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FARMER'S ADVOCATE

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EDITORIAL

Noting Actual Returns

For weeks past the intelligent farmer has been taking notes regarding crops and other features on his farm and in the neighborhood. These notes will be used to good account in an attempt to increase the returns per acre in 1910. A comparison of crops grown side by side on his own farm, or of similar crops grown in a neighbor's field, is of inestimable value in assisting the progressive agriculturist in a judicious selection of varieties or strains for seeding purposes.

The use of seed of higher quality and the general practice of thick seeding have been brought into prominence in many districts. The man who is skeptical on these points is consulting his own best interests if he investigates the returns from high grade seed and thick sowing and makes careful comparisons with ordinary seed sown at the usual rate per acre. All through the growing season no doubt he has noticed the general condition of crops. But standing grain frequently is deceptive as to outturn when run through the thresher. Perhaps a field of oats gave promise of a yield of eighty-five or ninety bushels per acre, but actual measurement gave less than sixty bushels. On the other hand it is possible that an oat crop may have been greatly underestimated. The only safe guide, then, is a careful scrutiny of the growing crops, and just as careful study of the yield, as shown when the crop is threshed. It is only on such evidence that a man is safe in paying high prices for what is claimed to be superior seed and then putting this in the soil in increased quantities. Increased yields and a few days less occupied in ripening are what please the farmers of prairie Canada. If such are borne out by actual results the demand for the higher quality of seed will continue to increase.

Fall Care of Grass Seeding

In many parts of Western Canada the impression still prevails that it is impossible to grow clover on the prairies. Some also find difficulty in securing a satisfactory stand of the cultivated grasses. Granting that there are localities in the West in which the production of clovers and grasses is at least uncertain it must be admitted that in most cases these crops have a poor chance.

In the first place the fact that the seeds are small demands that a well pulverized seedbed should be provided. Further, in order to provide against being crowded out, it is necessary to seed down with some crop that does not grow so rapidly and so luxuriantly as to smother the young clover and grass plants.

But the exercise of care in the preparation of seed-bed and of judgment in selection of nurse crop may be followed by utter neglect of what otherwise would have produced a creditable crop of hay. This neglect most commonly takes the form of close pasturing from the time the harvest is removed until winter sets in. The custom of past decades and the lack of fences results in cattle and other stock having free range, and as a consequence the tender young growth from fresh seeding down is completely stripped. It is forgotten that a plant, like an animal, must be given special protection while it is young. Live stock are allowed to pasture off the clover and grasses that are showing up well and to trample down smaller and weaker plants that came on later.

In order to get the best results from areas seeded down all stock should be kept off after harvest unless the growth is very luxuriant. In this way nature is permitted to provide the winter protection she wishes to furnish.

Merging for Manufacture

A short time ago it was announced that leading cement companies in Canada had decided to merge into one monster company. Later came the report that cement companies not in the ring first formed had united forces. Then comes the rumor that the cast iron and porcelain enamel manufacturers in Canada have amalgamated their factories.

The ultimate result of such amalgamations, as far as cost of the manufactured article to the common people is concerned, is only problematical. No doubt it will be possible to manufacture the goods at less cost than formerly. Fewer office hands and fewer highly paid managers can at least be anticipated. Besides there should be less expense connected with finding a market for the products. However, in a protective country such as Canada, the aggregation of capital, aiming at monopolistic control, is attended with great opportunities for mischief and extortion.

Considering the cement situation it is found that the import duty on cement coming into

Canada is 8 cents per cwt. under the preferential tariff, and 12½ cents under the maximum schedule applying to imports from the United States, the same rate of duty applying to the containing sacks or packages. As a barrel of Portland cement weighs some 350 pounds, this figures out to a duty of 28 cents a barrel under the minimum or preferential rate, and 43½ cents on imports from the American mills. Assuming or anticipating complete control of the Canadian output, there would be nothing to hinder the Canadian combine from adding at least 28 cents to the free-trade price on every barrel of cement produced in their mills. Even prior to the securing of complete control, it might operate quite effectively to restrict output, and thus raise prices. As cement is a commodity of almost universal use in country as well as in town, being employed in vast and growing quantities, the cement merger is a matter of vital concern to every citizen, and, therefore, to our statesmen. The new company, as well as the proposed steel merger, and every other large combination of capital, should be carefully watched, and any possible disposition to take advantage of the consumer met with prompt and radical reduction of import duty, or bounty, as in the case of steel. Perhaps the formation of two monster companies will furnish such competition as will ensure normal and reasonable prices.

Answering Questions

Dozens of questions of divers nature are received by THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE every month. Most of them are answered promptly. A few are unavoidably held over for some time, because it is considered better to perpetrate a delay than a mistake. Accuracy in every particular is our prime aim.

But some questions reach the editorial department that are not answered. This is not due to a lack of interest in our inquiring friends, but simply because the enquirer has not shown sufficient interest to give his or her name and address in full. Most of these queries demand great outlay of time and sometimes it costs considerable cash to have an authoritative reply furnished. If we feel satisfied that the enquirer is a bona-fide subscriber of THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE, or a member of the family of a regular subscriber, no pains is spared in furnishing a reliable answer as promptly as possible. It should not be overlooked, however, that it is impossible always to insert the reply in the first issue after the receipt of the query. Time is required to prepare the answer, have it set in type, and have the paper bound and mailed to its destination. Furthermore, lack of space sometimes results in matter being crowded out from one issue to another.

With this warning it is hoped that fewer queries will be sent in without names or post-