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"Persevere and
Succeed."

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EDITORIAL.

Where Nature does the most for a country, Man often does the least.

A plantation of well-selected apples, properly cared for, may be appropriately described as a sort of endowment insurance policy.

The Missouri Pacific Railway sends out over its lines a 12 h.-p. motor car equipped with a weed-cutting attachment, calculated to abate in some measure the pests their trains let loose upon the country.

Railways are professedly anxious to promote the prosperity of farmers living in their territory in order to develop more and better business for themselves, but their methods do not always keep pace with their intentions.

In the Province of Ontario the Government, in its wisdom, provides well-qualified county representatives to conduct agricultural classes in the high schools, but maintains a school system admirably designed to conduct them in other directions.

It is scarcely too much to say that the organization of five co-operative egg circles in Peterborough County, last week, marks an epoch in the Canadian poultry industry. Read the account in our last issue. The movement will spread. It is worth watching.

Under present conditions of marketing, a farm flock of poultry can easily be made to yield an average net return of \$1.25 per annum over and above cost of feed. By co-operative marketing of a guaranteed product, tastefully put up, this margin may be doubled.

Speaking last winter of clover as feed for horses, Dr. J. Standish, Professor of Veterinary Science at the Nova Scotia College of Agriculture, pithily stated the argument for early cutting of this valuable legume. "The clover," he said, "should not be allowed to get to the stage when the horse will think that he is eating raspberry canes." On behalf of the cow we respond for her, "Me too!"

Single-tax is quite a live question in New Ontario. Advocates claim that it would discourage speculative holding of land and encourage its devotion to productive uses. Opponents reply that any system of taxation which imposes on the struggling newcomer a larger proportion of taxation than he now bears would be impracticable, since the settler in question simply would not have the money to pay, and money can't be wrung out of stones. It is a broad question.

The graduation of another batch of 29 Bachelors of Scientific Agriculture from the O. A. C., subject to supplementals in three cases, again prompts the question, What will be their attitude to the farm? For various reasons, some of them will respond to the urgent call of business and the lure of the city, but it is encouraging to see many of them with their eyes set for the life of the country, and operation of a farm, and the opportunity to be in the business as such, and not as a mere spectator, and that is enough for a lot of people.

Prospective Profits from Tree Growth.

Belated through pressure of space, we publish two letters on the question of the farmer's wood-lot, one from J. H. Burns, of Perth County, in Western Ontario, and one from Clark Hamilton, in the East. On one point they agree with us, viz., that many sections unsuited for cultivation should never have been cleared, but should have had the mature growth removed from time to time, and that reforestation of such areas should be promptly begun.

We concede with them, further, that in communities where some of the farms are rough, while others are wholly suitable for tillage, the main if not the total forested area should be on the rougher farms. Such distribution of the woodland would serve the communal interest quite as well as or better than if the woodland were divided among all the holdings, and would be true economy. On this ground, mainly, we advocated the exemption of farm woodlands from taxation, and a half-way optional measure to secure this is now on the Ontario statutes.

But take the case of the average community where it is good land under tree growth or none at all, and here, we unhesitatingly assert, a broad survey of the whole question will indicate the advisability of each farmer leaving a percentage of his land in wood-lot. In this connection Mr. Hamilton raises a very pertinent question as to whether it is better to attempt to restore a thin run-out wood-lot of poor kinds of timber, occupying rich soil, or to clear this land and plant select species on land less adapted to cultivation. In such a case transfer of the location might be advisable, not because the old bush cannot be saved, for scarcely any bush left standing at all is past the possibility of restoration by natural means if stock be kept out. But it is undoubtedly economical to have the wood-lot on areas least suited to cultivation. Mr. Hamilton's fear that the original species will not thrive under present conditions of drainage and exposure is not well founded. We could take him to scores of wood-lots where a splendid growth of mixed hardwoods has sprung up from natural seeding since live stock has been excluded. With a little attention to selection and thinning a beautiful growth of straight, thrifty saplings may be secured. And not only so, but cross sections show that the larger trees improve noticeably in health and rapidity of growth once the annual leaf fall is retained by the saplings that quickly spring up when cattle are kept out.

Mr. Burns is more unsparing than Mr. Hamilton. Brushing aside all considerations of sentiment, and practically ignoring the many indirect benefits of the wood-lot, such as checking the sweep of winds, and providing harbors for insectivorous birds, he demands to know whether foresters are quite sure a wood-lot will produce an annual growth of a cord per acre. Assuming that it would, he contrasts the return from such growth with the returns from flax or other crops. To this we had previously objected that allowance should be made for the depletion of fertility by the growing of a flax crop. We took the position that the rental value per acre of a whole farm, or the annual interest on its selling value, would be a fairer criterion by which to estimate the relative profits of the wood-lot and cleared land. To compare the gross returns of the wood-lot with the gross returns of the fields is palpably unfair, since labor and fertilizing eat up a goodly share in the former case.

Mr. Burns asks whether a cord of wood would produce as much plant food as a ton of

flax, thereby revealing a lack of information which he should certainly have repaired before entering a controversy of this kind. We have been at pains to secure some data from Prof. Harcourt, at Guelph, and Dr. Fernow, of the University of Toronto. Quoting Warrington, Prof. Harcourt shows that the great bulk of the plant food in a year's growth of three species (beech, spruce fir and Scotch pine) is contained in the leaf litter, which being annually returned to the soil, increases the available fertility. Dr. Fernow fully substantiates this conclusion, pointing out that the wood of trees rarely contains as much as one per cent. of mineral ash, while the foliage contains more than six per cent. And of the total plant food abstracted a considerable part will have been brought up from below by the deep tree roots. Moreover, practical experience convinces all of us that land under forest increases in available fertility without expense for manuring. It is clear, therefore, that the forest, unlike the flax or other field crop, need have no charge assessed against its annual returns to compensate for abstraction of fertility. If anything, it should be credited with something for the improvement of the land.

The other question, whether we may be sure of an annual growth of a cord of wood per acre, is quite effectually disposed of by Dr. Fernow, an acknowledged authority, who states that a planted forest, if well attended, would produce at least 25 cords in 25 years, and that this rate of a cord per year could be maintained and improved to the hundredth year. He cites figures to show that in the German national forests of Prussia the growth is constantly improving, and has increased from 29 (solid) cubic feet per acre in 1830 to 70 cubic feet in 1900, these figures applying to an average of seven million acres, many of them very poor and unproductive. Harking back, then, to our former estimate that at present fuel prices in London a growth of a cord per acre of hardwood would ensure a net return of \$4.00 per annum from fuel alone, we maintain that this would be approximately as good to a farmer as the present net annual farm return indicated by prevailing land rentals. We freely concede that present rentals do not represent what might and should be made off our farms, but they undoubtedly do indicate approximately what is usually being made from them over and above wages, taxes, running expenses and cost of up-keep, and it is actual, not possible conditions we are dealing with. Will Mr. Burns tell us what net return he is deriving from his farm?

Then, again, we do not by any means admit that fuel value represents the possible return from the wood-lot. With a little attention to thinning and pruning of the saplings, far more than this may be derived from timber in one or another of its various forms, and timber values are rising. In Ontario, for instance, the supply of choice hardwood, such as white ash, rock elm and oak, is practically exhausted, and manufacturers are importing such woods from the United States. Prices have gone up to a fabulous height, and other kinds, such as maple, chestnut and birch, are being used more freely. Is it not reasonable to expect that when the commoner woods become as scarce in their turn, the man who has some to sell may pretty nearly dictate his own prices? Fuel prices are rising, but the disparity between fuel and timber prices is increasing much faster. Make liberal allowance for the substitution of other building materials and the prospects for tempting timber values are still of the brightest. It is estimated that the present standing timber supply in the United States is about sufficient for twenty years' use. But take present prices and the showing is excellent enough. Two or three