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EDITORIAL.

"A Little Farm Well Tilled."

One of our correspondents, J. F., Perth Co., Ont., in this issue starts what should prove a helpful discussion on the subject of small vs. large farms. There is no doubt that the fertile soil of Canada, even in the settled portions, is not carrying anything like the rural population of which it is capable, in comfort, and its productiveness in grain, fruit, animals and their products is unquestionably far below the limit of which it is capable under a more thoroughgoing system. A season like the present, broken by frequent showers, emphasizes many of the difficulties that arise in trying to farm too large an area, such as obtaining satisfactory help for harvest, combating weeds, and also performing the general farm labor, which is now more evenly spread over the year than in the earlier days. In England, after the fall in the price of cereals, a larger proportion of land was laid down to grass for fattening cattle and sheep, and a smaller proportion kept under cultivation and the work more thoroughly done. The subject is a live one that will bear discussion, and the wide diversity between the condition, crops, and net returns of farms, the natural conditions of which are not at all unlike, indicate very plainly the need there is for radical reform in the methods of many tillers of the soil.

A Tuberculin Canard.

A number of alarmist articles have been floating about lately in local weekly and daily papers regarding tuberculosis in Canada, and the warning statement made that compulsory legislation for tuberculin testing will no doubt be pressed in the Canadian House of Commons at an early day. We have the authority of Hon. Mr. Fisher, Minister of Agriculture in the Dominion Government, to state there is no such intention whatever. A thoroughly informed and practical man, favoring educational methods, with liberty of individual action, the present Minister of Agriculture knows that however it might work with the peasants of European countries, with their unsanitary conditions and unhealthy herds, it would be ill-advised in Canada, even if it were necessary, which it is not.

Protecting Farm Buildings from Lightning.

We regret to record that many valuable barns and other outbuildings have been destroyed this season by lightning. Whether in the aggregate the losses will exceed those of previous years we are unable to state definitely, but they are serious enough to revive interest in the subject of lightning rods, about the utility of which many are sceptical, while others have become disgusted with their very name in consequence of the rascally way in which they have been fleeced by agents. The records of insurance companies, so far as we have been able to learn, and the conclusions of those whose investigations best qualify them to form a correct judgment, are favorable to the use of rods properly constructed and maintained. We think there need be little doubt upon this point. Next comes the question, can farmers properly rod their own buildings, and at what cost? This was answered in our issue of August 2nd, page 339, where Mr. Thos. Baty described in detail the whole process of putting up 240 feet of rod, which two men did in a day and a half and at a cost of \$4 for the galvanized wire forming the rod, and say \$3 for the labor—\$7 in all. We gave in the same issue the favorable comments thereon of two experts, one the Chief of the U. S. Weather Bureau, and in this issue Mr. J. W. Robson reviews the whole subject and gives our readers the benefit of many years' experience, study, and observation, so that it has now been very thoroughly covered from all standpoints. If the reader is convinced of the

theory of protection from lightning, he has before him in the articles referred to the knowledge of how to proceed and what the probable cost will be. On the latter point we might add that agents have been putting up rods this season in the same part of the country, for which the price was some 22 cents per foot, including labor, or over seven times what it actually cost Mr. Baty to rod his barns, and so far as appearances go and the way in which the work was done his appeared to be in every respect a much superior job. Time will determine their comparative utility and durability.

The Royal Commission Reports.

The report of the Royal Commission appointed by the British House of Commons in 1893 to investigate the causes of the depression in agriculture has recently been distributed. It is a lengthy and elaborate document, filling a blue book of 370 pages, dealing with a great many points with which our readers have no interest in common, and we make use of only such passages as seem to be of at least passing interest to Canadians. The Commissioners agree that the depression is mainly caused by the heavy fall in the prices of agricultural produce. They have arrived at the following general conclusions on this point:

1. That the changes in the prices of grain during the past twenty years represent a fall of over 40 per cent. in the three staple cereals, and over 50 per cent. in the case of wheat.
2. That in the price of beef there has been in the same period a fall ranging from 24 to 40 per cent., according to quality.
3. That the prices realized for mutton since 1882-84 have exhibited a progressive decline of from 20 to 30 per cent.
4. That there has been a fall in the price of wool amounting to upwards of 50 per cent. during the past twenty years.
5. That dairy produce has participated in this depreciation, and that, taking the changes in the prices of milk, butter, and cheese as a whole, there has been a fall approaching 30 per cent.
6. That the fall in the staple products, already referred to, has been accompanied by a decline of at least 20 to 30 per cent. in the price of potatoes.
7. That although there have been fluctuations in the prices of hops, they have exhibited in recent years a general tendency to fall to an unprofitable level.

The concluding sentences in the report are as follows: "The grave situation we have described, affecting no inconsiderable part of Great Britain, is due to a long-continued fall in prices. This fall is attributed by the great majority of witnesses to foreign competition, and, as previously pointed out, we have not been able to find any promise, in the near future at all events, of a material relaxation of the pressure of this competition upon the British producer. So far, then, as agricultural depression is due to these causes, we must regard it as probable that the depression will continue, and that there will be a further reduction of the area of British land susceptible of profitable arable cultivation, together with a corresponding contraction of our production and a diminution of our rural population.

This is certainly not a very cheerful finding, and the Commissioners have evidently not seen their way clear to adopt the view held by the President of the Board of Agriculture as recently expressed, that the colonies and foreign countries would probably limit their exports when prices fell below the cost of production, a view which to most people would seem to be over-sanguine since the colonists and the foreigners have large surpluses in many lines that must be marketed however unsatisfactory the returns may be. The report is decidedly pessimistic in its tone, and its suggestions are evidently advanced more as palliatives than as likely to prove a remedy for the existing state of depression from which the British farmer is especially suffering. The Commissioners intimate that while they have agreed almost unanimously upon the main features of their report, yet upon the subject of a remedy for the chief cause of the depression there is considerable difference of

opinion, and that subject is accordingly left to be dealt with in separate memoranda. A supplementary report is presented by ten members of the Commission, including Mr. Chaplin and Mr. Long, who see in the gold standard a principal cause of falling prices and consequent depression, in favor of a reversal of the monetary policy of the country. In this document a conference of the powers is recommended to consider the subject of international bimetalism.

The Commissioners devote considerable attention to the question of railway freight rates, a subject in regard to which our sympathies are with them, and sum up their conclusions as follows:

"We fully agree with the many witnesses who have given evidence upon the subject that it is one of very great importance to farmers, who, while suffering from the fall in the value of their products, have found little or no relief in the rates charged for their conveyance. But it is well known that in fixing rates railway managers have less regard to the cost of the service than to the value of the article carried. The whole question affects national as well as class interests, and is deserving of much more scientific investigation than it has yet received."

To guard against the sale of adulterated products, and of imported goods as home produce, the Commissioners recommend that the proposals of the Food Products Adulteration Committee bearing upon agricultural produce should be carried into effect by legislation, and that the recommendation of the House of Lords Committee for registering dealers in foreign meat should also be given effect to. They also express themselves in favor of the system of selling cattle by live weight.

The Proof of the Pudding.

It has no doubt been a puzzling problem to many breeders and feeders of hogs in the United States, and perhaps to some in Canada, that hogs have for several months past been selling for about \$2 per 100 lbs. live weight higher in the Toronto market than the highest prices ruling at Chicago, but the *Drover's Journal* of that city seems to have solved the problem to its own satisfaction, as indicated by the following quotation from a late issue of that paper:

"The Canadian packers could buy many hogs in Chicago at \$4.00 that cost them \$6.00 in Toronto, but they couldn't sell the product for Canadian bacon, which has gained such an enviable reputation."

And in another paragraph in the same issue an attempt is made to comfort the American farmer for this difference in prices by arguing that owing to the peculiar manner in which the American hog gets his living a comparison of results is not necessarily so unfavorable as may at first sight appear. The *Drover's Journal* goes on to say:

"Canadian bacon manufacturers are making the most of the excellent reputation they have won for their product, and are having no difficulty in selling them in competition with United States bacon in England at prices that justify them in paying farmers \$2 per 100 lbs. more for hogs, live weight, in Toronto than our packers pay for our best bacon hogs at Chicago. On Friday, August 6, a report of the Toronto bacon hog market was as follows: 'A few extra choice bacon hogs sold as high as \$6 cwt., but ruling price for best was \$5.80 to \$5.85.' On the same day some fancy light-bacon hogs sold here at \$3.92, with \$3.85 to \$3.90 being the prices for selected 160 to 180 lb. hogs. A comparison of results looks very unfavorable to the American hog grower, but when everything is considered he probably makes more money out of his hogs than the Canadian farmers who can get \$2 per 100 lbs. more for what they grow. The Canadian farmer engages in mixed husbandry, and while he grows a little of everything, he does nothing on a large scale. He raises perhaps one litter of pigs, and having no coarse grain feeds them on milk, peas, roots and grass, and his expense account is much larger than that of the United States hog grower, who can feed cheap corn to his cattle and fatten his hogs on what the cattle do not assimilate. There is doubtless more money to the