

## FARM

### The Binder Twine Inspector on the Industry.

On one of his trips of investigation into the binder twine industry, J. L. Haycock, inspector for the Dominion government, stated that never before had such a quantity of binder twine been used in Canada as this present year. The sales to the farmers totalled \$4,000,000, over \$500,000 above last year's sales. Of this amount 10,000 tons were brought into the country by the International Harvester company; 6,000 tons were made in Canada and 500 tons were shipped into the country from England.

"This order of affairs, however, will be reversed next year," said the inspector. "Then it will be 10,000 tons made in Canada and 6,000 tons imported from the States. A new mill is being started in Welland, Ont., by the Plymouth company of England which will more than make the difference. I asked the Plymouth company what their idea was in manufacturing in Canada and he told me it was because of the impending duty. There is no duty at present, but every year after the contracts are made there is a noise made about there being a tax on binder twine. To obviate the difficulty this company decided to establish in Canada and then they could trade without fear of a duty being imposed. In addition to trading in binder twine their company contemplates making cordage.

"As a matter of fact the imposing of a duty of binder twines, judging by the previous condition of affairs, would not be a good thing. In the three years following the imposition of the tax six mills failed to keep open while in the three years following the removal of the tax seven mills were opened. This condition of affairs was not due to the tax but the fact that one of the large companies bought out the others and closed them down, trying to create a monopoly. Then a Brantford firm, owing to the fact that they had a quantity of raw material on hand, declared dividends of between 75 and 100 per cent. This started a number of false companies, who with small capital of \$50,000, endeavored to take over a business which requires at least \$200,000 capital. In this manner a great many farmers were squeezed. The inducement held out by the fact that the Brantford people reaped such large profits seemed good to the farmers who made haste to put their money into what has since proved to be an unprofitable investment.

"The trouble with the binder twine factories is that there is only one turnover a year. True that is a large one, but the mill has to be kept in operation such a long time without any money coming in that it falls flat. The dividends which should be paid to the stockholders are being paid into the bank.

"Something I think which will go a long way towards ameliorating the binder twine situation is the use of flax binder twine. The International Harvester company factory at St. Paul is prepared to bring this type of goods to the Canadian market for this purpose. It is as good, I think, as the manila, hemp article and may answer the purpose very well. I understand that they can afford to sell the flax twine at two cents a pound cheaper than the old article, which is going for about 12½ cents a pound. It means a saving of \$40 when a farmer uses a ton of binder twine in a year.

"Then there is the possibility that flax can be grown with profit in the West. It has never been tried to any extent. The International Harvester company have theirs grown in Minnesota, Wisconsin and Iowa. There is very little reason why it should not be grown on this side of the line.

"There is a factory in Montreal just getting under way that will handle this same product. Good flax is grown in western Ontario and Quebec. The manager of this firm places great reliance in the flax growing qualities of the West. It will pay the farmers to grow it, for \$11 a ton is being paid for the flax, including seed and all at the present time. Two tons to the acre can be grown and there is no bother threshing it. All that is necessary is to put it through the binder."—Telegram.

### An Injurious Parasite on Wild Hay.

An important parasite belonging to the Hypocreaceae, another family of the Ascomycetes, is the ergot fungus, which attacks the ovaries of grasses and cereals.

Symptoms—In the ears of rye, wheat, and many pasture grasses dark purple-colored bodies known as "ergots" are found occupying the place of some of the grains. In rye and several grasses these structures are much larger than the natural grains and stand out from the glumes of the inflorescences in a conspicuous manner, while in wheat and many smaller grasses the ergots are not larger than the grains which they displace.

Each ergot is solid and often slightly curved with a furrowed surface; although black or deep purple on the outside, it is white within, and waxy or oily in character, especially in fresh specimens.

The substance of the ergot contains several poisonous compounds, and continued use of bread made from the flour obtained from ergoted samples of wheat and rye has led to dangerous illness in human beings. Since the introduction of improved methods of screening and cleaning samples of grain, ergotism is of rare occurrence.

Abortion among cattle has been attributed to the consumption of ergoted grasses, but from carefully conducted experiments to test the matter there appears to be no ground for such belief, due to the fact that the doses taken at one time are not sufficiently large, although serious poisoning effects resulting in numbness, paralysis and gangrene of the extremities are rapidly produced when animals are fed with considerable quantities of ergoted hay. It is, however, likely that ergoted grasses would cause abortion in mares, as such expel the uterine contents far more easily than do bovines, it will be found advisable, therefore, not to risk feeding ergoted grass of hay to pregnant mares.

Prevention and remedy—(a) Draining tends to diminish attacks of ergot, and deep plowing to bury the fallen ergot is beneficial.

(b) Meadows should be cut when the grasses are in bloom before the fungus has time to complete the formation of a mature sclerotium.

(c) Small patches of grasses in pastures are sometimes found to be much infested with ergots; in such cases the tops of the grasses should be cut off with a scythe and then raked together and burnt.

(d) Samples of cereal grains or grass "seeds" containing ergots should be not sown.

### The Value of Damp Wheat After Drying.

Mr. King is reported as giving evidence to the Grain Commission to the effect that, as soon as possible after the drying plant has been put in operation wheat was purchased and tested by certain Ontario millers and careful milling and baking trials resulted in the fact that the yield of flour was slightly behind that of No. 1 Hard, but in the baking results was fully equal to that grade. Mr. King contended that the then grade of No. 2 Northern and the present grade of dried 3 Northern was for milling purposes about equal to what used to be No. 1 Hard and No. 1 Northern, reasoning that No. 2 and No. 3 Northern were really composed of the higher grades reduced in inspection on account of the bleaching of the bran by rain.

He further considered as a miller, that the wheat was improved for milling purposes by the water. He cited the case of a Dakota harvest when the grain having been harvested very dry, the millers failed to make good baker's flour until they damped it with water, then it made first-class flour. After this experience, in dry seasons all western wheat is moistened with water before it is ground. His deductions from these facts are that dried wheat should be re-inspected and as a proof of this under the old inspection act a mixture of 50 per cent of dried

wheat was allowed for export. This was afterwards reduced to 25 per cent and complaints came that the latter mixture was not as good as the former.

In reply to Mr. McNair's questions re bleaching the witness said that he did not consider the bleaching of the wheat covering or the bran affected in any degree the milling value, although it reduced its inspection grade. Unless the grain had sprouted or the gluten had been damaged by the fermentation and heating of the grain. No change in the gluten occurs under a temperature of 60 degrees.

Mr. McNair suggested that a greater degree than this, by the action of sun and air sometimes was brought to bear on grain in the field.

Mr. Goldie pressed the question as to whether damage by alternating sun and rain would injure the gluten, to which Mr. King replied in the negative, his opinion applying only to grain that would inspect no lower than grade No. 3 Northern.

With regard to shortages, Mr. King said that the terminal elevators or the railway company invariably bore the brunt of the blame, which he considered really lay at the door of the shipper both with respect to leakage in the cars and failure to load the amount claimed, and in proof thereof he produced a record of his shipment of over 500 cars of grain to the east, from which he had only one complaint of a small shortage on one car of flax. His evidence thus backs up that of D. D. Campbell in this matter.

### Portable Granaries.

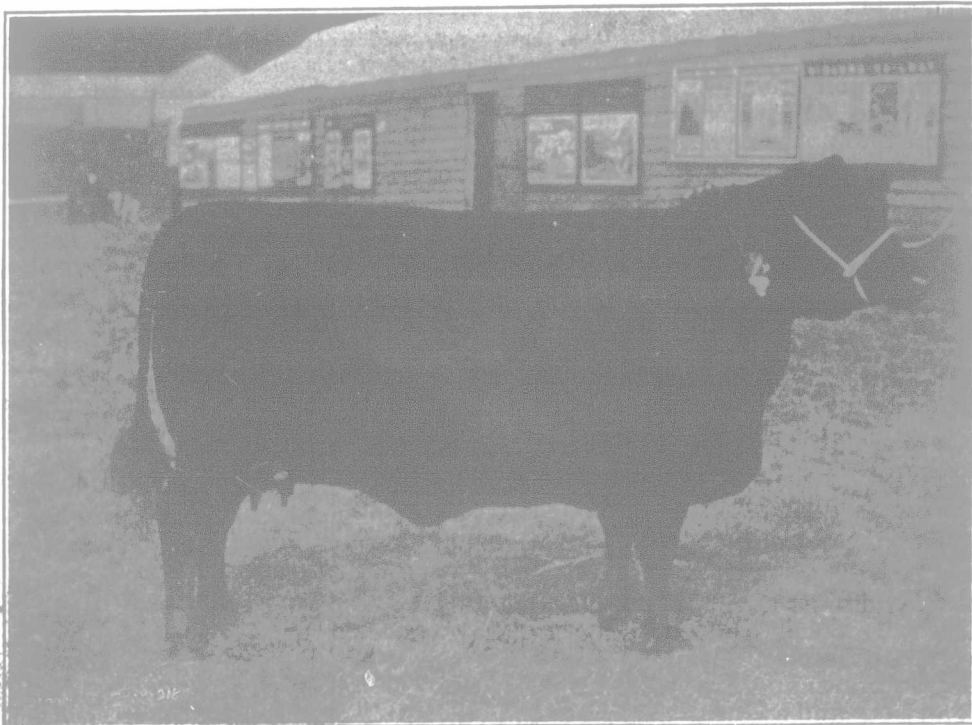
The small portable grain bins are in very general use on large grain farms in the Dakotas and Canada. They are built on skids, which makes it possible for them to be drawn while empty from one place to another in the field. The usual size is about 12 feet wide by 14 to 16 feet long, and 6 to 8 feet high, very few of them being covered with shingles. The roof is usually made with boards that are bent over the top, car roof style. Six-inch tongued and grooved lumber is generally used for flooring, while ship lap or drop siding is a good material for boarding up the side and ends. The floor joist should be 2x8's and the studs 2x6's, and both should be placed not more than 2 feet apart. A small door is placed in the roof or in one end at the top of the wall for a spout from the machine that conveys the grain to them, no help at all being needed to take care of the threshed grain, until this small granary is filled almost to the top, where it can be left until it is desired to market it.

### Testimonial.

Dear Sirs:—Enclosed find \$1.50 to cover my renewal subscription to the FARMER'S ADVOCATE. I am well satisfied with your paper and would not be without it.

J. J. Souris.

FRED BEGG.



JUANA ERICA.

Three-year-old Aberdeen-Angus Cow, First and Champion, at the Highland Show, 1906.