

AGRICULTURAL LEGISLATION.

The present Ontario Government has always taken an active interest in the welfare of the farmer and the stock-raiser, and the province has reason to be thankful that so much has been done for the promotion of its leading industry. The Agricultural College and Experimental Farm are institutions of which any country might reasonably feel proud, while the work of the Agricultural Commission in the past, and that of the Bureau of Industries and Statistics at present, can hardly be too highly estimated. But, at the same time, there is much that remains to be done, and which will be done if those most interested are only prepared to properly represent their case to the Provincial Government.

At this time England is becoming thoroughly awake on the importance of using every means in her power to promote the horse-breeding industry, while here in Canada it appears to be about the last thing thought of. As a class it is questionable if Canadian horses are not absolutely deteriorating instead of advancing in excellence. This comes of hap-hazard breeding to mongrel stallions. These mongrels are usually crosses between native mares and heavy draught horses. A cross of this kind will often produce a good substantial work horse, or even a fairly good brood mare but a cross-bred animal—and especially the result of a cross between widely differing types—should never be used as a sire. Now this is a fact that is or ought to be known to everyone who breeds horses, but it is disregarded by many who know it simply because the services of a fairly good-looking mongrel can be had for a trifle. But these sleek-looking cheap mongrels are not the only stallions on the road that should be castrated. Horses that have disease or unsoundness that is likely to be hereditary should not be employed for stock purposes. Several years ago we saw a grand-looking old chestnut thoroughbred travelling through eastern Ontario, and "insuring" at two dollars per mare. This was no other than imported Emigrant. He had three ringbones, and nine out of ten of his colts had from one to four ringbones. The few sound colts that he left behind him were at that time and in that section of the province considered marvels of style, speed, and endurance, but for all that the country would have been much better without him.

Two things at least should be done to improve the status of horse-breeding in Canada. In the first place, no horse should be allowed to cover mares till a competent veterinary surgeon had pronounced him free from hereditary disease and unsoundness. The objection that would arise to this would be, "Where is the money to come from to pay for these inspections?" And this leads to the second proposition for the advancement of the horse breeding interest.

The second is the licensing of all stallions. Let the license-fee be as large as possible without bearing unduly on the farmer who happens

to raise or buy a colt good enough to be a sire. These fees will go a long way beyond paying for the administration of the license and inspection regulations, but no stallion owner or intelligent horse-breeder will grumble so long as it keeps worthless cripples and mongrels off the road and leaves a clear field for really first-class sires. But nothing could be easier than to return the surplus to the very men who pay it over. It can be returned as prizes to the best stallions in each class. Thus the men who import first-class stallions at considerable expense would soon find the road clear of those worthless brutes whose owners stand them at from \$1 to \$5 per mare, and the owners of good horses would have something like the chance they desired.

If stallion owners would only hold a convention early in the present session and present their views properly, it is more than probable that some step would be taken by the Local Government in the matter.

INFORMATION WANTED.

The Bureau of Statistics has been doing an excellent work, but there appear to be still some fields not covered by it in which its services would greatly assist the farmer. At present there is a great diversity of opinion as to the class of horses which yield the best returns to the breeder in Canada. One man says the heavy draught horse, another says the cross-bred draught, or the mis-named "general purpose horse." Still another says the sprightly roadster or light harness horse, another the big coach horse, and not a few think no horses average better returns than the half-bred hunter or saddle horse. So far but few have tried the production of race horses with the view of making money out of the sale of them, but the day may not be very far distant when the breeding of race horses in Canada may be found a very profitable employment. In the meantime, if we could only be put in possession of statistics on this subject it would not take long to come to some sort of an intelligent conclusion on the question. The Agricultural Commission held some years ago took evidence from various people bearing on this subject, but, as might have been expected, there was a very wide diversity of opinion, each dealer and breeder thinking (as was quite natural) that he himself was on precisely the right track.

Of course there would be some difficulty in collecting information of this kind, but as dealers and breeders came to understand the substantial good that was to be effected by the collection of reliable statistics they would, no doubt, be induced to co-operate heartily with the energetic secretary of the Bureau of Statistics. The classes and average prices of horses exported would be easily obtainable, but the great difficulty would be found in securing figures that could be relied on from the local horse markets of the Province.

It would certainly be worth a little trouble and expense to be able to show the Ontario

farmer at the end of each year how many thoroughbreds, trotters, roadsters, coach horses, hunters, saddle horses, agricultural horses, and heavy draught horses were sold out of Ontario during the year, and at least an approximation to the average prices brought by each class. It would also be useful, and interesting, and instructive, to know how many colts were foaled each year in each of these classes. It would also be desirable information to the farmer if some one could tell him how many stallions, in each of the specified classes, were employed in the Province and what patronage they obtained. Much of this information would be readily obtainable, and it is to be hoped that the suggestion we have thus thrown out will be taken into consideration.

MR. GILBEY'S SALE OF SHIRE HORSES.

English correspondence of THE CANADIAN BREEDER.

LONDON, Jan. 2d.

The lovers of the Shire horse will have, on the 5th of February, perhaps the finest opportunity which has ever occurred for purchasing some of the best bred animals of this most useful and fashionable breed.

I allude to the sale of twenty-eight mares and fillies and twelve stallions and colts which Mr. Walter Gilbey, the ex-president of the Shire Horse Society, has decided to sell by auction, owing to his stud increasing so rapidly and so completely outgrowing the accommodation at the Elsenham Hall Paddocks. This cannot in any way be called a draft sale, as all the young prize-winning stock (with the exception of one young stallion which is reserved for stud purposes) will be unreservedly offered for sale.

For proof of the wonderful quality and breeding of these splendid specimens of the Shire horse, it is only necessary to point to the marvellous success achieved by them in the various show yards during the last year, when they won three champion prizes, four specials, twenty-seven first and thirteen second prizes, besides numbers of high commendations.

Amongst the stallions we find that grand horse Gay Spark (3,095), winner of two champion prizes, and which at the 1884 London show was only beaten by the champion stallion Enterprise of Cannock (2,772), which was sold for 1,000 guineas or 5,250 dollars. Then there is Toddington Don, one of the Gold Medal Group at the Amsterdam International Agricultural Exhibition, and also Crowland Chief, the first prize winner at the Shewsbury Royal, the Bath and West of England, and the Royal Counties Shows.

The mares and fillies include some of the best and most successful prize-winning animals in England. Cosy won the first prize two successive years at the London Shire Horse Show, added to which Cosy is doubtless in foal to Spark (2,497), the most celebrated Shire horse stallion of the day. Spark was the sensational horse of the 1881 London Show, where he was bought by Mr. Gilbey for 800 guineas, after winning the champion prize, which he again