

THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE AND HOME MAGAZINE.

THE LEADING AGRICULTURAL JOURNAL IN
THE DOMINION.

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Government Dealing in Breeding Stock.

We are in receipt of letters from two different breeders of pure-bred stock in the Maritime Provinces, in which they vigorously condemn the system adopted by the Government of one of the Provinces of sending out agents or commissioners to purchase breeding stock to be exposed for sale at public auction to the farmers, public money being used, and the loss, being the difference between the cost price, including expenses, and the price obtained, being charged up against the people. One of our correspondents writes: "The importation of cattle by our Provincial Government has doubtless driven nearly all the old breeders of beef cattle out of business, as well as injured the breeders of dairy stock, and I think that any Government that should have made an importation of dairy stock at a time when young breeders were endeavoring to organize and get down to real good work deserves the severest censure. Breeders prefer doing their own importing and making their own selections rather than entrust that work to men who have no knowledge of good stock whatever." It must be admitted that there is some force in these arguments, and especially if selections of stock are made by men inexperienced and uninformed in regard to the qualities of the different breeds of stock, and when inferior animals are purchased, for the reason perhaps that the price is low. Our second correspondent says: "The writer had the privilege of attending the sale of 100 sheep that our Government imported from Ontario this fall, and the lambs could not compare with our own for size." We understand that these sheep were sold at prices representing a heavy loss as compared with the cost price, which, from what we know of the stock, we judge was not high, but the fact that they were not of a high standard of excellence probably accounts in a large measure for the unsuccessful sale, while the introduction of inferior stock hurts the reputation of breeds and breeders, and paying freight charges and other expenses on that class of stock cannot be justified on business principles. Since exception is taken, and with some foundation, to this system, we submit that probably equal or greater service could be rendered the farmers of the Maritime Provinces, who are desirous of securing from time to time good fresh blood for breeding purposes, if reduced rates of freight were arranged for the transportation of registered stock on the same basis as that on which such stock is now carried by the C. P. R. from Ontario to the Northwest Territories and British Columbia, instead of paying high freight rates on inferior stock. The eastern farmer and breeder could then arrange to make his own selections or entrust the selection to competent men in the West, and by this means business could be promoted and improvement of stock encouraged to the advantage of both buyer and seller. The Maritime breeders and farmers should also be accorded by the local railways the advantages of special lower rates on pure breeding stock shipped from point to point within the provinces.

A Personal Request.

DEAR READER,—In the last copy of the FARMER'S ADVOCATE for 1896 we promised a number of improvements for 1897. Among these was a new and substantial cover of fine paper in corn and gold colors. But first in importance, as far as practical value to the farmer—be he stock breeder, feeder, dairyman, fruit grower, poultryman, or beekeeper—was an increased and improved quota of articles and letters. Has the pledge been redeemed? We are content to abide by the judgment of the reader. "An excellent paper, full of valuable information," writes Mr. David Robertson. "Holds its own against all comers," says Mr. C. A. Cass. "Every farmer," writes Mr. Alfred Judd, "should take and read the ADVOCATE thoroughly." Mr. G. C. Caston observes: "Glad to see you still lead." "Worth \$5 a year," says another in a postscript; and so on through scores of unsolicited testimonials that every mail brings. Encouraged by the cordial appreciation of the past, and the better times (which we predicted a year ago), we have mapped out a further advance for 1898. To get out a high-class paper of this sort requires the "sinews of war." Will every present reader, by prompt renewal, and at the same time sending us one or more NEW SUBSCRIPTIONS, sustain us? We believe they will. Wherever the paper goes it helps to make farming pay better. We should have at least 50,000 Canadian readers before the end of 1898. The current issue gives a fair idea of what may be expected in reading matter and illustration. If you wish extra sample copies for persons whom you know ought to take the paper, send us their addresses or drop us a post card for samples yourself.

The Christmas Number for 1896, our initial effort, proved a unique success, 11,000 or 12,000 extra copies being required to meet the demand. With that experience we have planned for the number of 1897, to be issued on Dec. 15th, a much handsomer and more valuable treat, both in illustration and articles, from the most skilled artists and capable writers in Canada, from the Maritime Provinces to British Columbia, and in Great Britain as well. A very wide range of subjects—national in their importance—will be ably presented, bearing mainly on the fundamental conditions of progress and success in Canadian agriculture, but introducing many new and interesting features. The advancement of Canada's live stock interests will be fully dealt with by men who understand every phase of the question. The interests of Western Canada will be ably set forth both by writers and illustrations, a magnificent set of original photographs having been secured for the latter purpose. Our artists have for some months been at work on the colored illustrations—to be in ten-color effect—for cover and inside, which are now sufficiently advanced for us to speak with assurance regarding them. Worth at least half a year's regular subscription price to the paper, we have, however, decided to supply a copy of this splendid number free to every new subscriber during the present month (Dec.) and January for 1898. Persons desiring extra copies as a holiday souvenir for mailing abroad or to friends away from home should advise us at once as to the number required. We will supply our regular subscribers with extra copies at 10c. each, or non-subscribers at 25c. each.

It is not necessary to direct the attention of our readers to the Bagster Bible, book, jewelry and other beautiful premiums, which speak for themselves, and which are being very widely taken advantage of.

Thanking you for past appreciation and support, and looking for an early and hearty response to the requests indicated above, we remain,

Yours faithfully,

THE WM. WELD CO. (LIMITED).

Couldn't be Without It.

I hardly know what we farmers would do without the FARMER'S ADVOCATE. It is invaluable. I at least would miss it.

A. D. GAMLEY.
Selkirk, Man.

Farmers' Institute Speakers.

BY "M."

The twelfth annual series of Farmers' Institute meetings will shortly commence, and the announcement is suggestive of many things in connection with them. It is too late in the day to question their usefulness. Statistics afford proof of the success of the system. There has been a steady annual increase in the attendance. Last year 659 meetings were held; 3,277 addresses were delivered; and the total attendance was 125,177. These are impressive figures, and must be very gratifying to those who are responsible for the work. We need not, however, imagine that each one of those 659 meetings was a success, or that every address was a model of its kind. Nor need we think for a moment that there were 125,177 people who were perfectly satisfied with the meetings and the speakers. It is not proposed here to analyze the circumstances that lead to and accompany failure, but rather to throw out some critical and suggestive thoughts concerning one great factor in the success or failure of these meetings—to wit, the speakers. We may say, however, in passing, that we do not by any manner of means wish to intimate that speakers are mainly responsible for the way things go. Half the battle lies with the local officers and the chairman; and audiences themselves can do much to make or mar a meeting. We recall a case in point which happened last season in a district which shall be nameless. After a long, cold drive in the dark, the delegates arrived at the place of meeting. The audience numbered two, one of whom left the room directly the delegates entered it! A cheerful kind of secretary in that Institute, surely! A great deal, too, lies with the chairman. This, indeed, is a more important matter than most people realize. We have seen as many meetings ruined, or at least fall short of success, from the fact that an unsuitable man was in the chair as from any cause whatever. A chairman is supposed to keep order and to introduce the speakers. If he can't do the first—and some of them can't—he will undoubtedly kill any meeting. But even if he can keep order and can introduce the speakers, something more is wanted. It is for him to say the bright word, suggest questions, guide discussion wisely, rouse the enthusiasm of the crowd, and without much talking on his own part, create such an atmosphere that everybody else is glad either to talk or to listen. If a man consents to take the chair, he should feel qualified to do so. He should realize that on him in no small measure rests the success of the meeting. It is to no purpose that a man is a successful farmer, a good citizen, an amiable father, etc. He may be all these, and at the same time a "stick" of a chairman. The fact is, a chairman should prepare himself for his office as carefully as if he were one of the principal speakers—which he is.

But while all this is felt rather than understood, it is the official speakers—the delegates—on whom usually fall the praise, the criticism, and the censure; and on them lies a large share of the responsibility. The ideal Institute speaker is more easily imagined than found, and far less easily found than the ideal critic. It's a small meeting that doesn't hold at least half a dozen full-fledged critics. The ideal speaker is obviously he who understands experimentally all the practical details of his subject, and who can at the same time so translate his knowledge into words as to impart to his audience all he knows, and carry them with him by the swing and interest of his speech. Not very easy to do, perhaps, but an ideal at which all speakers can aim. As it is, we are too often confronted by men who are eminently practical and successful, and yet who, from sheer lack of manner and language, cannot once rouse the interest of their audiences; or, on the other hand, by men with a fatal fluency of speech, but no real and comprehensive knowledge of facts. Undoubtedly the keynote to success is thorough preparation, and this not only as to the matter but as to the manner of the speech. A famous preacher used to say, "There are three kinds of speakers—those whom you can't listen to, those whom you can listen to, and those whom you can't help listening to." The last sort only become such after the most patient and strenuous attention to all the details which contribute to success. There are many reasons why Institute speakers should prepare thoroughly for their work. For one thing, the very process gives him unconsciously more confidence in himself. For another thing, these Institutes have been some time in operation, and people are beginning now to compare speaker with speaker, and in the threshing out of some knotty problem, the unconvincing answer of speaker A is met with "but Professor B told us so-and-so." A delegate may at least pay himself and his audience the compliment of a close study of the scientific side of his subject. Woe to him if he doesn't! In the dullest of audiences he is likely to run up against a "snag." His pseudo-scientific statement, laid down with an air of finality, will meet with some pertinent, house-searching question from an O. A. C. graduate, or from a man who reads, and he is put to hopeless confusion, and the good he really did do is straightway undone. While we believe that it is wise for a speaker to utter what is in him boldly and confidently, rather than to shove things out diffidently and tentatively, yet it is equally wise and unspcakably more honest to "plank out" a plain "I don't know" than to come out with a plausible but shaky and unsatisfying answer.

As to the question of reading versus speaking, one should be lenient in judging. An old hand at