

Notes from Ireland.

A HOPEFUL SEASON'S PROSPECTS.

Ireland is at present wearing a cheerier appearance than for many a long year past. Away in the West the transformation of extensive cattle ranches into colonies of small but industrious and ambitious farmers affords one of the most hopeful and pleasing signs of a regenerated land. And how glad some it is to note the pride which the newly-installed occupants are taking in their holdings, the taste and skill with which they are adorning their homes, and making them bright, healthful and fresh, and the zeal with which so many of them are already successfully engaging in the smaller branches of agricultural activity, such as poultry and egg production, vegetable culture, etc.

In most of the districts to which I am now referring, the occupants find one of their chief difficulties in the lack of capital, and to the provision of approved credit banks for such people, the immediate attention of the Department of Agriculture is promised. The Irish Agricultural Organization Society have established a number of local banks, but, arising out of the working of these, much friction occurred between the Irish Agricultural Organization Society and Vice-President Russell, of the Department, during the later stages of the period when the first named body was being subsidized by the Department. Mr. Russell is keen on the idea of banks, from which farmers can have advances without being fleeced. He promises to provide the real thing, and it is up to him to make good his word.

There are also signs of progress in other parts of the country as well, a notable feature being the number of fine, new farmhouses and up-to-date out-offices, stables, byres, iron hay sheds, etc., that are now arising.

The recent census returns, too, while they disclosed a continued decline in the population during the past decade, were not without their eminently satisfactory significance, in that the reduction was the smallest yet recorded, only about 70,000, compared with 1901. Emigration will in course of time be curtailed; "far-off fields look green," and when the youths and maidens of Ireland become less susceptible to the spell of the shipping agent, and realize more clearly that the streets of Toronto, Montreal, Winnipeg, New York or Brisbane are no more paved with gold than are those of Dublin, Belfast, Cork, or Derry, we shall undoubtedly find them turning in increasing numbers to look for the opportunities that are springing up for them in the towns and country districts of their own land. I hope the Canadian Immigration Office will not be offended.

THE SEASON.

Within a fortnight or so after their coronation, their Gracious Majesties, King George and Queen Mary, are to visit the Irish capital, and a characteristically warm-hearted and enthusiastic welcome is being prepared. Addresses are to be presented from all parts of Ireland, and though there are a few churlish, dwarf-minded "patriots" who, in their cherished ideas of isolated nationality are determined to stand aloof from any acknowledgment of deference to a "foreign" monarch, they are so rare that they are only making themselves ridiculous. From a social point of view, this visit, of course, will be the great event of the season, but in another aspect, viz., from the farmer's standpoint—which, in the long run, is of infinitely more importance than the coming and going of royal families—1911 promises to be long remembered as a grand year. The seed time was unusually favorable for practically all crops, and from the beginning of May till the middle of June we had an unbroken spell of generally warm, fine weather, which, fortunately, has at last given away to some very welcome rain, so that growth is going on apace. A phenomenally heavy frost, as late as the 13th and 14th of June, in the West and North, caused a severe check to the potato crops in many districts, but many tons of early potatoes were lifted in grand condition, and marketed at remunerative prices as early as the first few days of June. The dry weather kept pastures a bit bare, but latterly they have been producing abundant herbage. Grain, viz., wheat, oats, barley, all promise to yield full crops, though the area of the latter may be smaller than in other years. Flax has been very extensively grown this year; probably the area has increased by 25 per cent. Growers may expect lower prices, but the crops look splendid.

With regard to live stock, all classes of cattle have come well through the winter and spring, and have realized high prices, especially yearlings. Fat cattle, however, are not worth so much money as last year. A very good, healthful lambing season was experienced, thanks to the favorable weather, but until within the past month or so, the market currencies for mutton have been on the low side. Pigs maintain their prices well, but as young litters seem to be unusually plentiful throughout the country, it would not

surprise me to see heavily-stocked markets before many months elapse.

SHOWS.

The county and district show gets more firmly established as a recognized institution every year. As money is wanted for other purposes, the Department of Agriculture have been forced to reduce their subsidies to many local fixtures this year, but the promoters have not been discouraged thereby, and several grand exhibitions have already been held. Armagh Show, which used to attract thousands of visitors, has, however, dropped out this year, and Co. Waterford Show was almost slipping over the brink into abeyance, till a special effort gave it another year's lease of life. On the other hand, many shows are forging ahead in popular success, and are doing splendid work. I could name at least three Northern local one-day shows, quite close to each other, though serving distinct localities, that have each drawn crowds from 8,000 to 10,000 people within the past fortnight, and in every case the utmost critical and intelligent interest was shown in the relative merits of the different stock, so that great educational benefits were derived by visitors. We have not yet got the length of judging live stock in Ireland by means of the score-card. It is adopted pretty generally in the case of butter, eggs, honey, butter-making competitions, poultry plucking and trussing competitions, etc., but judges of the bigger sections, viz., horses, cattle, sheep and pigs, fight shy of it. One midland show, however, that at Mount Bellew Co. Galway, will witness the system of judging by points, being utilized in as many sections as possible.

COW-TESTING AND MILK PRODUCTION.

We are now to have, as a new and eminently desirable phase of Irish live-stock improvement, cow-testing associations set up throughout the country, mainly in conjunction with local creameries. The Department of Agriculture is moving in the formation of these, and nine are already in full activity. Obviously, the object aimed at is to inculcate the importance of having the milking qualities of the cows actually tested. In the nine societies referred to, arrangements exist for testing almost 1,200 animals, and each society is to get a small subsidy from the Department to assist in the remuneration of the secretary or manager.

The entire question of the milking capabilities of Irish cattle is a very vexed one just now. Many declare that the dairying properties of the heifers of recent years have been ruined owing to the influence of the premium Shorthorn bulls that have been used and that have been mainly of the Scotch beef type. The pedigree Shorthorn cow, too, has come in for a lot of harsh criticism from farmers on account of her alleged deficiency as a pail-filler, and the demand has been vehemently made for premium bulls only of a deep-milking strain, bred, say, from the ordinary cows registered in the Irish Dairy-herd scheme. Against this, the true-blue, pedigree-Shorthorn men seem to lift up their hands in holy horror, and they raise loud voices to refute the allegations against the dairying capabilities of their favorites. They point to the fact that, at one of the Department's Institutes there is a herd of selected cows, practically all sired by Shorthorn bulls, and that in this herd the average record per head is 650 gallons. Again, the beef men come along with their protest that milk and butter are only minor considerations, after all, and that, as the value of the Irish cattle exported is over 10½ million pounds annually, or two and a half times as much as the butter and other dairy exports, it is absurd to bend every energy towards the latter, but that the meaty types, e.g., Herefords and Aberdeen-Angus, should be still more extensively catered for. After all, it is very largely a question of locality. What will suit one district will not suit another. Yet, it is a painful fact that Irish butter exports have been steadily declining, and it urgently behooves the agricultural authorities to do all they can to check this most serious tendency. The keeping of milk records is one of the first steps in the direction of improvement, hence the wisdom of the testing associations. At the recent meeting of the Council of Agriculture, a very exhaustive debate took place on the subject of "Milk Production: Can it be increased without detriment to other agricultural industries?" J. S. Gordon, the Chief Agricultural Inspector, dealt with the matter in an instructive paper, and, having argued in favor of an affirmative answer to this question, recommended, as a means to the desired end, that farmers should:

1. Breed only from cows which give the highest yield of milk.
2. Retain their heifer calves to renew the stock.
3. Mate these cows and heifers with bulls whose female parents have a high reputation as being good milkers.
4. Have more cows calving in autumn.
5. Feed the cows more liberally both when dry and when giving milk.

"EMERALD ISLE."

Crop Report from Essex.

Prospects for an abundant harvest are fairly good. The season opened up somewhat cold and backward in April, delaying oat and barley seeding considerably. May was exceedingly hot and dry, giving ample opportunity for working the corn land and planting same, but, owing to excessive drouth during the latter part of the month, much corn failed to germinate. This was especially true on soil improperly drained or poorly cultivated. The result is that early-planted fields present a patchy appearance. Copious rain after the middle of June saved the situation and materially changed the prospects for all manner of crops, except clover. Corn (with a few exceptions) is in advance of this time last year. In many localities it has reached that stage where heat and drouth does not retard, but rather hastens the growth, so long as constant cultivation is followed. Should no unforeseen calamity befall us, Essex will have a large yield of corn to report for 1911. Other crops are also excellent. While there are no extravagant fields of fall wheat, yet the average is far in advance of 1910. The season is much earlier than has been known for many years. Cutting began in some sections on the 29th of June, and at present date, July 5th, is well under way. Reports say the sample is equal to that of former years. Oats are looking splendid, the rich dark color, strong growth and general appearance indicating a large yield. But little barley was sown last spring, but it is up to the average. Small fruits are in abundance. Cherries are rotting on the trees. Strawberries suffered from drouth, but raspberries are making a good showing, but need showers to secure a large harvest. Blackberries give great promise, and, likewise, currants. Plums, pears and peaches are also plentiful, but apples are almost a failure. The acreage planted to tobacco is far in excess of last year, but at present time is making very slow headway. Owing to heat, drouth and grubs, many fields required replanting. Should present dry, hot weather continue, many acres of the weed will be a total loss. It is rather early to speak assuredly regarding cucumbers, tomatoes, etc., but indications are very encouraging. The onion-growers are jubilant, for, while the early part of the season was rather dry, causing slow growth, while weeds grew apace, yet those who persevered in their efforts to keep them under control, are now enjoying the fruit of their labors. The acreage under onions is much larger than former years, and in all likelihood about double the quantity will be shipped. Pasture is rather short, and stock is suffering slightly, but we have little reason for complaint. So far as can be ascertained, Essex compares favorably with any other part of Ontario.

A. E.

New Assistant Horticulturist at Macdonald.

E. M. Straight, B. S. A., has been appointed assistant in Horticulture at Macdonald College, to fill the position vacated through the resignation of J. F. Monroe, who has gone to South Carolina, being engaged as agricultural agent of the Southern Railway Co., with headquarters at Columbia, S. C.

Mr. Straight was born at Cambridge, Queen's Co., N. B., where his father carried on a truck-gardening business, producing the earliest truck crops supplied to the St. John, N. B., market. He taught school for five years in his native county, spending the summer with his father, assisting him in his truck-gardening operations.

The call of the farm being too strong, he left teaching, and engaged for a number of years in intensive market-gardening at Cambridge. He was the first in this section to erect a greenhouse for the development of plants for early market crops. This start has resulted in the erection of many similar houses for this purpose by others in this and adjoining sections.

He broke away from the activities of the farm, and took two years at the Nova Scotia Agricultural College, Truro, N. S., securing a diploma from that institution. He followed this with one year at the Ontario Agricultural College, and the following year at Macdonald College, graduating from that institution in the spring of 1911.

Western Enterprise.

On the night of July 6th fire completely destroyed the grand-stands of the Canadian Industrial Exhibition Association at Winnipeg, whose exhibition was to open July 12th. While the fire was still raging, a meeting of the Exhibition Board and the City Council was held, and plans for the reconstruction of the grand-stands in time for the exhibition were completed. The active work of rebuilding started next morning, with all the resources of the City of Winnipeg bent to the task, and hundreds of workmen at work. The president says the stands will be ready for the crowds when the fair opens. In order to give as much time as possible to complete this great task, the opening of the exhibition has been set back one day, to Thursday, July 13th.