

Manitoba Notes.

BY "BUCKBOARD."

INVESTING MONEY THOUGHTLESSLY—
OBSERVATIONS.

That thousands of dollars are yearly foolishly invested by our farmers becomes more evident each year. There are always men concocting plans by which to draw the farmer's attention to some snap, knowing that if a good crop has been harvested the unwary farmer is easily gulled. Cases have continually come before us of farmers being trapped; but, no doubt, one of the most successful was a concern, an agent of which went the rounds, first issuing certificates and taking the names of those farmers who were willing to invest. They were told that upon payment of \$15 they could obtain books, merchandise, etc., from some wholesale house in Toronto, and thus would "easily save forty per cent.," or "sometimes" more. On payment of the \$15 they would receive a showy article worth about \$2.50, and of little practical value to farmers.

I have seen one of their catalogues, and among other articles I notice a double set of harness, giving retail price at \$28; price to members, \$25. In this article a saving of twelve per cent. is only made, which any farmer can save in our own province by paying cash. This \$25 will buy a good double set of harness in any of our towns. Then a single set is illustrated, showing retail price \$16; price to members, \$13.50,—a good set of which can be bought in Winnipeg for \$12 or \$13. Thus a saving of about sixteen per cent. is supposed to be made. I notice that a big percentage is "knocked off" on literature, but anyone sending to Toronto or Montreal can, no doubt, procure a discount for cash, and can do so in Winnipeg. Farmers can buy all the books they want here at a very little more than in the east. The forty per cent. which these agents told the farmers could "easily be saved" on "some" articles, does not show up in their catalogue, with the exception of on pianos, an article they were well aware would seldom be inquired for. A cabinet piano is quoted at \$425; price to members, \$275. Now, these people must certainly think our farmers a green lot, if they expect to make them believe that a gain of \$150 can be made on a \$425 article. A first-class piano can be bought in Winnipeg, or any other Canadian city, for \$300, and even as low as \$200, and some makes less. But it is such articles as jewellery, fire-arms, silverware and cutlery stock, on which a good profit is made, that they show in their catalogues.

One of these men, representing this concern, came the round last year peddling a lot of shoddy material, and in some cases induced farmers to invest as much as \$30. And now they have let this fellow swindle them again, for it is nothing less.

In conclusion, I would say to the farmers, "Don't buy a pig in a poke". It is easy to get a few hundred catalogues printed and make a fine display on paper! But, farmers, patronize your own store, the keeper of which carries you over a bad crop, or sometimes more than that. Has not the man that gives you your food and clothing on time the first right to your ready cash? Well, then, tell these agents so when they come around. Give them a wide berth, especially if they talk plausibly about giving something for nothing.

The Pilot Mound Sentinel very concisely and pointedly sums up the matter to which I have been referring in the following sentence: "The farmer pays a sum of money for the privilege of sending more money to somebody unknown, who probably has no existence, and this at the request of a man with whom the farmer has not the slightest acquaintance, and whom he would trust no other way."

THE SLAUGHTER OF PRAIRIE CHICKENS.

Manitoba farmers have of late made many serious complaints of the manner in which prairie chickens have been slaughtered the past season. It appears that men from different towns in the province have made a practice of seeing "how many they could kill". These individuals call themselves "sportsmen", but they are wrongly named. They should be called "wholesale slaughterers". The season not

being opened till the 15th of September, does not allow the farmer to enjoy one or two days' sport, as they are then too busy harvesting, which they could not leave to go hunting.

This date might be easily altered to the 1st of September, the chickens then being quite ready for the gun. Many of the farmers have turned a good number of these "sportsmen" off their land, forbidding them to fire a shot on their property. And I would advise this step to be followed more generally, because if something is not done to stop this butchering of game we shall soon be without prairie chickens or anything else.

I heard of three "sports" in southern Manitoba, who, up to the 29th September, killed over three hundred chickens, partridge, etc. It is such cases as this that should not be allowed. Strange to remark, two out of the three were "men of the law", and this is the way they set an example! Surely some law can be made prohibiting this wholesale butchery.

STATUTE LABOR VS. TREE PLANTING AS A MEANS OF DOING ROAD WORK.

That the present system of doing road work is nothing more or less than a losing transaction to municipalities becomes plainer every year. Anyone going through the country when the statute labor is being "put in", and seeing the manner in which the work is done, would at once come to the conclusion that those engaged in "working for the Queen" had just met to enjoy a smoke and to have a good time. I beg to make the following suggestions: Let every municipality have its taxes paid in cash, and let the road work out in contracts. A large majority of the farmers would prefer this, and it would cause competition; and where the municipalities get one dollar's worth of work done now, they would get five dollars' worth done. Then another way of improving the value of land and the country is this: Let the farmers and other owners of land plow up, say one rod wide, the land on each side of the roads in every township, backset it the next season, and sow broadcast seed of the maple or cotton tree. The latter, perhaps, would be the best, as it grows into a good sized tree, and will shoot up from thirty to fifty feet high.

What a different opinion those coming here from eastern countries would have of our province, and then see the hundreds of benefits we ourselves would reap. There would be little or no danger of lives being lost in the winter blizzards, as once on the road they could not easily get off without knowing it. Then, see the protection it would be against the hot winds which burn up thousands of bushels of grain; and we all are aware that those parts of our province that are wooded get more rain than we do on the bare prairie, not to mention numerous other good points it would make. Nothing will improve the appearance of our fair province more, and besides add countless value to the land. Let this system be tested next year by municipalities, and see if it would not give better satisfaction than at present, but let them be cautious to have a "roadmaster" whom they have confidence in—some uninterested person who will see that the government get one hundred cents on the dollar's worth of work, and not as we are at present, men who "don't like to boss", or are "afraid".

Brandon Poultrymen.

The adjourned annual meeting of the Brandon branch of the Manitoba Poultry Association was held at the Royal Hotel, Brandon, Oct. 11th, 1892, when the following officers were elected:—R. M. Mathewson, President; J. C. Harrison, Vice-President; Geo. Ashe, Sec.-Treas.; W. F. Wilson, Thos. Chambers, W. Anderson, E. H. White, W. J. Currie and Jas. Kennedy, Directors. Judging by the conversation of the members present, Brandon may be expected to make a very creditable exhibit both in quality and number of birds at the proposed winter show in Winnipeg.

Practical Points in Stall Feeding a Steer.

BY A MANITOBA FEEDER.

In these days of low prices for all farm products, we must pay greater attention to the marketing of these products, endeavoring to place them on the market in the most profitable form, and at the same time reducing the cost of production as much as possible.

Now, instead of hauling our low grade wheat and barley to market and selling it for half a cent a pound or less, burning our straw piles and leaving ourselves with little or no employment for three or four months of winter, can we not make that wheat and that straw pile walk to market on its own legs, bringing us a good profit and leaving on the farm just what we need to keep up the fertility of our soil, besides furnishing us pleasant and profitable employment during the long winter?

I think we can, by breeding and feeding first-class steers—now, mark you, they must be first-class—no use wasting time and feed on scrubs. They must be good grades, sired by pure-bred bulls of some of the beef breeds; I would prefer roan Shorthorns; they must have been properly fed during their calfhood and through their first winter. Now, we will suppose we have a bunch of such steers about one year and a-half old; I should tie them up in pairs in comfortable stables, and begin to feed a little chop as the nights get frosty, letting them run during the day, so that they will not loose a pound of grass beef, as it is cheaper to keep that on than to replace it. As soon as winter sets in, tie them up and get them on full rations as soon as possible.

Feed twice a day chop wheat or barley, or both (adding say one-third or one-half chop oats, or even whole oats, for awhile at first), increasing the quantity as they will stand it, which can be judged by their feed boxes and by their manure. Give what hay or chaff or green cut straw they will eat three times a day. They should have at least one feed of turnips a day. Ensilage is, I think, out of question in this country as yet; but turnips can be raised with very little expense, and will be of the greatest service in keeping the steers in right condition, and in enabling them to properly assimilate the dry chop and straw or hay. I would let them out to water once a day, which I consider often enough. Don't forget the salt, which they should have every day. Now feed and water at regular hours; supply a good bed, and keep them clean, comfortable and quiet, and next Easter you will have a bunch of two-year-olds that should weigh 1,200 lbs., and be worth \$45 or \$50 apiece, with which, I think, you will feel well repaid for your labor and feed, besides having a pile of first-class manure left behind.

You should have scales to weigh both steers and feed, and then there would be no guess work, and you could see from time to time just what you were doing.

[NOTE.—Our correspondent (who, by the way has had a good many years' experience in Manitoba), makes a number of excellent points in his letter. Nothing could be more important than preventing the loss of flesh which the steers have gained so cheaply on grass. Proper feeding during calfhood, too, is an essential. The first year is the most important year in the animal's life, and the first six months of that the more important. What is lost at that period can never be regained. Nor does this imply that any "forcing" or "hot-house" system need be pursued. The safe path to tread is a golden mean between starvation and pampering. Our correspondent as a natural adjunct in his work as a feeder directs attention to the need for comfortable housing in winter, the necessity for which experienced men well know; but let no one, therefore, runaway with the impression that something elaborate or expensive is necessarily implied. Some grand stall-fed steers have come out of sod stables, and others cheaply constructed until the owners could afford something more permanent.—EDITOR.]