

The Farmer's Advocate

and Home Magazine.

"PERSEVERE AND SUCCEED"

ESTABLISHED 1866

REGISTERED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE COPYRIGHT ACT OF 1875.

Vol. XL.

LONDON, ONT., AND WINNIPEG, MAN., APRIL 27, 1905.

No. 657

EDITORIAL.

Improving Our Postal Service.

Sir William Mulock, Postmaster-General, on more than one occasion in Parliament, has placed himself on record against the introduction into Canada of rural mail delivery, on the ground of its excessive cost. To give the farmer a delivery of mail once per day like those who reside along city streets (these receive it twice daily, as a rule), would certainly entail very great expense, and no sooner would it be introduced in one section than every district, from Cape Breton to Vancouver, would demand its extension. Moreover, the scheme would disturb the existing local P. O. system, and entail endless trouble in the choice of delivery routes. The politician does not relish that sort of thing. Self-preservation is one of his strong virtues. His attitude, therefore, is not unreasonable.

During the past eight years it has been the aim of Sir William to make the Canadian postal service efficient and self-sustaining. He deserves commendation for introducing the two-cent letter rate, not only in Canada, but to other portions of the British Empire, thus strengthening Imperial ties. The "Farmer's Advocate" has approved the payment of postage on newspapers, but disapproved of the vexatious and unfair 40-mile free zone, and a rate for 300 miles and another rate for over 300 miles, thus making fish of one and flesh of another. We do not object to paying our share for this service, but it should be uniform.

If Sir William's veto on rural mail delivery is to stand, we submit that there are other reforms deserving his energetic and prompt attention.

In the first place, the farmer ought to have a daily mail service to a local post office within reasonable reach of his home. As a business man he needs it more imperatively every year, and the extension of rural telephones does not make the need any less, either. It will hardly be credited, but still there are old and thickly-settled farming communities, sometimes within half a dozen miles of a city, that only receive a mail service two or three times per week. In this enlightened, go-ahead age, with the vast revenues at the command of the Dominion Government, and boasted surpluses piling up, this state of things is simply intolerable. The farmer is a patient being, or he would not submit to this sort of treatment. Every such locality is entitled to a daily mail service, and should demand it.

In the next place, we have to say that the local postmasters should be better paid. Their hours are long, and they do a great deal of faithful work for a very small remuneration, which is only tolerable because a store is, in most cases, run in connection with the office. Our wealthy Government should not take advantage of that circumstance, and should realize that a decent allowance would be an encouragement to efficient service. There are other fields where the cheese-paring policy might, with some show of reason, be instituted. And while the P. O. Department is grading up the allowances for the local postmasters, they might, without danger of bankruptcy, improve the fittings and internal arrangements generally of a good many post offices. It would make the wheels of life run more smoothly for the small-salaried postmaster or postmistress.

Then, again, some of the Departmental regulations appear to be of so complicated a character, that even officials themselves find their interpretation a difficult task. As an example of this, a publication, through an error on the part of

the Department, subsequently admitted, was over-charged \$40 postage, and though some six months of petty red-tapeism had, at last reports, passed by, the Department was still clinging to the amount with deathlike tenacity.

In the next place, we would suggest that the postal note and money-order system be steadily extended, on account of its safety, being decidedly preferable to the registered-letter system. To secure such a service, all that is required is a request from the local postmaster or any patron of the office.

To conclude for the present, the Postal Department would be conferring a most decided boon by inaugurating the system of sending parcels by post, "C. O. D." (collect on delivery). The parcel-post system would be welcomed both by farmers and business people of the towns. An immense amount of business might in that way be done for localities that are not reached, and probably never will be, by the express companies.

By energetically carrying out the foregoing reforms, making all promotions in the service dependent upon a real system of efficiency, rather than upon the operations of the mysterious "political machine," the Postmaster-General will be earning the thanks of the business people of Canada, particularly the farmer.

The Need of Good Sires.

The urgent necessity for the use of more good sires in the breeding of beef cattle in this country is clearly evident to all who visit our stock-yards and markets. Prime cattle, such as are suitable for the export trade, are steadily becoming scarcer, while good cattle for grazing or stall feeding are hard to secure, even at prices that used to be considered satisfactory for finished heaves. There is no great profit even in feeding first-class cattle for beef, beyond that made by selling the grain and fodder at a good price through the cattle, and the fertility added to the farm by feeding the stock. But feeding inferior cattle is usually a losing game, and the only way to make it reasonably profitable is to improve the quality of the stock by the use of good pure-bred bulls. A glance at the market reports shows that there is generally a difference of at least one dollar a hundred weight between the price of good and medium cattle, and nearly another dollar between the value of medium and common, which means a difference of from ten to twenty dollars each in the selling price. A pure-bred yearling bull may be bought just now for about what he will bring for beef at maturity, or at the end of a term of service in the herd, and he will, in the meantime, probably add from five to ten dollars a head to the value of every calf he sires, if sold for beef at two years old, as compared with common stock at the same age and with the same feeding. The farmer who does not see his way to keeping a bull for use in his own herd, can, in most cases, secure the services of a pure-bred sire for a fee of from one to two dollars, and the calf will be worth from five to ten dollars more than one from a scrub bull, at any time after it is a year old. And we would advise a farmer with only a herd of grade cows not to be content to use a third-class pure-bred bull. A first-class one, if purchased at a reasonable price, will probably make up the difference between his cost and that of an inferior one in the quality of his progeny, in the superior feeding properties of his get. The prices at which first-class bulls are now being held by breeders are not excessive, considering the investment in the sires and dams from which they are bred, and the expense incident to maintaining a high-class herd, while

medium-class bulls are plentiful, and may be purchased at a very moderate price.

The need of the use of good sires in the country applies not only to beef cattle, but to all other classes of stock. The producing capacity of our dairy cows might be nearly doubled, on the average, in a very few years, by the use of pure-bred bulls bred from deep-milking strains, whereas a large proportion of the cows in the country are barely paying for their feed, and many are not even doing that. Good horses would sell for high prices now, and are likely to for many years, but so many farmers have been content to breed their mares to cheap-grade stallions that good horses are extremely scarce, and inferior ones rightly sell for inferior prices, though they cost just as much to raise and keep as the better class that bring big money. A large percentage of the pigs, sheep and poultry in the country are inferior in type and good feeding quality, owing to the penny-wise and pound-foolish policy of farmers in using mongrel sires, or looking for cheap ones, instead of going in for the best, the first cost of which is higher, but which is more than made up in the increased value of their offspring when placed upon the market, while the expense of raising them is no more than in the case of common stuff. There are hundreds, we might say thousands, of good young sires of all these classes in the hands of breeders in this country, and many mature ones that have proved their usefulness, held for sale at very reasonable prices, or their services available at a moderate fee, and there is no sensible excuse for continuing to produce inferior stock, which is raised at a loss and which is injuring the reputation of our country in the markets of the world, and discounting the profits of the farmers and the wealth of the Dominion.

If we are to hold our own in the British market, we need to profit by the example of the farmers and breeders in the Argentine who are buying the best bulls in England and Scotland to improve their cattle, and will leave us in the lurch when their improved stock meets ours in the market to which we are both catering, as are also our neighbors of the United States. Let us get a move on, and go to work in earnest to improve our products and keep them up to a high-class standard.

Beef Cattle Situation.

The letters in this issue of the "Farmer's Advocate" from feeders, local dealers and exporters, constitute a timely and valuable contribution with regard to the present and prospective supply of beef cattle. Of stall-finished animals there is evidently a big shortage in Ontario, which has brought up the prices both of butchers' stock and exporters. For the latter, even six cents per pound would not leave the farmer, an excessive margin, considering the cost of feeding cattle, of feed, and of farm labor. On the Chicago market, best Western States heaves have been quoted up to seven cents. Among our correspondents, the prevailing opinion appears to be that more cattle will this season be fed off the grass, but we incline to the belief that this is problematical. Of younger cattle coming on, fewer have been sent to the States lately, and it is thought that there will be a fairly large supply. We think that some of our correspondents hardly take fully into account the continued strength of the dairy business, the demand for cows of the dairy type, and the annual slaughter at birth of thousands of calves, steadily going on in the factory sections, all of which tends to diminish the ranks of beef cattle.