

What of the Horse Market?

The Outlook for the Importer and Breeder Discussed by Breeders who have Long been in Close Touch with the Business.

"HORSES are lower in price than they were a few years ago," said Mr. John Gardhouse, of Highfield, while speaking at the Ottawa Winter Fair, "and I am inclined to think that it is just as well that they are, because horses are going to be more needed than ever this coming year owing to the larger acreage likely to be put under cultivation, especially in the western provinces. Power tractors seem to be less popular than formerly in the west. This year the cry on all sides is for increased production. This means that more horse-power will be required to cultivate the land.

"From 1867 to 1877 horses were low in price. In 1878 the market began to improve and continued to do so until 1890 or 1891. During the nineties, prices dropped until the low point was reached about 1900. From 1900 prices advanced once more until in 1910 and 1911 they reached their highest point. Since then prices have decreased until now heavy draft horses that sold in 1910 and 1911 for from \$250 to \$300 can be bought to-day for from \$180 to \$250. The high prices paid during the eighties were caused by good trade conditions with the United States. It was a bad day for many of our farmers when they sold their best mares that should have been kept to breed from.

"The main factor in the high prices paid from 1900 to 1910 was the development of western Canada. While western farmers still require many of our Ontario horses, the demand out there is still somewhat quiet. It will probably be some time, if ever, before horses get back to the high prices that prevailed a few years ago.

"Where there are permanent good roads in our cities, the motor has become a rival to the horse, including the heavy horse. The effect of motor traffic has been to keep down the price of horses.

Effect of the War

"The war has not raised the price of horses as much as we would have supposed. It has made a demand for a certain class of horse that can be purchased at a fair price. It is a class of horse that this country can best spare. The United States has sold many of this class of horse to both Great Britain and France. This should help the price of the ordinary work horse in Canada, as hitherto many horses of this class have entered western Canada from across the border.

"Looking at the past as well as at existing conditions we must decide what we will do. My advice is to keep right on breeding and that we should aim to breed the best. The man who breeds the best is sure to win in the end.

"The draught horses of Belgium and France will be almost annihilated during the war. The farmer who is raising a few good draught colts of the right kind now should find a market for them before long that will be both attractive and profitable. After the war is over, both Belgium and France may look to the North American continent for a supply of good heavy horses for their foundation stock. While it is possible that these countries will prefer to go to the United States, where it will be easier for them to obtain stock of the breeds they like, I am inclined to believe that we in Canada who have the right kind of horse will find a market for them in these countries also. The shortage that will be created in the United States by the sale of these animals will be certain to prove beneficial to us.

Breeding Army Horses

"Much is being said at present about breeding a horse that is suitable for army purposes. I

am inclined to think that the average farmer is not in a position to raise such a horse unless he is given assurance that he will be able to sell it at a fixed price when it is about two years of age. Horses of that character are not suitable for farm work. For that reason the average farmer is unable to carry them along profitably to an age when they are marketable.

"Breed the best. Spare all the good, well-bred mares, and breed them to the best sires obtainable. Aim to get away from the misfits of which we have far too many to-day. There never was a time when there was a call for more careful breeding and feeding on the part of farmers than the present."

Expert Opinion on the Horse Market

By the Directors of the Clydesdale Association

MANY are asking as to the future of the horse industry. While not claiming any superior knowledge on this subject, after a careful consideration of all the conditions having any bearing upon the future of the industry, we would say that the outlook is most promising. There



A Good Type Where Heavy Implements Are Used.

The type of breeding mares that should be conserved above all others are the heavy draft kind that meet work horses of the stamp here illustrated. This type is in greatest demand for city drag and construction purposes and is becoming more and more popular on the farms of Canada for hauling heavy implements—the double cut-away disk, for instance.

are those who see in the cessation of railway building on a large scale and other big undertakings, such a falling off in the demand for draught horses as will seriously affect the market for some years to come. Probably that would be the case were this the one big source of demand. Just at present the lumbering industry is at a standstill, but this condition is not likely to be long maintained. As soon as the war is over, and possibly before it is over, there will be a revival in lumbering operations which will afford a big outlet for horses.

Then there is the demand for city trade and farm work. Both these sources of demand have been on the quiet side during the year. For some time the eastern farmer had a good market for his horses in the west. He cannot, however, hope to have that market always at his disposal. The western breeder is annually increasing the supply of horses available for farm work in the west, and while the special efforts in the line of increased crop production may cause a bigger demand for horses this spring than usual, the eastern farmer must more and more adjust himself to this condition—that the west will sooner or later be in a position to take care of the western farmer on the score of horse supply.

This is a situation that should not be viewed by the eastern breeder with regret. It is a credit to the men of the west that they have had the enterprise and the courage to take horse breeding on the extensive scale which they have. They have been the best customers of the eastern breeder and farmer for many years, and will continue to be customers, but to a more limited extent as the years go by.

So much for the local situation. The influence of the war upon horse breeding generally is deserving of careful consideration. One has only to recall the great waste of horse flesh in the countries in the war zone, and the rapid destruction of horses in the war itself, to be convinced that the world's supply of horses is being reduced at a very rapid rate. The average life of a horse in the battlefield is said to be only 12 days. The chief demand is for remounts, and thousands have already been taken from this continent for this purpose. It is reasonable to suppose that when the supply of the lighter types is exhausted, the heavier kinds will be drawn upon. At any rate, with the withdrawal of horses for remounts will come a demand for the heavier kinds to fill their places. It looks, indeed, if hostilities are long continued, that horses of all kinds will be drawn upon to supply the waste of war. This will have its effect on the market, not only for the lighter types but for the heavy draughts also.

When the war is over and peace is again restored, there will come a demand for breeding stock in the horse line such as this country has never before witnessed. And this demand will not be confined to types suitable to breed remounts. The war has put a stop to horse exporting from France. We understand that the French Government has already issued an order prohibiting the exportation of breeding females until 1920. There is not likely to be any exportation of males from that country either. In Belgium export because there are no

portations have ceased horses to export.

In Great Britain the horse supply is being rapidly reduced for war purposes, and our information is that many draught horses are being taken. In any case prices have advanced and the importer will have to pay more than he did a year or two ago. The indications point to much higher prices still, which will undoubtedly have an effect upon importations of Clydesdales for some time, all of which will add to the value of the Canadian-bred animal; in fact, it is claimed by some who have made a close study of the situation that breeders in Scotland may be looking to Canada to supply them with breeding stock in the not distant future.

The farmer has been somewhat demoralized and pauperized in the past 25 years by the work of officialdom for him. I might cite as an instance the case of Perth county, where there are no farmers' organizations, and they are waiting for a district representative to do their organizing for them. Let us follow the example of the Western farmers who have led us in organizing independent farmers' organizations.—W. C. Good, Brant Co., Ont.