



The chestnut Hackney mare Royal Millie, champion Canadian Horse Show, Toronto, 1905, but disqualified for being imported, as only Canadian-bred could compete. Owned by C. D. Wadley, Fort Erie, Ont.

The Western Horse Market

Having just returned from a trip in Western Canada and being an admirer of a good horse, I have brought myself in touch with the situation as much as possible, and it seems quite evident, judging from the demand in the West, that the horse business is good for a long time to come.

It is an established fact in Ontario now, and has been for some years, that there is almost an unlimited market in the old country for the right kind of heavy horses. Of late, however, we are finding ourselves confronted by two other markets, one of which we never expected to have and the other which many thought would have been played out long ago. We have looked on such states as Indiana and Illinois and many others, not necessary to mention, with their large breeding establishments, as being able to produce plenty of horse-flesh, and because of this that the time would never come when our neighbors across the line would be buying from us. But whatever they have not had the right foundation or have not been using the right kind of a heavy horse is a question, nevertheless, the fact remains that a great many of the best heavy horses produced in Western Ontario have found a market in the States during the past year.

OUR BEST MARKET

But to say nothing about this demand, and leaving out our market in the Old Country, what about the market we have in Western Canada? Some will say, no doubt, that the Western Canadian market does not demand a first-class heavy horse, but that any old "heavy" animal would do. True, they have taken such a horse in the past, but how long will they continue to do so. It has been quite a number of late years for a number of years around among the farmers as to buy and buy the old, worn-out horses that would not breed, together with some better ones, and ship them west. In some cases it was a paying proposition and in some others it was not. Of course it was in one way a good thing for the Ontario farmer,

But what is the situation to-day? I have been in the West the past few years and have noticed that, in a town of say 600 of a population, where, three years ago, there would be 12 carloads of horses sold with from 16 to 20 in a car, this last spring at the same point there would be just as many cars sold but with this difference, that the quality of the horses was a great deal better, and they have got to be so. At any rate, there are a great many more good ones sold to-day than formerly. The dealer will tell you to-day that the horse that sells the best and brings the most money is the 1500 or 1600-pound draft horse, with clean, flat bone, lots of quality, or the kind of horse that is so very scarce in Ontario at the present time.

GOOD FOR MANY YEARS

But, you say, will not this market be soon supplied? Anyone who talks this way has no idea of the average life of an Ontario horse after he goes into that country and also has a very faint idea of the extent of our Canadian heritage and the way it is filling up. A person traveling through the country in the spring of the year and having to look for a bed at a hotel, will soon realize this fact. Then again, others will say Western farmers will soon breed all the horses they want themselves. Well, just take into consideration the fact that a very large percentage of the mares that are in that country at the present time are mares that would not breed in Ontario, and in only an odd case will they breed there. No doubt there are many men now living in Western Canada who are importing good breeding stock and there are large breeding establishments further west in Alberta, but when a man sees the prospects for railroad construction and how this will be going on for years to come, and as it is a common thing to have 1000 teams on one short piece of construction work, and connecting these facts with what I have before mentioned, the average life of the horse there, the number of people who are going in there and the large percentage of the mares

that are there that will not breed, saying nothing about any other market, it is proof enough that the horse breeding business looks bright for the Ontario farmer.

WHAT THE MARKET DEMANDS

Now that we have such a market, what are our prospects for meeting the demand? The breeding of horses is a business by itself and to insure success needs to have the same foundation as any other business, and it becomes necessary to manage it in the same way as any other manufacturing establishment or any other business. What is our first business principle? First, knowing what the market demands and producing that very article. Second, producing as economically as possible. To do this we must have the proper kind of raw material to begin with. In the horse business we know what a finished product is, what the market demands, —the high quality draft horse.

Now what about our raw material to produce this, our breeding stock? Is it necessary to take breeds into consideration? I imagine it is; it is an established principle that has made rapid development during the past few years has been one backed up by men who were not afraid to speak their mind, and if a certain breed of animals were not the desirable raw material to produce the ideal finished product they would say so. Take, for instance, the bacon industry. It has had great development and certain breeds of hogs have been held up as the desirable breeds and others not desirable have been put down, until all breeds of swine in Canada to-day are drifting to the bacon type. It is just the same in the horse business. The breed has got to be considered. Can we produce the ideal heavy horse best with the Clyde, the Shire or even the Percheron? Then again, in order to handle the business profitably, we can not afford to waste time breeding to grade stallions, that will not be frequent, unsound mares, mares with bad vices, etc.

As it appears to me there is no better proposition to-day connected with the Ontario farm than the selection of good mares, the breeding of all the good young ones and not the old unsound ones to good registered stallions.

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Improvement in Horse Breeding

For several years draft horse breeding has been a profitable business and is likely to continue so for several years to come. There are indications, however, that farmers are not getting half the profit out of it as they might if the business were conducted in a more systematic way.

The following from Wallace's Farmer outlines very clearly some of the defects in a great deal of the horse breeding to-day. The horse companies referred to correspond to the stallion syndicate in this country and whose methods of doing business might be greatly modified to the advantage of the farmer. The premium plan, as it is worked out in Scotland, would work out to better advantage to all concerned. A great deal of what Wallace's Farmer says will apply to Canada.

A good many horse companies make very unwise selections of stallions. They wait until the agent of some breeder drops in and organizes a company and purchases the number of horse at an advance in price that will cover the expense of organization