

THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE AND HOME MAGAZINE.

THE LEADING AGRICULTURAL JOURNAL IN THE
DOMINION.

PUBLISHED WEEKLY BY
THE WILLIAM WELD COMPANY (LIMITED).

JOHN WELD, MANAGER.

AGENTS FOR THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE AND HOME JOURNAL,
WINNIPEG, MAN.

LONDON (ENGLAND) OFFICE:

W. W. CHAPMAN, Agent, Mowbray House, Norfolk Street,
London, W. C., England.

1. THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE AND HOME MAGAZINE

is published every Thursday.

It is impartial and independent of all cliques or parties, handsomely illustrated with original engravings, and furnishes the most practical, reliable and profitable information for farmers, dairymen, gardeners, stockmen and home-makers, of any publication in Canada.

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THE PREVENTION OF FIRES.

At the last meeting of the Mutual Fire Underwriters' Association of Ontario, a tabulated record was presented which, in a striking way, contrasts the losses from fires in America (Canada and the United States) and six European countries, Australia, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy and Switzerland. In the latter group, the losses per capita range from 12 cents to 49 cents, while upon this continent the losses average \$1.76 per capita! In contemplating this enormous difference in fire waste, two questions naturally arise: How is it to be accounted for, and what measures may be taken towards its reduction? Speaking generally, there can be little doubt but that to the use of wooden buildings and careless haste in their construction may be attributed a large share of the responsibility for the frequently-recurring fires on this continent. In many cities and towns it has been found that stringent regulations, requiring the use of brick, stone or other non-combustible materials have effected a great reduction in the losses by fire. The State of Ohio has what is called a Department of Fire Enquiry, the chief officer of which is the Fire Marshal, under whose direction rigid inquiry is made into the causes of every fire, and he may order the removal of explosives or dilapidated buildings, which are a menace to adjacent property. As a result, the incendiary fires in the State have been reduced from 1 in 6 to 1 in 16. In fact, the very considerable number of States having the fire-marshal system in vogue, has demonstrated its efficiency in reducing fire losses and insurance rates. In some cases the Fire Bureau is supported by the State, and in others the outlay is partly made a charge upon the insurance companies. The Fire Marshal of Massachusetts reports that, during a couple of years, one-third of the total number of incendiary fires were set for the purpose of defrauding insurance companies, nine per cent. from revenge, and three per cent. from mental dis-

orders. In the returns from Ohio, during a recent year, we note the following suggestive table, classifying incendiary fires:

To defraud insurance companies.....	468
Revenge or malice	110
Mischievous boys	36
Pyromaniacs	29
Intoxicated persons	28
To avoid or secure work.....	18

A tabulation based on a period of years, for the whole of the United States, shows that over 20 per cent. of the fires are due to various forms of carelessness, such as in the use of pipes, matches and cigarettes, defective stoves and pipes, oil stoves, candles and gas jets, hot ashes, defective flues and smokestacks, fireworks, and so on. The moral of this is obvious, and the remedy lies with the people themselves. The risks from fires have no doubt been increased by the introduction of motive power driven at a high rate of speed, and furnished by the use of inflammable materials, requiring, obviously, greater care in their use. Using cheap or defective lamps and lanterns, and low-grade oils, are fruitful causes of fires. In regard to farm buildings, insurance companies find that lightning is the chief cause of fire, but scientific research and practical experience unite to show the usefulness of lightning-rods for protective purposes. Before the last annual meeting of the Mutual Fire Underwriters' Association of Ontario, Mr. Thos. Sheil, representing the North Blenheim Company, reported that in 45 years no barn protected by rods had been destroyed by lightning; and the London Mutual, a few years ago, made a somewhat similar report. Mr. Sheil stated that there was a very great increase in the number of barns so protected, and, in the interest of the insurance company and of the farmer himself, he strongly recommended that barns should be protected by lightning conductors, good galvanized fencing wire being useful for that purpose. It is essential that the ground connection be made in permanently-damp earth. Specific directions for the erection of homemade lightning-rods have frequently been given in "The Farmer's Advocate," and, since the season for lightning storms is again approaching, the subject is one deserving practical attention, and we will be glad to publish correspondence from readers who have had experience with this class of lightning-rods or others, together with information as to their cost, method of construction and efficiency.

WHO WORKS THE HARDEST?

A story is told of a farmer's son who concluded that farm work was too hard, and who engaged with a thrifty business firm in the city. Months passed, and the father visited his son in his new place of work. As the two left for lunch, the father inquired, "Well, how do you like your job? Do you find it any easier than it was with us?" The son replied: "Easier? I guess not! When we were on the farm we kept at it pretty steadily. Once a year we had a downright rush, on threshing day. Well, here it is threshing every day."

This anecdote has its lessons. The farmer is not the only busy man. Further, even if he were compelled to work as hard as the city man, his surroundings are such that his vital forces are being restored continually. With the city man, this is not the case. The air he breathes is always more or less vitiated. His ears are assailed by a constant din. The pace at which he is obliged to live is simply killing—so killing, indeed, is it, that many families removing from the country to the city become extinct in the third generation.

At the same time, conditions of country life may be greatly improved. Success, even in farming, is attained at too high a price when it is secured at the cost of premature breakdown. Just now the farmer will do well to plan his summer's work that he can secure regular periods of rest. The weekly half-holiday will be found a paying investment. No farmer regards the time taken for oiling his machinery, for resting his horses, or for sharpening his cutting tools, as wasted. For the same reasons, he will find himself a gainer by arranging for regular periods to be devoted to leisure, or to quietly reviewing his work when his mind is free. Such intervals of rest and relaxation will mean better work during the hours of work, and will mean added years to one's usefulness. This is no experiment, as keen business firms the world over abundantly testify. This is no sentimental gush, but solid, hard-headed business sense. The more enterprising a farmer is, the more alert he is to the importance of good health, alertness of observation and the power of reflection, and this condition requires times of rest, as well as abundance of labor. O. C. Wentworth Co., Ont.

OUR MARITIME LETTER.

THE SEEDS THAT WE SOW.

The visit of the seed-dealer's agent is somewhat like the angel's, but when he comes he throws us into an unusual amount of trepidation. In this country he is an Ontarian, or some representative of Ontarian enterprise from without. As with seed, so with about everything else in the line of merchandise—Ontario seems to set up the standards. Well, Ontario is not generally supposed to have produced much good seed last year. Indeed, the papers tell us (and who would doubt the papers?) that, out of millions of bushels of oats and wheat offered to the Federal Government for seed in the West, only a comparatively few thousands were accepted as fit to put into the ground. As it is with seed grain, so it is usually with grass seed.

No Islander need go to the great old Province for seed oats this year, at least, for he has it himself, better and cleaner and cheaper at home—three qualities which usually determine purchase. But, whatever specialists may say, wheat is seldom or never sown three consecutive times here from the same seed; and this year, in many places, the wheat was not considered especially good. Therefore, there is wheat to be bought, and in plenty. It soars away up in price, too—almost prohibitively. The ordinary mortal cannot see why times are dull, when everything in the line of seeds is sky-rocketing. This is one of the mysteries we must be prepared to meet with in the business world every day, however.

Well, although Ontario buys little from us, and sometimes is inclined to think that she has only a predatory interest in us, we must get our seed from her. There is much clover wanted, and, in this age of agricultural education, clover is a necessary luxury. It was never dearer, but that's not the worst; the temptation of high prices is often too much for the producer's or the middleman's honesty, and he adulterates. The seeds inspection of the Administration is very good indeed, but, as in the fruit trade, and unlike the old wine we hear about, it doesn't improve with years.

True, the schoolmaster has been abroad of late, and the farmers who do not know how to size up the samples of seeds offered to them for sale deserve to be fished. Experience of this kind brightens immensely; but there are certainly many who cannot yet make any sort of fist of detecting inferior seed—not even that loaded with foul-weed seeds. There is, therefore, great need of activity among the public inspectors, that, on the one hand, justification for their generous salaries may be made, and, on the other, protection from sharks be vouchsafed to the unsophisticated.

The very wet season has greatly reduced the local alsike crop; indeed, the mere fraction threshed and cleaned hereabouts is so inferior in quality as to cause grave doubts in the minds of the owners, as to whether or not it should be sown. The red clover product in seed is nil this year. All classes of grass seeds range high. Native timothy is selling for \$3.25—a big price here—and the imported grasses and clovers are all above the normal considerably. Nobody will allow the land to go without grass seed, however; nobody can afford to do so; therefore, the outlay in this regard alone is likely to be heavy with the farmer.

If it requires a dry season to produce good clover seed, and if, as all agree, Ontario has passed through one, the seed she offers should be prime seed. The contrary is predicted of it. North-western Canada has been for many years the principal source of our seed-wheat supply. The last year's shortage, and the inferiority of the grain harvested, have removed it for the time as a seed source from Eastern calculation. Ontario is, then, the main supplier to those who cannot trust to their own seeds. Short as has been her crops in general, then, last year, she stands to bring up the average of value very considerably by the high prices she is receiving for them.

Looking over the census returns, we find that the Province of Prince Edward Island buys less seed per capita of her population than any other Province. This may be a mixed compliment. It was not so intended, we know, for the contention is made that more of our farmers grew more of their own seed between 1891 and 1901 than those of any other Federal division. And, no doubt, this is correct—in oats always, in wheat often, in barley, in buckwheat, in timothy, we have produced fairly clean and fertile seed. In the other grasses we are striving to do something better now than merely supply ourselves. This year, the oats of the Island will carry her name, and credit far afield—along the great plantations which skirt the gray Saskatchewan. The "change of seed," if there is really anything in this old farmers' creed, should be ample in this case. And we feel that our little garden Province has paid the debt to the West with her million bushels and more, which she contracted by drawing for seed wheat from the Northwest for many years. We are progressing in the seed line, surely, but there is great need of a more sympathetic reception of