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### EDITORIAL.

#### The Live-stock Commissionership.

In view of the retirement of the present Live-stock Commissioner at Ottawa, there has been more or less discussion for several months past with regard to the person upon whom the mantle should fall. Among others, the name of Mr. J. H. Grisdale, Agriculturist at the Central Experimental Farm, Ottawa, has been mentioned. To stockmen and other readers of "The Farmer's Advocate," Mr. Grisdale is well known, but many others will be desirous of knowing something more of his pedigree and record. He is a Canadian, being born in Russell County, Ont. After a thorough grounding in practical agriculture, he took a course at the O. A. C., securing the Associate Diploma in 1898, and subsequently taking the degree of Bachelor of Agriculture from the Iowa Agricultural College. From the time Mr. Grisdale was a student at the Ontario Agricultural College, down to the present, we have observed his career with interest, and having had frequent and close-range opportunities of judging, it seems to us that he possesses, in a marked degree, many of the qualifications necessary for the head of so important a department. In the first place, he is a Live-stock Husbandry man from start to finish, and by practice and theory he is an appreciative and capable exponent of the supreme value of pure-bred stock in the general scheme of agricultural progress. A straightforward and honorable man, he is progressive and aggressive, without being pyrotechnic. It would be hard to name in the ranks of men who might be styled official agriculturists, one who indulges so little in fireworks. He has earned a secure place in the opinion of those well qualified to judge by steady-going, hard work in dealing with problems that have confronted him. He has not shirked tasks because they were difficult, nor has he strained the testimony of experimental work merely to make a show on paper or on the platform. He depends upon fact and reason to make good his case, as readers of "The Farmer's Advocate" will remember in his frank presentation of the results of his researches into the use of condimental stock foods. He is a most capable platform man, well educated, and well versed in the French as well as the English language. We have found him a competent judge in the show-ring, and he has rendered most efficient service at Farmer's Institutes, and in the conduct of judging schools, as might be naturally expected from one who was a first-prize winner at the students' live-stock judging contest at the great Trans-Mississippi Exposition. Being on the right side of the prime of life, he is in a position to bring the grip of enthusiasm, steadied by natural and acquired sagacity, to his tasks in the further development along rational lines of the live-stock interests of the country. Whether he is disposed to give up his present work at the Experimental Farm to undertake the Live-stock Commissionership, we are not in a position to say, but the successful way in which he has discharged the duties of the former has been an effective preparation for and a guarantee of his fitness for the latter. He has a thorough acquaintance with live-stock interests in every part of Canada, as well as in the United States and Great Britain. The Dominion Minister of Agriculture is congratulated upon having as hard one in whom he can have confidence, one so well qualified for the position, and whose appointment would commend itself to the stockmen of the country. In order to the maturing of plans

for the approaching year, it goes without saying that the new incumbent in this very important division of the Dominion Department of Agriculture—the Live-stock Branch—should be at its head at an early date.

#### The Greatest Product of a Farm is Men.

Once upon a time a student at the Ontario Agricultural College was working in the field beside Prof. Thomas Shaw, then farm manager of that institution. The student in question was a sturdy young man, who was putting himself through the College, and working over-time to pay his board. He was not lacking in grit, but he couldn't help contrasting the rich, friable soil on the College farm with the stiff clay hills at home. The elder man listened sympathetically while the other told of the disadvantages of the home farm, of the steep clay hillsides that were so hard to work and that baked like brick after every rain, of the drouth and winds that reduced the crops, of the persistent blue grass that choked the grain and often beat out the clover, of the poor stabling accommodation for stock, and of the need for economy in the household. The Professor listened, and when his companion was through he preached a sermon in the words, "Yes, my boy, but that's the kind of country that produces men." There are many such farms in Canada, and it is a matter for gratitude that there are. They rear our clearest thinkers, our true economists, our strongest men. He who can wrest a living or perhaps a competence from Nature's poorer spots develops a habit of thrifty industry and a grasp of economic business principles seldom acquired to an equal degree by those more comfortably circumstanced in early youth. It is not a misfortune to be born on a poor farm, unless one's own craven spirit makes it so. Environment alone does not make men of great moral and intellectual fibre, but it is a powerful factor in the process. These stony, broken, hard-clay homesteads may not produce record crops of corn or grain or roots, but they afford food for a great deal of hard, earnest thought in their management and cultivation. From lands like that come men of brain and brawn and character and pluck. Such men rule the world, and such farms have, in many instances, by intelligent management and cultivation, been made to yield heavier crops than many that are more favored as to natural conditions.

#### Bad Roads and Good Roads.

To every farmer the condition of the roads upon which he travels is a subject of immediate and tangible concern. It is a matter of profit or loss. Somnolent regarding forest preservation, we have been more apathetic with regard to the highways we travel over. This is the season to think of the loss and waste consequent upon bad roads, and to plan a campaign of improvement in every municipality in the country; yea, on every road. "The Farmer's Advocate" publishes with pleasure, in this issue, a stimulating contribution from the pen of Mr. A. W. Campbell, Highway Commissioner of Ontario, one of the most experienced and practical authorities on roadmaking in America. It will repay study by every man who uses the King's highways, and especially by the municipal powers that be. Let something be done this year—1906. Make a beginning. Drain, grade, gravel. If you can't get an elaborate outfit of graders, crushers and steam rollers, start the road-leveller, cut down the weeds, and open the ditches. Next year you will do something still better. Read what Mr. Campbell has to say.

#### Specialization, System and Success.

Prof. C. C. James, Deputy-Minister of Agriculture for Ontario, in a recent address, pointed to specialization as an important aid in meeting the changing economic conditions with which the Ontario farmer is finding himself confronted. He cited instances where farmers of certain districts had gone extensively into one line or another, and these were the most prosperous communities. In Eastern Ontario they pin their faith to the cheese business; in some parts of Western Ontario they make a feature of fruit-raising; in other limited sections it is onions, or turnips, etc., while he had been surprised to discover along the Detroit River a little French-Canadian settlement where they were making a lot of money producing choice radishes for the American market. Going outside Ontario, he might have mentioned that the most opulent farming district of Nova Scotia is the Annapolis Valley—that famous apple country—while the most prosperous and up-to-date agricultural area of New Brunswick is King's County, where co-operative dairying has developed a strong lead. Wherever one line of this kind has been featured, it has engaged the best thought of the people, and not only have they made more money out of it, but the spirit of progress has not infrequently extended into the remaining branches of their farming operations.

For a good many years we have been hearing about the danger of specialty, and the great advantages of mixed farming. The note was sounded first by those who perceived the desirability of farmers getting into stock husbandry, rather than drifting along in the soil-depleting system of raising and selling grain and hay. From these it was caught up and echoed from Institute platforms, and frequently from the press, and it has become quite generally put into practice, until today much of our farming is, as someone has tritely said, "hopelessly mixed." The pendulum has swung, in not a few cases, from the extreme of almost exclusive grain-growing to the opposite one of aimless mixed husbandry. Not following any one line to any extent, a farmer is unable to equip himself with the best machinery to do any one thing well, so he plods along in the procession without definite purpose or conspicuous success.

Specialization would change that considerably. In the first place, the specialty, if judiciously chosen, would be along some line for which the farm, the markets and the man's tastes were particularly adapted. It is a serious waste of opportunity not to concentrate effort on the main chance. We have in mind localities admirably adapted to the production of early fruit, in which lots of money could be made, but the majority of the people, instead of going in largely for this line, fritter away most of their effort raising crops which they cannot produce nearly so cheaply as can neighboring townships. There is, perhaps, hardly a farm in Canada which is not well adapted to some one line of farming. All it needs is an enterprising, level-headed man to decide what that is, and then work into it as fast as expediency permits. It is, as Prof. James said, up to each farmer to think along the lines of his own experience, decide what is best for him to do in his particular case, and then go at that energetically.

The man who is keeping some cows and some sheep and some pigs and some poultry, never knows just where he is at; he is almost certain to drift with the yearly fluctuations of the markets, and, for want of a definite purpose, he seldom makes marked progress in his business.

On the other hand, it is unwise to carry specialization too far. There is an essential difference between specialty farming and the following