural Wealth.

In another column is an article signed "Reader," under the heading, "The Pick of the Earth for Canada." "Reader's" idea, in substance, is that wholesale encouragement of immigration is injudicious, that only the very best settlers should be sought for Canada, and, as an automatic means of discrimination, he would discontinue the policy of free-land grants, so as to exclude the thriftless pauper classes, which not only lower our standard of citizenship, but occupy for a longer or shorter time, lands, the increment in value of which should accrue to the public revenue. We are fully in sympathy with our correspondent's plea that the best people of the earth are none too good for Canadian citizenship. Incidentally, an important point is touched in referring to those immigrants who decide to try their fortunes in Eastern Canada.

In whose interest is this wholesale booming of immigration? Ostensibly that of the country and of the Western settlers; really, it is mostly in the interest and to the immense gain of speculating land corporations, railroad companies and other capitalists who desire a speedy return from investments based on the hope of rapid Western development. Likewise it seems to be in the immediate interest of Eastern manufacturers, who desire a market in that country. Undesignedly, it is also in the interest of American manufacturers, who are getting a good share of that marvellously expanding Western trade. All these classes desire to see the country settled fast. They want land to boom, oceans of wheat to be raised, great volumes of freight to be moved, and money to be spent in the country to open it up. They do not care what class of people settle there. They do not associate with them. They do not care for the future of that country, nor of the Dominion as a whole. Their aim is immediate profit to themselves.

What is the mania costing the country? How much good is it doing the East? How is it going to redound upon the West? Is it in the interests of the future of Canada as a whole? To historians it will seem as though Canada were afraid if she did not secure settlers at this particular juncture she would be forever unpopulated. The fact is Canada possesses about the last great area well suited to Caucasian inhabitation, and her ultimate settlement is as certain as the diurnal revolution of the earth. "You can't check Manitoba," was a prophetic utterance regarding which we have been amazingly sceptical, though a truer prediction never was uttered, and it applies not only to Manitoba, but to the whole West—to all Canada, in fact. It would be only a question of time—and not a long time, either—till our West were densely populated, though we did nothing but wait. Our boasted enterprise in settling the country reminds the economist, in its