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Improving the Corn Crop

ONE of the far-reaching movements in agriculture in these modern times is that which has to do with the improvement of the corn crop. It would seem at the present time as if all the experiment stations in the United States and especially in the west were vying with each other in their efforts to do something to improve the quality of this important cereal. Bulletin after bulletin has been issued, and in the agricultural press no other topic is given more space or more prominence than the improvement of the corn crop.

What the effect of all this will be is not difficult to foresee. Corn is the chief cereal crop of the United States. A great many industries are associated with its success. If it were not for the millions of bushels of corn grown annually, the cattle industry of that country would be of very much less importance than it is to-day. Therefore, any movement that has for its object the improvement of the quality and yield of this crop cannot but be of distinct advantage to the country. Not only does it mean increased returns from the annual corn acreage, but from the live stock industry also.

The basic principle of the movement lies in the improvement of the crop by careful selection of the seed and by planting only seed of proven vitality. The process of selection is not confined to one year. At the experiment stations careful selection is conducted for a period of years, with the result that a seed is secured of assured vitality and capable of producing a maximum crop, providing soil and climatic conditions are favorable. While the results, as yet, are not very marked, in so far as the general corn crop of the country is concerned, quite a large increase in the yield is reported for a number of districts and states. If the work continues, it will be only a short time before the value of the national crop will be greatly enhanced. As one writer puts it, a corn crop of twenty bushels per acre will pay 5 per cent. on a valuation of the land of \$30 per acre, after a reasonable amount has been allowed for cost of production, while if the crop can be increased to forty bushels per acre the net returns will be 5 per cent. on a valuation of more than \$100 per acre.

The benefits resulting from extended work of this kind cannot be confined to the country where it is conducted. Some of its advantages will undoubtedly filter across the northern boundary and help the Canadian farmer. The corn crop is not of so much importance to us, perhaps, as it is to the farmers south of the line, and yet it is possible by following the same methods to greatly increase

its value to this country. (So far the work of our experiment stations has been chiefly concerned with testing varieties with a view to obtaining those best suited to our climatic and soil conditions. This is very good and of great value so far as it goes. But might not something further be done? A continued process of selection carefully conducted under our peculiar conditions might result in developing types of corn better suited to our needs than any we now have. Our corn growing area at present is somewhat circumscribed, owing to climatic conditions. Might it not be possible by careful selection and test to produce types that would grow well and mature at latitudes much farther north than is possible at the present time?

In some of the northwestern states, Minnesota, for example, where climatic conditions are similar to our own, some of the best work in corn improvement has been done. Why not in Canada?

Is the Clydesdale Doomed?

Certain parties in Western Ontario who are interested in promoting the Percheron as the farmer's draft horse have recently stated that within five years there would not be a Clydesdale left in this country. What do you think of such boasting, Mr. Farmer? Is the bonnie Scotchman's draft horse, which has been the standby of the farmer of this country for so many years, to be driven out of the land by a game of Yankee bluff of this kind? We assuredly think not, and if either of the breeds named have to take a back seat we think it will be the other fellow. The Clydesdale has the staying power. He is the kind of horse the farmers of this country should pin their faith to.

The energy exhibited by some of the promoters of the Percheron in this country is certainly to be admired. It is not the horse that makes the sale but the inveterate push and zeal of its owner. Through the country he goes, button-holing every farmer and loading him up with all kinds of yarns about the perfections of his own breed and the imperfections of the other fellow's breed. He prefers to work on the syndicate plan (which is all right if honestly conducted) rather than sell privately, as it gives him a better chance to dispose of his inferior goods at superior prices. And to effect a sale at all he has to do a lot of boasting and bragging. Last fall one of these Percheron syndicate men, operating in New Brunswick, used as an argument to induce farmers to join his scheme, that his brother was a noted prize-

fighter in Uncle Sam's domains. What affinity there is between prize-fighting and syndicate stallions we are at a loss to understand. But so it goes. The farmer is looked upon as a victim ready to be taken in by all sorts of argument and spurious reasoning. If we mistake not, however, the Canadian farmer is not such a dupe as some of these promoters think he is and his general common sense will come to his aid and prevent his being taken in by his "Yankee" cousins.

But the "bonnie" Clyde is doomed, so they tell us. And so he is. He is doomed to be the leading draft horse of this country for many years to come. He is doomed to leave his impress upon the horses of this country to such an extent that in five years the Percheron "boom" will have passed away as doth a bad dream, leaving naught behind it but the remembrance of a bad hour or two. Then, get into the swim, ye farmers, and don't be led away by the soft blandishments of any transient horse breeder. Stay with those who have and are building up the business of horse breeding in this country on legitimate and sound lines. Don't mix the breeds. A good Clyde or a Shire meets all the requirements of a draft horse. Stand by the breeds that have done so much to improve the horse breeding of this country.

Unfair Freight Rates

Before the Agricultural Committee of the House of Commons last week the question of railway rates grievances came up for discussion. The information presented to the committee on this subject showed that the rates charged on agricultural products from points in Ontario away from the main line of the railways, is anything but fair. There is an excellent case here for the Railway Commission.

The railway companies arrange a scale of rates for eastbound freight on the percentage basis. The Chicago rate is the standard accepted upon which to base rates to the Atlantic seaboard; the rates for intermediate points diminishing as the distance to the seaboard is diminished. If fairly adjusted there could be no objection to this arrangement. But the rates are not fairly adjusted and an entirely different arrangement would seem to be in force as soon as the Canadian border is reached.

At Port Huron the rate is 75 per cent. of the Chicago rate, or a reduction of 22 per cent. for 335 miles, or an average reduction of 1 per cent. for every 15 miles. But here the