



THE ARID LANDS COMMISSION.

Hon. T. C. Jones and Hon. R. W. Furnas, of Nebraska, who, with Prof. Hilgard, of the State University, constitute the commission appointed to report on the condition and prospects for agricultural progress on what are known as the arid lands of the United States, arrived in San Francisco, September 14th. A meeting of the commission for consultation was held on Monday, and a plan of operations was partly agreed upon. The commission finds itself embarrassed somewhat by the prospect of an Indian war in Arizona, and until the southeastern horizon assumes a more peaceful aspect they will not venture in that direction. We understand that the commission was advised by telegraph from Washington on Monday, that they had better devote the immediate future to a study of California, and if there should be war below, it is possible that Nevada and eastern Oregon, and Washington Territory will be investigated before any movement is made in the direction of Arizona and New Mexico.

It has transpired that the first schedule of instructions to the commission considered chiefly the study of the southeast country with a view of determining its adaptability to the growth of the vine as already existing in California, and a consideration of its live stock interests, and the chance for its improvement and extension. It is now probable that the commission will take a wider view of the field. It is quite certain that such was intended by those who secured the passage of the arid land act in Congress. The chief idea in the proposed investigation was to secure a report upon the condition and prospects of agriculture throughout the whole Pacific coast country, and as the report is to be the work of recognized Eastern experts, guided and aided by a well known local authority, their conclusions would have more weight in the great Eastern country than any report which emanated wholly from those whose interests are identified with the region under consideration. It is altogether likely that broad inquiry contemplated by the promoters of the act will be sanctioned by the Commissioner of Agriculture, in whose charge the investigation was placed.

The Commission proposes first to consider the agriculture of California, and they come at an opportune time to view the results of some of our producing specialties, as the agricultural fairs are now beginning. We understand that Judge Jones and ex-Gov. Furnas will start at once for Los Angeles to attend the Horticultural fair in progress at that place this week. They may then examine counties adjacent to Los Angeles as time permits them, until the opening of the State fair at Sacramento, September 19th. After that other directions of observation and investigation will be taken up as seems best at the time. As Prof. Hilgard is occupied with his University duties, and is already well acquainted with agricultural affairs in this State he will not accompany his associates, but will intrust them to public spirited citizens of the State whom we doubt not will secure them every opportunity for seeing. Messrs. Jones and Furnas are well trained observers and they have come here not for a jaunt, but for a close study of conditions, achievements and opportunities for progress. Their work will no doubt redound to the benefit of our western lands in many ways.

By the way of introducing the members of the Commission to our readers whom they may meet in the different regions of the coast, we may remark that we have long known Hon. R. W. Furnas as prominent in the progressive movements looking to agricultural advancement, not only in his own State, but beyond. He has a wide acquaintance with practical cultures of various kinds, and will be well able to appreciate the achievements which he may find here, and the peculiar conditions under which they have been secured. He will also bring a trained observation to the detection of the adaptabilities of our country, and to form a trustworthy and businesslike judgment concerning them, and this is just the kind of judgment which will benefit us most.

Judge Jones, of Ohio, is recognized as a leading authority on the live stock interest of the country. He has done most excellent service as a contributor to the National Live Stock Journal, and as a high officer in the American Short Horn Breeders association. He has lately returned from a prolonged examination of cattle and cattle breeding of Great Britain, undertaken in the interest of American progress in this great industry. Judge Jones is also prominent in other public endeavors and enterprises, and is at present one of the Board of Trustees of the Ohio Agricultural college, founded under the Morrill act.—Pacific Rural Press.

THE FUTURE OF THE FALLOW

Our wheat growers in the great valleys have for the most part decided upon the great advantage in summer-fallowing, and the practice is covering larger areas every year. How long will this method of handling wheat land yield satisfactory results is a question of no little importance. There is, of course, no series of experiments made in our conditions which is yet old enough to give data for determining this point, and it is experience under our conditions which must finally settle the question. It is well enough to bear in mind, however, that careful experiments elsewhere show that land tires of this treatment as it does of any other treatment which does not return to it some equivalent of value received.

The experiments of Lawes and Gilbert, the well known English experimental farmers, whose trial crops have been grown on the same land for about 30 years, seem to show that the systems of farming advocated by Jethro Tull and the Rev. Samuel Smith, were

based upon erroneous principles. Soils exposed to constant stirring and aeration were said to absorb fertility from the atmosphere. That considerable amounts of nitric acid are produced where land is fallowed is tolerably certain, but it is not easy to explain the large reduction in the yield, of the plot under experiment, except upon the assumption that the nitric acid proceeds from nitrogen already stored up in the soil in an organic form, as in farmyard manure or in commercial fertilizers. It will be of interest in this connection to review the experiments of Lawes and Gilbert, upon which the above conclusions were based: In 1851, one acre of land was fallowed in the ordinary manner, and after receiving several plowings during the summer, was sown with wheat during the autumn of the same year. In 1852, there was, of course, no crop, but the disadvantage of having a crop of wheat on alternate years alone, was so obvious, that in 1844-5 the land under experiment was divided into two half acres, and has so remained ever since. The wheat grown in 1855 was thus necessarily wheat after wheat without a summer-fallow. The following table gives the produce of the first seven crops, and also that of the land growing continuously unmanured wheat crops:

Year	Wheat after fallow	Wheat every year
1852	37	14
1854	42	11
1855	17	17
1856	21 1/2	14
1857	28	20
1858	25 1/2	18
1859	34	18

In 1855, when the experimental plot under fallow was divided into two equal portions, and the wheat followed the wheat of the previous year, it will be seen that the two crops were alike.

The first crop of wheat after fallow is considerably more than twice as much as the wheat following wheat without a fallow; the second crop is exactly twice as much, but after that, the difference is less than twice as much, and from 1859 to the present time the fallow and the permanently unmanured crop have approximated nearer and nearer to each other, until it has become a somewhat difficult question to decide which of the two crops now growing will yield the larger produce.

This would indicate that there will come a time when the "bare-fallow" will not be able to lift the yield above that of land on which wheat is grown year after year, and this of course would be equivalent to the loss of every other year to the grower, without counting the cost of the work on the fallow. Will California experience lead to a similar conclusion under our conditions? This is the question which should be borne in mind and the yield of fallow and wheat-every-year land should be constantly compared and the result recorded so that there may be data for some future conclusions. Of course the conservation of moisture in a fallow for a subsequent crop (a consideration of great worth in California) does not hold in the English experience we have described. The matter must be studied under local conditions and we merely mention it as worthy of such study.—Pacific Rural Press.

A Comparison

A farmer, not more than ten miles from our grounds, turns up his nose at "fruit growing," and says "it's small business," and "hard on horses and wagons." Let us see about this "small business." We have about the same amount of land which this farmer possesses. He employs on an average through the entire year one unmarried man and one girl, thus giving means for support to two persons, besides his own family. We employ on an average twelve men, heads of families, and as many more single men and women, for most eight months, in fact, the average number that we give employment to, including pickers, from April 1st to December 1st, is thirty-five to forty persons, thus giving means for support to at least seventy-five to one hundred persons, besides our own family.

He pays to help, say \$400 per year. We pay at least \$6,000 per year. He sells from his farm, say \$300 to \$1,800 yearly, gross. We \$15,000 to \$18,000 (which includes our plant trade.)

He plows, harrows, sows, reaps, draws into the barn, threshes, cleans and draws to market the product of an acre, say an average of fifteen bushels of wheat, for which he obtains gross, say \$20. We plow, harvest, plant, cultivate, hoe, gather and market from an acre an average of fifty bushels of fruit, for which we obtain gross, say \$150, saying nothing of the plants sold from same. He and his help from five o'clock in the morning till dark; our help work, 7:00 a. m. to 6:00 p. m. He tugs, lifts and sweats. We don't. "Small business," isn't it, reader?—The Fruit Record.

STOCK RAISING

As a rule all farmers are stock raisers. It is true there, especially in this State, too many exceptions to the rule, but the exceptions often illustrate the correctness of the rule, and we think they do in this case. Scarcely a farmer in the State that can bring things about to suit him that does not intend to work gradually into the practice of raising more stock. This fact of itself is a general admission of the proposition that this State furnishes too many exceptions to the rule we laid down at first. But it was not the general proposition we proposed to discuss. It has been said that it costs no more to raise good stock than poor stock: This is not only true, but it half states the truth. It costs less to raise good stock than it does poor stock. Not only this, but we are prepared to say further that it is a losing business to any farmer to raise poor stock. If, for instance, a man can clear ten dollars an acre on his land in raising corn, and can clear only five dollars an acre in raising barley, is it not a losing business to raise barley? Does not the farmer lose just five dollars per acre by continuing the barley raising? Now upon the same reasoning a farmer can clear \$10 a piece in raising ten Jersey cows, and can clear but \$5 a piece in raising the same number of common

or native stock, does he not lose money every year he continues in the business of raising the latter? or, in other words, does he not lose \$5 apiece for every one of the latter he raises? Then does it not actually cost more to raise a poor animal than a good one? We are aware that it is not in this sense in which the statement is generally made. The general proposition means that a good animal consumes no more than a poor one. Even in this sense the statements convey only a part of the whole truth. What farmer does not know as a rule that their best animals consume the least actual food and give a greater return for the amount consumed? We have often heard farmers in speaking of this or that horse say he will do more work on the least food of any animal they ever owned. This is the quality that makes the animal the best. So the cow that gives the most good, rich, butter making milk from a certain amount and quality of food is the best. Now the best way for each farmer to get into raising the best stock is by selection. If a farmer has half a dozen cows, for instance, and by actual experience in milking and raising calves he has found that three of the lot make more butter and raise better calves than the other three, he should make it a point to build up or increase his herd from the three best cows, and thus in a few years he will have, if his business be in the dairy line, a herd of cows equal or superior to the original three cows he had proved to be good. The male animal is, however, a more important factor in raising stock good or bad, than the female. A dozen cows will ordinarily raise but a dozen calves in a year, while this dozen calves may be all the get of one male—and so of an increased number. The cow may be the mother of but one calf in a year, while the bull may be the sire of fifty. It is then fifty times more important that the stock raiser who has fifty cows should secure a good male than that he should secure a good animal in any one cow. In other words, it is of much importance, so far as the character of the progeny is concerned, that the one male be first rate as that the whole fifty females be of that class. In the above suggestions we have made no reference to breeds; the suggestions apply equally to all breeds. But our own experience and observations are decidedly in support of the proposition that in stock raising of all kinds blood will tell. If the object be to raise stock for beef, then by all means secure the Shortorns or the Herefords, of if the location be in a mountainous or hilly country, the Devons. If the object be to make butter, then select the Jerseys or Alderneys, or a cross of these with the best milking families of Shortorns or native stock. If the object be to make cheese or to furnish milk for a route in a town or city, then select Ayrshire or Holsteins. The Jerseys give the richest milk, while the Ayrshires give more of it. The former will be most profitable in a butter dairy, and the latter in a milking dairy.—Sacramento Record-Union.

Midsummer Bee Management

The Rural New Yorker contains the following article on Summer management: In case of scanty pasturage for bees at this season of the year, there is great necessity of providing them food in the hive. The following should be done regularly after sunset, and as they are more liable to be vicious when the fields fail to supply them with honey, the bees should be bemocked sufficiently to keep them quiet; and then, as always, they should be disturbed as little as possible. The practice of feeding, either in Spring before flowers bloom or in the Summer intervals during the absence of the best honey-producing flowers, is a wise one, as it keeps the bees in good condition for the work before them. Cheap honey is recommended by some as a good food, but "A sugar reduced to the consistency of honey, is quite as good. There is little to be said in favor of feeding grape sugar and glucose. Honey which is removed from the hive in hot weather is apt to be inhaled by the moth worm, which hatches from the eggs deposited in one way or another by the bee moth. Just how, or when, this is done is not known, but it is not at all unlikely that the moth finds her way into the hive and there lays her eggs, though some say she deposits them on the bottom boards of the hive and then they are carried inside by adhering to the feet and legs of the bees. If honey taken out is to be kept in boxes during the Summer, it should be closely watched and at the first appearance of a fine whitish powder on the combs, it should be removed by fumigating with sulphur. It is well to smoke combs from which honey is extracted. It is important to keep the light-colored basswood or clover honey separate from the dark-colored such as buckwheat honey. The apiarist who expects to get good prices for his honey will be careful not to let these two kinds go to market in the same box. White honey, though it be but soiled with dark, will not command a good price. However, nice buckwheat honey, though not commanding as large price, is yet a source of much profit, inasmuch, in some sections, a good supply obtained after the white honey plants have failed. The hives should be protected from the intense heat of the sun during the heated term, though early and late in the season it is essential that the hives be exposed to the warm rays of the sun.

August is a good month for Italianizing, as the queens can be obtained quite reasonably then, and good Italian workers will be ready for the next season. Every effort should now be made to build up the colonies with young bees, even if feeding is required. Colonies well prepared will stand the Winter. Grafting I believe all animal fats and oils to be unhealthy applications to vegetable growths. Therefore, I question the advisability of employing either lard or tallow as an ingredient in grafting wax. Indeed, I have remarked that when I formerly used such wax, the bark would frequently die away from the end of the stump and sides of the cleft in quite healthy young wood—an accident that rarely happens when the wax is compounded with innocent materials. I always prefer making my own grafting wax by buying it, as I know it to be of the best materials, and after a good many years' experience I have settled down upon the following composition as combining all the necessary qualities of a good grafting wax: Take of linseed oil one pint, clear resin six pounds, pure beeswax one pound; melt together slowly, so as not to burn, and stir thoroughly with cooling; pour into a pail of cold water, and when cool enough, work white, like molasses candy. Make up into rolls six inches long, and lay upon a beam in a cool cellar. It will keep there perfectly good for many years. When taken out into the garden in a mild day it will soon be soft enough to handle easily. If the hands are rubbed with linseed oil, the wax will not be troublesome to them.—[A. S.] in New England Farmer.

Fleeces

To be perfect fleeces ought to have two good qualities. They must be fine and soft both. Also they should be regular, having each staple of the same quality throughout. The sheep known as the Merino and the Angora reach this standard the most frequently, the fleeces of Saxony keeping fairly abreast of them; while irregular fleeces are occurring constantly among the ordinary flocks of Spain and Portugal and Italy, in which there will be found an intermixture of long coarse hair, of thick opaque hair, that makes dealers look shyly upon the wool, as not being "true grown." These incriminating hairs are called "kemps," and "kemps" are liable to appear in any of the fleeces of England and Wales when the sheep have been exposed to the inclemencies, and their food has been consequently too scanty and too fitfully obtained. For regularity, or evenness of staple, wether wool ranks much higher than ewe wool or any other. It shows scarcely any difference in it, in its thickness close to the skin and at the far point. To stimulate softness there has been a practice of smearing sheep with tar and butter among foreign dealers, and the compound very fairly imitates "yolk," or the grease abounding in fleeces naturally, and found in excess in the fleeces of the Merino. In all fleeces this "yolk" represents about 25 per cent. of weight. In the Merino fleeces it represents nearly 50 per cent. After cleansing it is gone; and it is of paramount importance that it should be gone. Flock growers like it to be present, because, during their short ownership, it keeps the fleeces sound and lets no harshness be detected. Fleeces buyers get rid of it at their quickest, because, after eight or nine weeks of packing, fermentation, which they call "sweating," ensues. This sweating makes the wool hard and brittle; in the inner part of the packs it even gets warm, spontaneous combustion has again and again resulted, and frozen factories have been leveled by it to the ground. When flock growers desire to consult the interests of fleeces buyers they will see that as much as possible of this yolk is removed. The Spaniards try for this after shearing, when they give the fleeces a good wash. Saxon growers wash the sheep themselves before the scissors are set to work. They have tubs of warm water and soap lye, into which the animals have their first dip; then tubs of clean water are ready for extra purification. The English, as is familiar wash before clipping also, but they only use clean water, and they squeeze this out, when the sheep are removed from it, with the hand.—[All the Year Round.

Weeds

How shall we kill weeds and how rid the soil of the species? A very simple matter indeed, if we would use the same common sense shown in other things. Will a field of corn, oats or wheat, or a hill of squashes or melons produce good seed if cut close to the ground just as flowers are forming? Every annual plant or weed we know of will surely die if cut at the surface just before it blooms. Cut a little higher, above a portion of the leaves, and life may be continued till new sprouts come out, which in time may produce seeds. In ordinary cultivation we are quite apt to keep root and top together, and to let a portion of the roots remain in contact with moist earth. Weeds treated in this way do not make so handsome a growth, but they will continue the species quite well enough. A young plant buried root and branch in the soil to a good depth will surely die. It must have air, warmth and sunlight. Ordinary cultivation early in the season kills the larger part of the weeds of a field, and if cultivation were frequent enough and thorough it would kill everything that grows from the ground. In a season moist enough to sprout seeds it takes but a very few weeks to rid a field almost absolutely of both weeds and seeds. A plough, harrow and roller are all the tools needed. How to bring up the seeds from the under soil and harrow just as often as a crop of seeds start, rolling the ground each time to compact the soil, that other seeds may germinate. A dry season is not half so good as a wet one for killing weeds by this method. Almost all our door yards and barn yards are nurseries of weeds, from which continual streams are flowing unobserved to other parts of the farm.—[New England Farmer.

Mammoth Siles at Holyoke, Mass.

The faith of W. H. Wilkinson, the Holyoke manufacturer, in the silo system, as the storing of green food for cattle in air-tight pits under a high pressure is called, reminds one of another imperturbable man in history named Noah. There were those, we are told, who looked on the ark with some distrust as a place of refuge while it was building. Mr. Wilkinson's silos grow apace, and are now so nearly complete that they can be easily comprehended by the common people. There are eleven of them in a row, 12 by 15 feet square, and 24 feet deep. They are to be filled at the top, and there are arched door-ways in the massive walls near the bottom. Ten of them will each hold 90 tons, and one will take in 100 tons. The storing of 1,000 tons of green fodder for the use of domestic animals is a bold un-

dertaking for any farmer in the Connecticut valley, and we are glad that Mr. Wilkinson has dared to do it. If he succeeds, he will have ensilage to sell, unless he keeps more stock than any other farmer in Massachusetts. Some one has intimated that none but Holstein cattle can appreciate "saur kraut." Fortunately, if Dutch cattle are needed to teach other cattle the language or diet of Holland, they can be had. Larger importations of this breed have been made this Summer than ever before. One firm in New York have recently received 127 head. We suspect that the proprietor of the Wilkinson farm has had an eye on Holland, ever since he began to plan his dairy barn, and that he expects to "beat the Dutch" in the city of the big dam. Milk will probably be an important element in the future growth and greatness of that city.

We forgot to say that the massive walls of the silos are to be plastered with cement, and that the followers used in pressing will have rubber weather strips on their edges to exclude the air. Every precaution will be taken that ingenuity can devise to make the door way air-tight. The foreman assured us that he had 52 names on his time book last week, exclusive of the masons.

The crops on this farm, particularly the corn, are showing the effect of high manuring, and they will be likely to show it for years to come. No other farm within our observation has had such manurial resources, or has such mighty heaps for future greatness laid up in store. The rye crop, which is to be the first used for the silos, will be heavily manured and sown the last of September, and next June when it is harvested will doubtless be worth seeing.

The Great Crater of Kilauoa.

The following pen picture of the fearful crater of Kilauoa is from the Honolulu Advertiser of July 26th: Tourists to the volcano many years past all remember certain active pools of lava, the North and South Lakes, which ordinarily bubbled and tossed a fiery flood at a depth of about 120 feet below the floor of the great crater. Now these lakes have all been filled up, and there have arisen peaks and cones of hard lava that rise over 100 feet above the South bank of the great crater, which is about 1,000 feet high. But there has burst forth a new opening in the great crater floor not far distant from the old lake, and a new lake, almost round in form, about 600 feet across and some 70 feet in depth, in ordinary stages, below the surrounding brink. Here the great Hawaiian volcano presents the most varied, fantastic play of liquid lava.

Here are some of the phases of the play of a fire lake, as recently observed in the great crater of Kilauoa. Sometimes it almost seems to sleep, and the disappointed visitor looks down into a black valley and observes a smoking pit, giving no more evidence of combustion than a tar kiln. But the observer stands on the brink of the pit, or great pool, or lake, as now appears, about 600 feet across, and whose surface is about 70 feet below him. And what is this surface? It presents a dark silver-gray hue, with a satiny shine. This is a crust of quiescent lava, and the observer, who has expected to have his sense of wonder strained to speechlessness, says: "Is this all?" No! look! the frozen, glassy lake is alive. What a heave in the center—some mighty beast lifting up the floor! Now a wave of undulation runs round the incrustated marge. And there is an outburst, a blood-red fount, gushing and bubbling from one of earth's arteries. The broad disk of the lake heaves and trembles. Fitful, gaseous flashes flit across, and now the moving floor cracks, and a serrated fissure, like the suture of a skull, runs from marge to marge, and quick, darting streaks, sudden cracks of the crust, shoot across in all directions. These serrated streaks are at first rosy lines on the gray surface, then they widen like crimson ribbons, broadening to the view. They undulate with the billowy motion of the whole upheaving surface. Another crimson fount springs up along the now fretting and roaring rim of the lake, and another and another of now wildly upheaving fountains of fire toss high their gory crests, even casting goutts and clots of the red spray, that fall and harden near the observer's feet.

By this time the spirit of our inferno is aroused. The whole fierce red lake is all boil and leap and roar. It is more than the roar of loud sea surfs beating bold bluffs. The surging tide of the molten earth sounds a deeper, bellowing bass than any note of the sounding sea. And now the heaved-up crust, broken into fragments, is churned up and dissolved in the boiling flood. The roaring gulf is now, indeed, a vortex of indescrivable glories and terrors. Caves open on the sides of the surrounding wall, and man sees more of a hell than he ever imagined. A thousand demons are now holding high carnival in this bottomless pit—and the leap and play of a fiery flood—the dance and swell of a red, surging tide, and the roar and shriek of the dread forces issuing from the red-hot, pulsating heart of the planet, make a thoughtful observer hold his hand to his own heart and say: "This is enough; the Almighty is here."

A Lecture on Astronomy.

At a school near London, the learned master was giving a lecture on astronomy, and after alluding to the representation of the world on the shoulders of Atlas, asked the class generally upon what Atlas stood. One replied, as the world was chaos, he must stand on chaos; another conjectured on a rock; when a lad from Cardiff, at the bottom of the class, exclaimed, "I know, sir." "Indeed!" replied the doctor, "pray tell us on what you think he stood." "I know," answered the boy "but it is not my turn yet." When the question passed to him the whole class was on tiptoe to hear the young Welshman's idea; when, with an air of consequence, he exclaimed, "On his legs, to be sure! On what else could he stand!"—[Exchange.

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