

THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE AND HOME MAGAZINE.

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DOMINION.

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Address—THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE, or
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MISUSE OF ROAD GRADERS.

The improper use of road-grading machines has been very apparent on gravel and stone roads where high, square earth shoulders have been drawn to the center instead of turning them outward. We have observed some striking illustrations of the proper and improper use of the grader on gravel roads in Middlesex County. On one highway between two townships several furrows were plowed on the sod shoulder of the roadbed, which just then had a fair crown and was really not in bad condition. Then the grader was put on, and most of the earth and sods were actually heaped along the center, burying the gravelled surface out of sight! The result can be imagined. After every shower, any traffic on the center of the road turned it into a mire, and, as a matter of fact, the traffic for one season, at least, was forced to the sides of the road. This was a sheer waste of money, and an injury to the road.

On a portion of what is called the Hamilton Road the plow was not put on, but several men spent days with a traction engine and grader skimming sods and a mass of dust and loose, unbroken stones into the center of the gravelled roadbed, making it very much worse for the remainder of the season than it was before they touched it.

On the other hand, members of "The Farmer's Advocate" staff observed last autumn a different use of the grader on a five-mile section of the Hamilton Road, immediately east of the City of London. The metalled roadbed had become altogether too wide and flat, in some cases actually hollow in the center, holding the water in pools, and on grades in running streams, so that the heavy traffic kept the road in a frightful condition for the greater part of the time, which was still further aggravated by the masses of unbroken boulders allowed to accumulate on the surface during years of mismanagement. The first step was to put on the plow and turn half a dozen

furrows of the heavy earth shoulders, which a careful use of the grading machine subsequently turned outward into the deep ditches, narrowing the driveway and giving a good crown, so that the heavy rainfall of the season had a free opportunity to get away without ruining the road. The effect was almost magical, and for once in years that portion of the old Hamilton Road was found by the people who use it in a really passable condition. It is doubtful if in any other way it would have been possible so quickly and economically to effect such an improvement. We expect this season to see an equally effective demonstration throughout Ontario of improvement in the condition of earth roads by the use of what is known as the split-log drag, "The Farmer's Advocate" offering \$100 in prizes for a competition with this implement.

OUR MARITIME LETTER.

The Department of Agriculture of Canada has just inaugurated, through Dairy and Cold-storage Commissioner Ruddick, a series of meetings in P. E. Island, having for their object the encouragement of dairying generally—not so much by the multiplication of factories, of which we have enough under present conditions, not even so much by the increase of the cows on the co-operative associations' lists, as by the quantity of milk afforded by those cows already contributed. Mr. Ruddick has sent out a circular in which he outlines the purposes of the Department in this particular. One hundred per cent. of increase, with the same number of cows, is the limit of attainment set before our farmers. He tells us all quite frankly, too, that he purposes to effect this by means of the "cow test," a system he has had in operation elsewhere. Indeed, Mr. Whitley, of Ottawa, the official formally charged with this sort of work, is already here to launch this new plank of salvation to our dairymen. He attended the annual meeting of the Prince Edward Island Dairying Association in Charlottetown, and explained the system fully to the assembled wisdom of Temple Hall. He will now make a tour of the Province and spread the new gospel, which is but another form, after all, of Dean's "Weed, Breed, Feed," assiduously.

This year, under that best-of-all influences—good prices—the dairy industry has taken an upward tendency amongst us. It has fallen off very much from what it was six or seven years ago, but seems to be on the increase again. Our highest mark in dairy production, we know, was only a tithe of what we should be producing in our worst years. But when, from a value of half a million we fell off 50 per cent. in a couple of years, it looked as if the bottom had fallen completely out of the business. There were causes for all this—dry seasons, low prices, ill-lusioned farmers. We have just overed these things. Our cattle, slaughtered because of shortage of feed, are again up to the normal of Provincial herds; the prices are such as to make every dairyman wear a self-satisfied smile, and the disillusioning has been a collateral of flattering prices. There was the stress of labor to be invoked, too. We are running our Province down to, if not below, and far below, in present circumstances, the minimum of possible farm help.

Whilst everybody will admit that the accurate system of the cow-test is the proper thing for any dairying community, few can hope that, in our conditions, carrying on a whole line of mixed farming, and extremely short-handed, this system can be very generally adopted in a moment; and, consequently, even if indirectly an upward influence, and as such to be commended and encouraged, we are not to expect that the generality of our population will, within proximate time, become so systematized as it is and exact. We have had the cow-test going on in our midst by the forward dairymen for some time. They all commend it in the highest; but those using it are our most intelligent, best-trained and painstaking people. The great bulk still follow, we are sorry to say, the Laissez faire in agriculture. We must not expect an old generation, especially with the children all off the farm in many cases—emigrated to the States or Canadian West—to take up matters which involve a good deal of care to be of any value at all. This desirable exactitude would come quickly if we were a dairy-

ing people exclusively, but we have not a score of farmers in the whole Province who are into dairying and nothing else but dairying. The mixed nature of their work, we admit, makes for the most efficient of men, or the most inefficient. An all-round system of farming develops the whole extent of the farmer's intellectuality, if he is really such a one as he should be; but who will say that in a day's walk in any Province of older Canada he can find a community of men, following the farming profession, who have all reached the ideal or who are capable of reaching the ideal in this matter. On the other hand, it is not so difficult to learn and apply all that there is in some one special branch of agriculture. But would it pay here? Under present circumstances, we think not. At least it would be very dangerous to go into it very generally. Only two years ago and our condensed-milk contracts were voided, for want of winter communication, even.

The main thing to do with our dairying, which we must keep up because the fertility of our soil calls for it imperatively, is to stimulate a greater desire on the part of cow-keepers—and this means practically all our farmers—to take greater care of their cattle, to have a much closer eye to their breeding, and to feed them as animals from which milk can be expected should be fed. This done, the weeding process alone can secure a herd which will approach in any degree the standard which must be maintained, even in a mixed farmer's country, to ensure sound financial returns. As we said before, the propaganda which Commissioner Ruddick has now inaugurated, whilst too far advanced for the generality of our farmers, will do good missionary work, and tend generally upward in its indirect influence at least.

Only the other day we heard an intelligent man say, with reference to the new instruction, "Those people are doing us more harm than good; look what they did with those of us who listened to them about housing our cows—now we have them ruined and full of tuberculosis. It is all very well for men with the Ottawa Government behind them to talk about scales and tests, and weighed feed, and groomed cows; we have to make our living; we can afford only ordinary care; that's all the Lord ever intended, anyway." This may be a very indifferent condition of mind, but many of our farmers have developed it, and we must correct it by common-sense methods which appeal directly to them. There has been, doubtlessly, a tremendous amount of "wobble," not to use a more expressive term, in our national teaching on the dairy question in fifteen years, and it is not wonderful that the public mind is somewhat confused.

With fair fodder years, we have to increase our output of dairy products here in Prince Edward Island under the influence of such prices as obtain, and they are likely to be maintained for some time. The loss of cattle in the West this winter must have a slight effect, at least, upon this last condition, too. It is our duty to prepare to get all that is in this business, then. An increase of 3,822,683 pounds of milk given to the co-operative institutions of the Province is registered over last year. This is, perhaps, satisfactory, all things considered. No doubt our people will be better equipped for the work next year than last. The returns from the co-operative factories show a total business in the past season of \$355,788.34. This is far below the high-water mark in co-operative cheese and butter making in 1900, when, at much lower prices, we touched the half-million-dollar mark. This, too, is a small business for a Province such as this—the Denmark of Canada—and should be greatly augmented. Of course, the private production of butter and cheese is large, and its value would go far to double these figures. There is nothing to be done but reduce the entire industry to a system, however, and increase it to its natural dimensions as quickly as possible in the best interests of everybody, and we are glad that Commissioner Ruddick is getting on the ground, and will do all he can to assist the work.

A FIRST-CLASS PIECE OF POCKET CUTLERY

Received acknowledgment of five subscriptions and also one of your "Advocate knives," which is certainly a first-class piece of pocket cutlery. I would not like to be without "The Farmer's Advocate," and will endeavor to pass such a good thing along.

East Hastings, Ont.

W. D. HANLEY.