

The Farming World

And Canadian Farm and Home

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Weeds and Thistles

FARMERS are complaining severely this year of weeds and thistles. Though the season has been backward for grain crops, weeds and thistles have flourished, and especially the latter. Many farmers who have heretofore prided themselves on having but few thistles on their farms, have this year fields completely covered with them. The backwardness of the grain crop early in the season seemed to give this weed the conditions it needed in which to show itself.

About the only thing that can be done now is to cut the thistles out of the grain. But with the present help scarcity, this is no easy problem. The thistles are now several inches above the grain, and the simplest way would be to go over the fields with a scythe when they are in bloom and cut the tops off. As the grain is all tied by the self-binder, thistles are not so troublesome as they were when this work had to be done by hand. What troubles the farmer most is to get this persistent plant and other injurious weeds out of the land. The past two or three summers, though wet and conducive to good crops, have helped the growth of weeds of all kinds. In this the farmer is facing a new difficulty, which the scarcity of help is not lessening.

To cope with this difficulty, many farmers are going back to the old-time summer fallow. While a hoe crop will produce the same result as a summer fallow in the eradication of weeds, and save the land from being idle a year, it requires more help to do it properly than the latter, and this, many farmers have not got, and are therefore compelled, in order to keep their lands tolerably free from weeds, to go back on the hoe crop theory. This does not mean that hoe crops are being given up altogether, but that the area devoted to these is being lessened. In fact, many farmers who grow the same acreage of hoe crops as formerly, have been forced to resort to the summer fallow in order to keep up with the weed pests. A larger acreage of summer fallow can be worked with less help than a hoe crop requires. This is not a plea for the restoration of the summer fallow. Where sufficient help is to be had, we believe as much will be accomplished in getting rid of weed pests by a hoe crop, as by any other method, and there is not lost. But things have reached such a pass in this province that the farmers are compelled to govern their farming practice not by what is best for the

land and for their purse, but by the amount of help they can command. In many cases this is so small that little land can be worked at all.

What Scarcity of Help is Doing

People not in touch with agricultural conditions in this province cannot realize how acute the farm help problem is becoming and how it is effecting a transformation in the kind of farming being practiced. In deciding what line of agriculture he will engage in, the farmer is governed almost entirely by his ability to obtain help. Many a farmer today is not directing his energies in the channels he thinks best or in those for which his farm and surroundings are best adapted because of this one thing—not sufficient help. If this scarcity were only of a temporary character its effect would not be so drastic. But

Exhibition Number.

Our Seventh Annual Exhibition number will appear on September 1st. It is our purpose in that issue to present a paper that shall represent high water mark in agricultural journalism. Men of experience and literary ability are contributing articles of special interest and value. Beginning with that issue, several new features will be introduced as regular departments of the paper. It is our purpose in this number to give our readers a little foretaste of the splendid bill of fare now being arranged for the fall and winter of 1904-5. The illustrations in this annual number will be unusually attractive. Advertisers desiring space will do well to make early application.

the scarcity has existed for several years, and so far as we can see at present, is likely to exist for several years to come. The only salvation for the farmer is to adapt himself to the kind of farming that will require the least help to operate it successfully.

By co-operation during haying and harvest, farmers can overcome the help difficulty in a measure. But this is not altogether satisfactory, especially during harvest, as the grain in a district will ripen about the same time. But even with this to contend against, a couple of farmers by working together can manage a good deal better than each one working by himself with no help. In a number of districts farmers have tried this plan with success.

But the help problem remains unsolved, and farmers like to be independent of their neighbors. And this

leads to another thought, that one way of overcoming the help difficulty would be smaller or larger farms. With a small farm of, say, fifty acres, the average farmer could do the work well himself and what help the family might afford. In fact, only the other day we heard of a farmer who sold his one hundred acre farm and bought a fifty acre one that he could handle himself. The larger farm idea might help to solve the problem in this way. With a two hundred acre farm, the farmer could afford to build a second house and employ a married man all the year round. In fact, where more intensive farming is being carried on, this would pay on a hundred acre farm. However this may be, we believe one of the ways of successfully overcoming the help difficulty is to employ a married man, provide him with a home, and give him steady employment the year round. Once settled in a comfortable home with his family, a married man will be loth to leave his employer, providing other things are satisfactory. And thus it is that either larger or smaller farms may help to solve the farm labor problem.

Agricultural Opportunities in Older Canada

Sir Hersh Gilzean Reid, a noted English journalist, did a very wise thing, when, in visiting Toronto recently, he called attention to the necessity of bringing before the intending British emigrant, with means, the attractions of the older parts of settled Ontario. He claimed that many of these newcomers would do better by buying cultivated farms in the east and thus take the places left vacant by Canadian farmers, who migrate to the west or to the newer parts of Ontario.

And so they would. In older Canada, the British farmer, with means, accustomed to what is known as intensive agriculture at home, will find opportunities for investment equal to if not better than any in the great Canadian west. On the vast prairie, where land is plentiful, there is no room for the intensive farmer. He must get into the swim and farm on a large scale, devoting his energies largely to one particular line, that of grain growing, or he will fall behind. In older Ontario and the provinces east, conditions are different. It is the intensive farmer, the one who works every foot of his land to the very best advantage and makes it produce to its utmost capacity, who is succeeding and who will succeed. Live stock husbandry, the dairy, the