

# The Farmer's Advocate and Home Magazine

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## EDITORIAL.

Over 100 students are taking the journalism course at Wisconsin University; 26 in the agricultural branch of it.

Much good is bound to result from the digestion of a large body of horticultural experience gathered in orchard surveys.

Under the Wisconsin Agricultural College extension work this season, demonstration work with alfalfa, corn-breeding, fertilizers, etc., is being done on twenty State and county institutional farms.

If Great Britain sees fit to remove the embargo on Canadian cattle, we shall naturally not object. But the idea that Canada has very much to gain thereby is pure fiction. The embargo is a trade restriction, singular in that, while maintained by another country, it has the incidental effect of protecting us from our own folly, to wit, the exportation of stores.

At a big meeting, held in the New York Produce Exchange, an organization was formed, with W. C. Brown, President of the New York Central Railway, at its head, and five other railway presidents, and many prominent business men on the board, to resettle and promote farming in the north-eastern States, according to more modern and successful methods.

The June excursions to the Ontario Agricultural College are announced. The list of Institutes participating is longer than usual. May the crowds, also, be larger. Any farmer, whether well or little informed, who can visit an agricultural college on one of these excursions, without deriving more than five dollars' worth of benefit, must possess a curiously unrecceptive mind. It is an eye-opener.

So long as the present excellent opportunities for farming abound in Eastern Canada, the average man is foolish to go either West or North. But for the young man with small capital, who wishes to establish a home for himself, Ontario's Northland offers real attractions. The best of markets, good soil, not a bad climate, and assurance of steady return while clearing the land constitute a quartette of advantages not to be despised.

With commendable enterprise, the Government of Nova Scotia is undertaking to promote farm underdrainage, as it has already stimulated the cause of live-stock improvement. By loaning money for drainage, on easy terms; surveying drainage systems for farmers; and, lastly, by the purchase of a traction ditching machine, operating it at a low contract rate per rod, it is hoped to demonstrate widely the benefits of underdrainage, and assist farmers in this important work.

In stating that there was urgent necessity for overhauling of the details of registration in the National Live-stock Records, "Scotland Yet" cast an undeserved reflection. While the customary vigilance exercised at Ottawa in matters pertaining to registration seems to have been temporarily relaxed in the admission of the Imperial Hunter Studbook to the list of records registration in which qualifies for free admission into Canada, still, upon representations as to the true character of this record, it was promptly excluded. On the whole, our National Records system is one to be proud of, and probably the best home possessed by any country in the world.

## The Clay Belt in Ontario's Northland.

Three hundred and thirty-five miles north of Toronto (by rail), one hundred and ten miles beyond North Bay, and eight miles past the naked rock-ribbed town of Cobalt, at a point between Haileybury and Liskeard—no longer New Liskeard—one enters a remarkable region. Haileybury and Liskeard, be it understood at the outset, are two thriving towns of some five or six thousand inhabitants each, both situated on that beautiful, eighty-mile, elongated stretch of navigable water called Lake Temiskaming, drained at its southern end by the Ottawa River. The towns are five miles apart. Haileybury has, if anything, the advantage in point of topographical location, sloping up from the lake, and presenting a beautiful view from the outgoing or incoming steamer. With the recent inauguration of a trolley line to Cobalt, Haileybury seems certain to become the favorite residential center for that world-famous mining camp. It thus becomes, as it were, a point of contact between this marvellous mining region, turning out over a million dollars' worth of silver a month, and the magnificent agricultural area just beyond. A hundred miles or so south-west lies Sudbury, the center of what is by far the greatest nickel-mining region in the world. The importance of these relationships, from the standpoint of settlers' markets, will at once be recognized.

But the metropolis of the agricultural district is Liskeard, strategically situated at the very head of Lake Temiskaming, into which flow the Blanche and the Wabi rivers. From this point, or a couple of miles below it, the great clay belt, following up and tributary to the rivers, opens out in the form of a vast, irregular, V-shaped area towards the north, north-west and north-east, but more especially the north-west. It is broken by the Height of Land, a low rocky ridge, the summit of which crosses the Temiskaming and Northern Ontario Railway between 177 and 178 miles from North Bay. Beyond this point, the rivers run north, but save for a belt of rough land at this point and a jack-pine belt of sand, the clay area continues to the National Transcontinental and beyond to the muskeg country bordering James Bay. In general, this sixteen or twenty million acre belt might be described as a vast tableland of white, yellow or brown, but mostly white, clay covered to a varying depth of from an inch to two or three feet, with a sharply-defined layer of dark vegetable mold, consisting of rotten wood and partly-decayed sphagnum moss. At rather frequent intervals the tableland is broken by majestic rivers, winding through valleys of considerable depth. It must not be inferred that the clay land all lies together and unbroken. Here and there outcroppings of rock interrupt the agricultural land, while on the other hand, many blocks of fine soil lie outside the limits of the V-shaped area, as we have attempted to define it. It should be stated that north of the Height of Land the base of the V expands into a broad belt, which continues westward into the districts of Sudbury, Algoma and Thunder Bay, and eastward irregularly into Quebec. Indeed, the Lake St. John country, away north of the City of Quebec, is said to comprise just such soil as in the clay belt of New Ontario. Fortunately, the bulk of the best land lies in large contiguous areas, permitting settlement and social organization under the most advantageous conditions. The fact that a thirty-five mile ride from Cochrane west along the National Transcontinental to the Mattagami River, one of the tributaries of the Moose, revealed not an acre of

broken land, is significant evidence on this score. East from Cochrane, we believe, the land is more muskeggy, and the agricultural area not so unbroken.

Practically the whole area of the Northland is covered with a light timber growth, chiefly valuable for pulpwood, though containing some material for lumber, as the mills scattered through the country attest. The trees consist mainly of spruce, birch, balsam, balm of Gilead (locally called whitewood), poplar and dead tamarack, the latter having been killed by the sawfly years ago, and now constituting the best fuel of the district, and about the only ready fuel for campers. A good deal of the country has been burned over at one time or another, and the present second-growth timber is consequently rather small, though, as a rule, there is quite a forest of spruce along the rivers, probably because the land there is better drained.

On the flat portions, and especially on the muskeg areas, where the depth of rotten wood and moss, combined with fallen trees, hinders drainage, the land is too cold and wet for vigorous tree growth. Drainage would doubtless improve conditions. Birch is generally found on the fairly well-drained soil. There is said to be little pine, except some jack-pine areas, any distance beyond the Height of Land.

To the uninitiated this great clay belt, as the railroad traverses it to-day, is not particularly inviting. The small wood growth, the whitish soil underneath the mold, the level marshy appearance of much of the muskeg, are liable to excite misgivings, while the latitude disturbs the timorous with fears of short and frosty summers.

As a matter of fact, the southern part of this country has already passed the experimental stage, while even the more remote portions give evidence of proving quite successful. The clay is not clay as we know it in the south, but crumbles readily under the influence of moisture, air and sun, pulverizing into a beautiful seed-bed. The writer picked several of the largest and hardest clods he could find at Liskeard, and brought them south. After being carried in a grip for a week or two they were put outside in a box exposed to weather. A very light shower, not nearly enough to soak them through, softened them so that they crumbled between the fingers like lumps of damp ashes. To anyone accustomed to the clay of the south, the behavior of this Northland material is remarkable, and when mixed with the vegetable mold it makes a beautiful friable productive soil. Splendid crops of farm and garden stuff are produced, the land being especially adapted to peas and clovers, except that the peas sometimes grow too rank, and, consequently, do not fill well. This assures the future agricultural progress of the district, for land that grows legumes has within it a means of perpetual restoration. Gardens worked for twenty years or more show little or no tendency to bake. As a grass and hay country it is superexcellent. E. F. Stephenson, a farmer from York Co., Ont., proprietor of a paper in Liskeard, and owner of a 237-acre farm, of which 40 acres is cleared, tells us he has had alsike and timothy meadows yield as heavily seven or eight years after seeding as at the beginning, even red-clover meadows lasting three or four years.

At a banquet to the pressmen in Liskeard, he stated that Dawson's Golden Chaff wheat had been grown in Liskeard section testing 64 pounds to the bushel for two years in succession; Swede turnips, weighing as high as 15 to 18 pounds apiece; carrots 28 inches long, and great celery. Beautiful, smooth and well-grown potatoes were passed around for inspection. On the local fair