

THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE AND HOME MAGAZINE. THE LEADING AGRICULTURAL JOURNAL IN THE DOMINION.

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less expenses, it is put at interest, to fulfil the obligations of the company when death occurs." But he does not discriminate between mutual assessment, or society insurance, and mutual old-line or level-premium insurance. Of the first class, whose premiums or calls are not adequate to pay all claims when they accrue, too much caution cannot be taken, for history points to the failures of hundreds of such concerns. On the other hand, mutual old-line or level-premium companies have been and are among the greatest successes in the realm of finance. The oldest life insurance company in the world, founded 1686, and the largest, having funds exceeding three hundred millions of dollars, are purely mutual companies. Throughout the British Empire there has not been a failure. These companies charge premiums sufficiently high to provide for every contingency which may arise. They set aside under Government supervision a portion of each premium to meet the amounts of the policies when they become due, and whatever is saved from death losses, expenses and interest is paid to or held for policy holders as surplus or dividends.

Soil Drifting.

There have been many strong advocates during recent years of the necessity of seeding down our older wheat lands to grass, and the preaching of this grass gospel has borne fruit to a really wonderful extent, and yet it required, perhaps, just such a spring as the past to convince a good many, and surely after seeing the object lessons that are to be found in every locality of the efficacy of grass roots in preventing soil drifting, there will be no more doubting Thomases. The demand for grass seed, especially *Bromus inermis*, has been unprecedented, some seedsmen raising the price during the latter part of the season, so great was the demand. *Bromus*, wherever we have seen it this spring, has proved wonderfully vigorous, in spite of the drought, and while not promising a very heavy hay crop under excessively dry conditions, certainly of its capital period. On moist soils, sown mixed with Western wheat grass, *Lycopodium*

tenerum), it makes an ideal hay crop, clean and easy to cure and of fine feeding quality, as well as making unequalled pasture. But apart from these qualities, the binding effect of the root fiber on the soil in preventing drifting is most important. On the Brandon Experimental Farm an exposed knoll of lightish soil that has been in cultivation ever since the farm was first broken, and that for years drifted badly—so badly that it was difficult to crop it—was seeded to *Bromus* and broken up again several years ago, and yet this year the soil did not drift. But no doubt equally good object lessons are everywhere to be seen, and argument in favor of seeding down is no longer necessary. Of course, where large areas are under cultivation it is impossible to seed down all the old land as rapidly as it should be, and other methods of soil treatment must be adopted, the object being to firm the soil immediately after plowing and at the same time leave the surface rough enough not to drift. The implement that is accomplishing this work is known as the Subsoil Packer, and is now under trial in many of the principal wheat districts, and is giving great satisfaction. Best results appear to follow the use of the packer when it is used immediately behind the plows, thus thoroughly compacting the soil to within about 2 inches of the surface, which is left about as rough as plowing. The seed drill then follows the packer with as little delay as possible, and where there is much liability to drift, the harrow is not used at all. The packer is especially useful in firming down land in which manure has been plowed under, and, in fact, is used by those that have them on nearly every kind of land, breaking, backsetting, summer-fallowing, spring and fall plowing, and in many soils where the plows fail to clean, owing to the looseness of the soil, the use of the packer firms the subsoil, and plows clean where they never cleaned before. Since the settlement of these prairies such a season has not been known, and yet it simply emphasizes the fact that intelligence and thought are profitable investments on the farm as well as elsewhere. Drive almost anywhere through the country during the early days of June, and one could see on one side of the road a crop blown and whipped almost to death and tons of soil piled up in drifts along the road edge, while on the other side of the road, with exactly similar soil and conditions, the wheat would be vigorous and healthy and about covering the ground, the whole difference being in the cultivation of the soil. Intelligence and brains *vs.* ignorance and brawn.

Brandon's Big Summer Fair.

The prize list of the Brandon Summer Fair, to be held under the auspices of the Western Agriculture and Arts Association, on July 31st to August 3rd, is a comprehensive volume of 150 pages, half of which is devoted to advertising matter. The classification is seemingly very complete. In the class for Clydesdales, \$25 is given in special sweepstakes (male and female) prizes by the Clydesdale Breeders' Association. In the cattle classes, separate sections are provided for home-bred Shorthorns, with the same amount of money offered as in the open class. While this classification may put money into the pockets of some breeders whose stock is not good enough to compete in the open classes, its real utility is somewhat questionable. Animals winning in such a class are not expected to be as good as those winning in an open class, and therefore the honor of winning is correspondingly less. The \$25 donated by the Dominion Shorthorn Breeders' Association is divided up equally between both classes.

Full classification is given for all the standard breeds, as well as for grades, of the dairy and beef types. Prizes are offered amounting to \$50, half of which is donated by the Holstein Association, for a milk test under similar conditions to that of last year. In the swine department, classification is made for Berkshires, Yorkshires and Tamworths, and any other pure breed, all on an equal money basis, including specials amounting to \$10, donated by the Dominion Swine Breeders' Association, in prizes of \$10 each for the best sow. A class for bacon hogs, pure-bred and grades, is also provided.

There are full poultry and dog departments. Included also are full classes for grains and grasses, field roots, flowers, vegetables, etc.

Very good prizes are offered in the dairy section, and should certainly draw out as large an exhibit as usual in this department.

Additions are being made to the dairy building, the main Hall, and also to the grand stand, which will greatly facilitate handling the crowds. In attractions, an elaborate programme has been arranged, and the public can take the word of the directors that it will be a most gratifying entertainment. The racing events on the Brandon track are always good, and with the large exhibition of live stock which is sure to be attracted by the free transportation, etc., Brandon Fair can be pronounced an anticipated great success.

The Grasshoppers.

In our issue of June 5th we published a very full description of the nature and characteristics of the Rocky Mountain locust, and also gave the remedies ordinarily prescribed. Since that issue went to press, an opportunity for personally investigating a considerable area of the grasshopper-infested districts has been afforded, and while there is no desire to raise any "scare," there is no denying the fact that in some of the light-soil districts the outlook in the early part of June was serious. Throughout the district stretching from about south of McGregor and Carberry westward along the south side of the main line of the C. P. R., through the sand hills that skirt both banks of the Assiniboine River, as far south as Stockton and Trebank, through the district north of Wawanesa, probably extending through the Brandon Hills district, toward Souris and Pipestone to Oak Lake and Virden, there extends ridges of light, almost sandy soil, and it would seem as if the hoppers had selected favorable spots throughout these localities for their egg-laying last season. The result is that the hoppers are to be found here and there throughout all this district. In some places they have done considerable damage to crops. Where the land is nearly all under cultivation, they have been pretty well held in check by the energetic efforts of the settlers. Great credit is certainly due to Mr. McKellar, chief clerk of the Department of Agriculture, for the energetic measures adopted in fighting this plague. Immediately upon receiving word from any district that the grasshopper had put in an appearance, Mr. McKellar arranged for a meeting of farmers, was personally present to address the meeting, giving full information as to their nature and characteristics, and methods of fighting them. Addresses were delivered at Douglas, Aweme, Oak Lake, Brandon, Wawanesa, Stockton, Souris, Deleau and Melita. This, of course, does not represent anything like the work that has been accomplished by the Chief Clerk, as miles of territory were driven over and carefully inspected by him in connection with each meeting. He also drove over the district south of Deloraine and Boissevain, where the grasshoppers were during the past two years, but could find no trace of them throughout the district, largely owing, no doubt, to the work of the Department, assisted by Prof. Fletcher, Dominion Entomologist, during the past two years, and to the thorough manner in which the farmers had acted upon instructions given, completely annihilating the pests that infested this district. The Government has undertaken to supply the pans for the hopper dozers, and the necessary coal oil.

Weed Inspector Braithwaite has been a capital field manager in giving full instructions as to the making of the hopper dozers and starting them to work. At this writing we are unable to find just how many of these are now in the field, but we learn that 500 gallons of coal oil a day is being used in combating the hoppers. One farmer, operating a 16-ft. dozer, stated recently that he had in one day captured a bag and a half of grasshoppers, and when it is remembered that probably five times this number had been killed by coming in contact with the coal oil, the number thus being destroyed must be enormous.

The Government has acted wisely in promptly providing adequate means to fight the grasshopper to a finish, as it is not only this year's crop that is to be considered, but were they allowed to go on unmolested, the damage next year might be ruinous to the whole Province.

A Hard Winter on Clovers.

A correspondent, Mr. Crealock, living on the western borders of the Portage plains, writes regarding the condition of grasses and clover under test with him, as follows:

"I am sorry to be obliged to report that the past winter proved totally destructive to lucerne, mammoth clover, and sanfoin, from the want of snow protection. Well-established plants of two years' growth were entirely destroyed. Bromegrass alone escaped, and is now the third season in good condition, and will shortly be in blossom. That the want of snow was the cause of destruction of clovers is proved by the fact that a few plants of sanfoin that happened to be covered by a drift that collected over them escaped, and are now (June 2nd) in blossom and nearly ready to cut; but it is evident that such crops, to pass a winter in Manitoba, are far too risky for the ordinary run of farmers; rich men may run the chance, but the ordinary settler could not do so."

Similar testimony comes from many correspondents, and from personal observation, not only have the larger clovers been pretty well killed out, but white Dutch growing along the roadsides and railway grades has also suffered severely. At the Brandon Experimental Farm nearly every one of the legumes have succumbed to the peculiar conditions of the past winter. This fact will not, of course, deter the Experimental Farm from continuing its tests of clovers and alfalfas, and should not discourage anyone, as such a season may not visit us during the next decade.

Mr. Bedford informs us that he has secured a sample of Turkestan alfalfa from the Department of Agriculture, Washington. A full description of this variety, said to be particularly suitable to our conditions, was published in the May 5th issue of the FARMER'S ADVOCATE.