

THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE AND HOME MAGAZINE.

THE LEADING AGRICULTURAL JOURNAL IN
THE DOMINION.

TWO DISTINCT PUBLICATIONS—EASTERN AND WESTERN.

PUBLISHED SEMI-MONTHLY BY
THE WILLIAM WELD COMPANY (LIMITED).

EASTERN OFFICE:
CARLING STREET, LONDON, ONT.

WESTERN OFFICE:
MCINTYRE BLOCK, MAIN STREET, WINNIPEG, MAN.

LONDON, ENGLAND, OFFICE:
W. W. CHAPMAN, Agent, Fitzalan House,
Strand, London, W. C., England.

JOHN WELD, MANAGER.

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Horses and Fruit.

MORE HORSES TO BE BOUGHT IN CANADA FOR THE
BRITISH ARMY.—WHAT THE MEASURE FOR
MARKING FRUIT BARRELS AND BOXES
PROVIDES.

FROM OUR OTTAWA CORRESPONDENT.

Ottawa, April 9th.—Lieut.-Col. Dent is again in Canada for the purpose of purchasing horses for remounts in the British army. He was in Ottawa this week for a few hours, but, with the exception of the Governor-General and the Hon. Sydney Fisher, Minister of Agriculture, he was disinclined to see anyone. To the question as to what were his plans, he said they would not be matured for some time yet, but he had definite instructions on two points: He would buy, at centers yet to be defined, all the Canadian horses suitable for army purposes that could be purchased at what he considered to be a fair valuation. As soon as possible he will buy 1,000 horses and ship them by way of Boston or Portland, as may be found most expedient. Then he will establish remount stations in various districts throughout Canada, at which horses will be bought and shipped as opportunity requires. When these depots are established, the experienced horse-buyer placed in charge will be empowered to give to horse-breeders all information necessary to enable them to raise animals suitable for army purposes. Lieut.-Col. Dent was disinclined to be interviewed personally on this point so important to the majority of the readers of the FARMER'S ADVOCATE, but he said the information would be forthcoming in due course. It is interesting to know, however, that the army officials have spoken highly of the quality of the horses taken from Canada for service in the South African war, and the Colonel volunteers the information that horses of similar build and breed (or variety of breeds) are just what is wanted. Indeed, there is reason for the belief that the official explanation why only 3,738 horses were purchased by the British Government in Canada, while 7,901 were bought in Australia and 26,310 in the United States, is correct. It was given in the British House of Commons on the 19th ult., when Mr. Gilbert Parker, M. P. for Gravesend, the well-known Canadian writer, asked for an explanation on the subject, thereby doing this country a good favor. Lord Stanley said the purchase of horses in the Dominion was "limited by the shortness of the season and the approach of the Canadian winter, and the prices of the horses and cobs were much higher than those paid for similar animals obtained in the United States and in Australia." There is

little, if anything, in the explanation of the short season and the approach of winter, for our winter does not in any way detract from the hardness of our horses, and in the Northwest thousands of them roam the plains, when not broken in and working, the entire year round. But we can well understand that if the Imperial authorities refused to pay our horse-raisers full market price, they would be unable to buy. If they got cheaper horses elsewhere, it does not follow that they got as serviceable animals, for experience has shown that the well-bred Canadian horse—thanks, in great measure, to the health-giving properties of our bracing northern climate—can hold his own with the horse of any country, under any conditions.

When navigation opens, the horses purchased by Col. Dent will be shipped by way of Montreal. The greatest care will be taken to secure proper shipping facilities for the animals, and in this work Col. Dent is being aided by Major the Hon. Ormsby Gore, of the 11th Hussars, and Dr. James Fraser. The last named, by the way, is a Canadian, the brother of Mr. S. P. Fraser, 10th con., East Zorra, Oxford County, Ont. He has achieved distinction as a veterinary surgeon, and is at the head of one of the largest colleges in the United Kingdom.

I understand that it is the intention to establish one or more remount stations in the Province of Ontario, one in Quebec, one in Manitoba, and one in the Northwest Territories, though nothing will be definitely decided until Col. Dent looks over the ground. He was in Canada last year, and he was then so pressed for time that he did not visit the Northwest, but he recognizes the importance of seeing that country and its horses on this occasion.

The House of Commons made few amendments to Hon. Sydney Fisher's bill to provide for the marking and inspection of packages containing fruit for sale. As reported, the measure will come into effect on July 1st next. A closed package is defined as a box or barrel of which the contents cannot be seen or inspected when such package is disclosed. Fruit marketed in ordinary baskets will not, therefore, come under this law. Every box or barrel in which fruit is inclosed must be marked in a plain and indelible manner, with the initials of the christian names and the full surname and address of the packer, with the name of variety or varieties, and with a designation of the grade of the fruit. It will be illegal for any person to sell or expose for sale, or have in his possession, any fruit packed in a closed package and intended for sale, unless such package is marked as thus set forth. Section 6 provides that no person shall sell, or expose or have in his possession for sale, any apples or pears packed in a closed package upon which package is marked the grade, "A No. 1 Canadian," unless such fruit consists of well-grown specimens of one variety, sound, of nearly uniform size, of good color for the variety, of normal shape, and not less than 90 per cent. free from scab, worm holes, bruises, and other defects; properly packed and marked in a plain and indelible manner, with the minimum size of the fruit, in inches (or fraction thereof), across the case of the fruit. "No. 1 Canadian" is defined, under similar terms, as apples or pears of which 80 per cent. are faultless. There is an enactment making fraudulent any selling, exposing for sale, or having in possession, any fruit in a closed package that does not come up to the standard set forth for "A No. 1 Canadian," and marked "first," "best," or "extra good" quality. Fraud in packing is defined to be when more than 15 per cent. of the fruit is substantially smaller in size than, or inferior in grade to, or different in variety from, the marks on the package, or the faced or shown surface of the package. It is made a serious offence for anyone to virtually alter, efface or obliterate the words, "Falsely marked," placed on the package by the inspector who finds a package of fruit not up to the standard claimed for it by its owner. Penalties are imposed for a violation of any section of the Act, and provision is made for carrying out the intentions of Parliament in establishing and maintaining honesty in fruit-packing. The inspectors will be employed under regulations duly drawn up, to inspect packed fruit and to secure the punishment of those who may attempt to defraud the public and bring the good name of Canadian apples and pears into disrepute.

I listened to the interesting discussion that took place on the measure. There was no difference of opinion as to the need of it. It was conceded that it was the minority of packers that in the past had injured the export trade of the country and the growing sale of eastern fruit in Manitoba, but it was shown that the country, as a whole, was the loser by the fraudulent practices that had been resorted to. There was some question as to the best way to establish brands under which our fruit could be sold. The result is that the brands here set up, though intended to be standard brands for the whole country, are permissive. Men who have established a market for fruit under their own brands will be permitted to continue those brands, but their fruit must come up to the standard established. The Nova Scotia apple will still be known by its distinctive name, "Nova Scotia," but the standard must be upheld.

Mr. Hodson, Dominion Commissioner of Live Stock, is now in the Northwest visiting and addressing Farmers' Institutes. There is everywhere a tendency to improve the breeds of horses and cattle.

STOCK.

A Day with a Western Shepherd.

BY J. M'CAIG.

The Doukhobors and Galicians and their customs and habits are interesting to us, because they have become part of our commonwealth, but they lack the initial interest of fellowship and common nationality that many other settlers in the West have for their eastern friends. Apart from the large foreign immigration that is setting in Canada, the West has absorbed a great many eastern men or boys who have felt that they could do better if they only had the chance, and have consequently left the competition of the east for the open prairies of the West. These may be artisans, farmers' sons, or 'varsity grads. If they come as far west as Southern Alberta or Western Assiniboia, with its free grasses and balmy winter climate, under the kindly chinook, they soon conclude that the cattle business is the business of the country, and the goal of most is to get a start with a few cows; hence, many start riding for the big outfits, and convert their annual savings into cattle, and wait for their bunch to grow until it is large enough to afford constant employment and sufficient return to warrant them in homesteading a quarter-section, putting up a shack, and going into the cow business in an independent way. The cowboy life has been written and talked of "good and plenty," as the Western phrase goes. The picturesque aspects of it have not been neglected by fulsome newspaper correspondents. In fact, the pomp and circumstance of the old cowboy life, with its cartridge belts, guns, rough-riding, and eager sports and vices, have been given a prominence and emphasis greater than actual present humdrum working conditions warrant. But all Western men are not rough-riding, irresponsible cowboys; they are not even cattlemen at all. There are a good many shepherds. The newspaper men seem to have passed the shepherds up, but they are an interesting and an important economic factor of Western life just the same.

We had decided to see them at work. The natural grasses soon exhaust near the towns, and the shepherd tries to get where nobody else is, if possible. A visit to a sheep ranch does not mean a drive in a broad-cushioned phaeton for three miles and return, but a horseback ride of twenty miles. The ideal and typical way of traveling in the West is on the frisky "cayuse," as the Western pony is called. He may be heady and fresh at first, and roll you a bit for the first couple of miles, for the healthy pony is fond of moving. His wind and constitution are good, for he has been brought up outside, with exercise all the year round and with plenty of dry feed. By and by you get closer to your Mexican saddle, with its high pommel and cantel, and it is much more comfortable than the diminutive English saddle—"postage stamp," the cow-man calls it. The air is fresh and exhilarating as champagne. Your whole frame is in pleasurable exercise, and you feel for once independent of the druggist and his drugs. But this is another story.

Two hours and a half brought us to the camp of our shepherd host—a real 'varsity man, but he has given over talking about that now. It was still light enough to see the camp lay-out. Large shedding, more noticeable for its extent than architectural grace; large corrals adjoining it; dipping plant, wool press, a mower, horse-rake, and large basket wagon, with which to gather the short prairie hay, against an occasional bad winter spell; but no harvesters, plows or seeders; and, finally, the shack of the proprietor. This was the picture before us as we jolted down the coulee to the river "bottom," protected on both sides by high-cut banks which carried up the bench lands at both sides of the stream. The sheep bunch were in the corral for the night. We could see the white mass and hear the bleat of an occasional unhappy member of the flock, who always seemed to have two or three, or perhaps half a dozen, imitators.

We ate and slept, and ate again, the last time before daylight, as the first time after dark, for the shepherd must be early afield. The dogs were already clamorous to be out before the lamp was extinguished—two collies and a greyhound, the collies to work the flock, the greyhound to protect the panicky, stupid sheep against wolves and coyotes. The greyhound bore many a scar, and was quiet and sedate, but the Scotch dogs were all movement, back and forth, and had to be brought "in to heel" frequently. The flock were already noisy; a second's pause found a new leader, and then came a regular chorus until the corral sent out a confused din of sheep calls. The corral is opened, a black goat is the recognized leader, but hundreds of quick hooves are striking the hard-trodden, dry way up the coulee; the dogs are quickening the front ranks by barking along the sides, and are shooting back to hurry the loiterers behind, and the day's work has opened. The pace slackens after the corral is empty, and the flock ascend the slope to the bench in long files, one after one, in a continuous, wavy movement, that seems of one sheep instead of twenty-five hundred of the little quadrupeds. By and by the bench and the grass are reached, the head ones pause for the first bite, and the ones behind spread and dress up to right and left until the flock is spread to a quarter or half a mile front, and in this way the circle for the day progresses. As among men, the aggressive get the best bite, and the strong, husky ones of the