secretary; Rutillus Alden, Winthrop, treasurer; W. K. Hamlin, S. Waterford, trustee. Mr. Alden was also chosen on the staff of the Experiment Station council.

A committee was chosen to take Dr. Woods' suggestions relative to breeding under advisement. F. S. Adams, J. D. McEdward and R. W. Redman were appointed a committee to push vigorously the revision of the tariff on cream, with a view to making it consistent with that on dairy butter. Other moves had to do with broadening the society's scope of usefulness.

The exhibit of butter was a fine one, and was placed on tables where it could be seen and tested after the awards were made. Orin Bent, of Boston, was the expert judge on both cheese and butter. The highest scores were, 96½ on butter, and 98 on cheese. Prof. Weld judged the milk and cream; 87 dairymen submitted samples, and the 348 bottles made the largest collection of these commodities this country has ever seen.

Nearly 500 ears of corn were shown, the flint variety predominating. Dr. G. M. Twitchell had best full acre, the weight in ears being 6,325 pounds.

M. B. AIKEN.

Maine.

Ice Houses.

No doubt many farmers who would be very glad to have a store of ice for summer use, and who would not begrudge the labor or slight expense involved, are deterred from making a beginning by an idea that it is a very difficult matter to keep ice; that to do so requires special knowledge and skill. That is a great mistake. The process is exceedingly simple. Good results are dependent upon three very easily understood principles.

The first is drainage. The ground underneath the ice, if not naturally dry, should be made so by drainage. In addition, it is well to raise it a few inches by a layer of cinders, stones, or other porous material through which the water may soak freely.

The second principle is ventilation. Not of the bottom or sides of the ice-block—that would be ruinous—but of the air-space above. Without ventilation, the enclosed air under the roof becomes very warm, as everyone knows; and there is another condition which is relieved by ventilation, which works more damage than does heat, and that is dampness. No one can dry ice, of course, by ventilation, but the sawdust covering should be kept as dry as possible. The drier it is, the better a non-conductor is it.

The third and main principle is insulation. To secure this, there is nothing better than sawdust. A foot thickness of it on bottom, top and four sides is sufficient. The fresher and drier it is, the better. If sawdust cannot be procured, cut straw or hay will answer very well. There needs to be, however, a double thickness of it to give as good results as sawdust. Two feet on all sides, is the rule.

A fine, costly building is not necessary. Any kind of a structure in which are observed the three above-mentioned principles will serve the purpose; that is, it will keep ice.

J. A. Ruddick, Dominion Dairy Commissioner, than whom there is no better authority anywhere, recommends a building with sills—set on short posts—plates, and 2 x 6 inch studding between, the inside boarding to be of rough inch lumber, the outside of lumber matched and dressed. This makes a satisfactory and very presentable building. If it is thought desirable to save expense, and appearance is not much considered, the outside boarding may, with scarcely any loss of efficiency, be dispensed with.

A description of an ice-house which was erected by a member of our staff over twenty years ago, and which seems good for as much longer, may be useful. The site is in an old orchard, and, by the way, a shady situation is desirable. The inside measurement is ten feet square, and the height from ground to plate the same. Instead of studding, sills, and short posts for the frame, four cedar posts about thirteen feet long were set up in line on each side, being made firm at the lower end by being set, like fence posts, about three feet into the ground. Two-by-six-inch plates were fitted and nailed on top of these posts, the ends being crossed and bolted strongly together at the corners. A single lining of unplaned inch boards was put on inside the posts. For ventilation's sake, on the east, west and north sides, a space of two or three inches was left between the top of the boarding and the plates. A gable roof, with simple ventilator in center of the ridge, was placed over all. An ordinary door on hinges, with short flight of steps leading up to it, was put on the outside, between the two central posts on south side. Inside the door and the posts, short boards, like bin-boards, hold back the sawdust, and can be taken out as the pile of ice lowers.

As has been indicated, this ice-house has served its purpose very well, and any such building in which the frame appears outside the boarding, if of somewhat rustic appearance, can be made to look quite respectable if the posts are carefully chosen

For a combined ice-house and milk-stand for large dairy-patrons' farms, our readers are referred to a description of an excellent structure of that kind on page 1923 of the Christmas Number of "The Farmer's Advocate." Almost any factory patron could afford a smaller and plainer structure built on the same principle.

Creameries Discard the Oil Test.

Four more Western Ontario creameries will change from the oil test to the Babcock test next season. A meeting of the officers and directors of the Alsfeldt, Saugeen Valley, Ayton and Egremont creameries was held at Ayton, on November 4th, when it was decided to take up this question at the annual meeting of these creameries. The meetings were held on Dec. 14th, 15th, 16th and 17th, respectively, at which time the patrons voted in favor of the change. The following agreement was drawn up and signed by the presidents of the respective creameries:

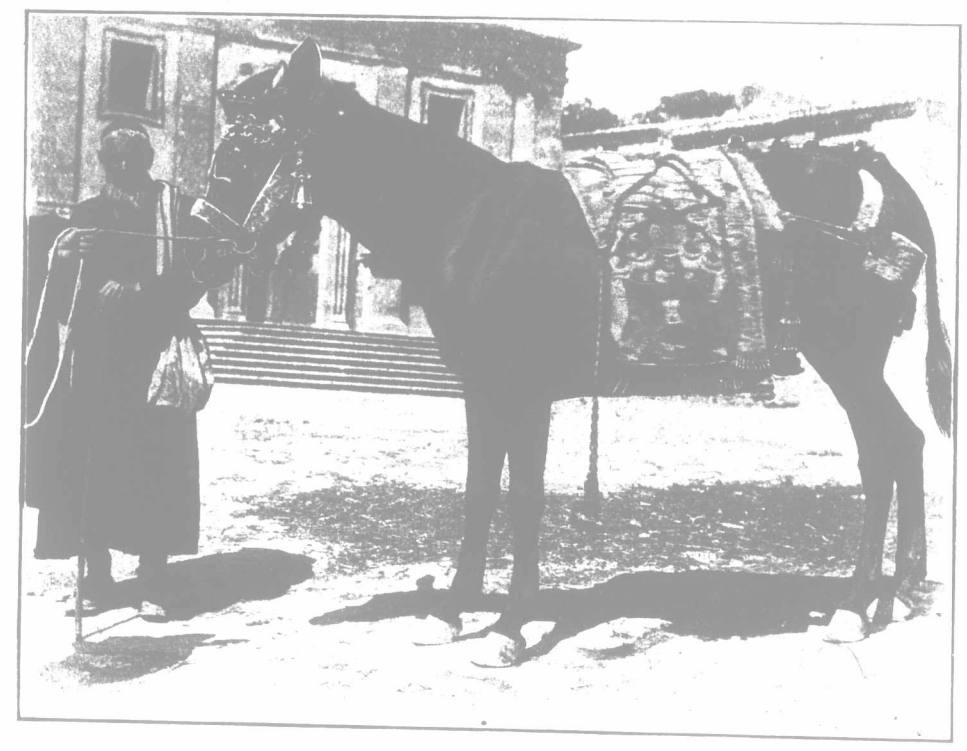
"We, the officers, directors and patrons of the Alsfeldt, Saugeen Valley, Ayton and Egremont creameries, acting upon resolutions passed at our meetings, held on the 14th, 15th, 16th and 17th days of December, 1909, respectively, do hereby jointly agree to adopt the Babcock test as a basis of testing our patrons' cream, beginning with the opening of the season of 1910. We solemnly pledge our business honor and integrity to carry out the above agreement."

A Family of Contadini.

Every good wish for continued prosperity of "The Farmer's Advocate; long may it continue to enjoy the confidence and gratitude of the farmers of Canada, whose advocate and helper it truly is. With the best wishes for a happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year to the entire staff of workers.

D. McEACHRAN.

Chateauguay Co., Que.



Italian Mule.

The Dairy Conventions.

Dairy conventions are the order of the day in Ontario this week and next. The Eastern Dairymen's Convention, at Belleville, will be on before this issue reaches its readers. The Western Ontario dairymen meet in St. Thomas on Wednesday and Thursday, January 12th and 13th. The patrons' session will be Wednesday afternoon. One feature of the convention programme will be, as usual, announcement of the results of the dairy-herd competition, for which, by the way, there have been ten applicants, not counting one who applied too late. Of the ten, only four are entered in the cheese-factory patrons' section, but there are an unprecedented number (six) in the creamery section. For the winter dairy exhibition, to be held in connection with the convention, there has been a very large entry, the number a week ago being already considerably in excess of the total last year. Butter shows an especially good increase, particularly the October makes, which are already more than double the usual number.

GARDEN & ORCHARD.

Fruit-growing in Sicily.

A special correspondent of "The Farmer's Advocate," Chas. S. Williams, visited the Island of Sicily, off the south-west of Italy, in the Mediterranean, last season, before the tremendous earthquake that devastated the City of Messina, the remains of which were recently shaken by a seismic shock. Mr. Williams pictures it as a fertile and beautiful land, bedecked with flowers and clustered with the richest of fruits. Small wonder that the people love their home, despite the terrors of earthquake and volcano. We append his letter, illustrated from several original photographs:

Editor "The Farmer's Advocate":

The Canadian farmer, whether his were rolling stretches of prairie in the middle section, or the fertile valleys of the Eastern Provinces, to be tilled with our modern implements and labor-saving devices, would, I am certain, look askance at farming in Sicily. Yet, allowing for the lava-covered mountains, upheaved rocks older than history, and the scorching summer sun, this fascinating island exported seven billions of lemons last year, and produced oranges, grapes, mandarins, almonds, figs, olives, etc., in equally surprising quantities. For Sicily is not dependent on the tourist or the members of the family who have emigrated to America. Her three millions of people may be called truly agricultural. They are poor, but they work hard. Water, that prime essential, is to be had, but irrigation is only for the richer farmers, so much must be carted, by hand or by donkey, sometimes half a dozen miles from the village fountain, the natural center of native life in every Sicilian township; for, while grapes grow without water during the long summer drouths, lemons do not. So the public fountain becomes the center of news, and is to the Sicilian town what the club or "sewing circle" is with us. The lava Ætna has thrown so lavishly over Eastern Sicily, makes retaining walls for miles of terraces covered with vineyards, and often is the peasant-farmer's house, as well as—what he has left—his fertilizer. For quite wonderful powers rest in this brown pumice-stone-looking formation, which for two thousand years has, at intervals, poured out from the snow-covered peak of Mt. Ætna, which dominates the whole island.

In the miles of vineyards which early October days see laden with the ripe fruit, is an unending interest. The vines are cut down to within three or four feet of the ground, that all the strength may go to the fruit. A dozen huge bunches of grapes to a vine, many of the bunches having each an hundred grapes, of a color unknown out-