

SUGAR BEET GROWING

There will undoubtedly be a careful investigation made this coming year to determine the value of the Imperial valley for growing sugar beets. It is expected that Maj. J. A. Drifill will soon visit the valley on behalf of the Oxwards, who are the controlling members of a number of beet sugar factories, and there is one feature of the possibility of beet growing here which will appeal to them strongly, if it be found that theories are sustained by experience.

The beet sugar "campaign," or manufacturing period, ranges from 90 to about 125 days a year at the various factories, the expensive machinery lying idle from 240 to 275 days a year. In a few cases the campaign has been extended to about 150 days, which is considered the maximum period in which beets can be delivered.

In the Imperial valley there is excellent reason for believing that the beet growing season will begin over six weeks earlier than in other portions of Southern California and extend more than six weeks later, thus probably increasing the period of ripening fully 90 per cent. This would imply the addition of 90 per cent to the productive capacity of a given factory and very materially reduce the interest charge against the cost of production.

But there is another feature of the problem. Sugar beets depreciate in sugar value rapidly when left in the ground beyond a given time after ripening, in sections where now grown, while if harvested and left in the more humid atmosphere of late fall their keeping qualities are not such as to make it possible to maintain the factory campaigns long after the close of the harvest season. It is believed, on the contrary, that in the Imperial valley, if the soil is allowed to dry out, the beets will remain uninjured in the ground, or that they can be harvested and so stored as to permit perfect aeration and thus be kept in this climate, which is as dry in the winter as in the summer, for several months after harvesting.

These matters are not wholly dependent on theory. The value of the dry atmosphere of the valley as a preservative factor has been long established, while there are now a few sugar beets growing in the valley, reaching maturity in December, having been planted in the hot days of September.

With the fact fairly well established that beet harvest could here begin by May 1, and be continuous until late in December, there would be eight months of harvest, and beets could in all probability be carried through so great a portion of the remainder of the seasonal year as to make the factory campaign practically continuous throughout the year.

If Imperial valley, as many people believe, can have an almost continuous beet sugar campaign, it will without question be the greatest sugar producing section of the country, while the long seasons will enable the farmers to grow some other crop before or after harvest with a view to replacing in the soil the plant food which the beets take out, and thus avoid the deterioration of soil which is often used as an argument against beet culture.

Harvest Ended

A. E. Walters has returned to Los Angeles after looking after the crop of sorghum owned by himself and L. M. Holt. The harvest is now over, and in the course of a few weeks the crop will be baled. Some of the sorghum grown in the valley was not entirely cured before baling, and it is not keeping as well as it ought. Special pains is now being taken to get the crop thoroughly cured before baling.

SALOON CONTROL

San Diego county supervisors are still wrestling with what has become the greatest problem of the times—the control of the liquor traffic. There have been a number of amendments to the license ordinance, and there is now an agreement that at the next general election, next November, the question of license or no license will be submitted to the voters of each precinct in the county. Pending that election, the several precincts are to be left undisturbed in their present condition, Imperial township being without a licensed saloon, though liquor is being illegally sold at one or two out-of-the-way places. Lack of judicial machinery has made it difficult to handle the problem locally, though it is believed that the fact will soon be demonstrated that law can be enforced in the Imperial valley as well as elsewhere, there now being both executive and judicial peace officers.

At the session of the board of supervisors last week, Mr. Jasper of this district introduced a new ordinance which abandons the license feature, exacting no fee from the saloons, but placing about them certain limitations and restrictions, which may prove of some value. The ordinance is seemingly based on the idea that the saloon keepers, paying nothing for the privilege of selling liquor, will realize more forcibly that they are not a privileged class in being above the law.

The San Diego Union of Friday said:

"The county supervisors adjourned the December session yesterday noon. The new saloon ordinance, No. 124, introduced by Supervisor Jasper, on Tuesday, was adopted by unanimous vote. Under its provisions no license fee is charged, the conditions on which a license may be had being based on the good character of the applicant and the furnishing of a bond in the sum of \$500, the attestants and surties, who in common with the applicant for such license, must have been residents of the voting precinct in which the business is to be conducted. The application must be accompanied by the names of five men who have lived in the district continuously for at least twelve months immediately preceding the signing of the application, and asserting that the applicant is a sober and competent person to keep and conduct such business. It provides for the closing of all saloons thus licensed between the hours of 11:55 Saturday night and 5 a. m. Monday."

Salt River Valley

More than \$1,000,000 worth of beef cattle will be shipped from the Salt River Valley within the next ninety days. But this is not a "marker" to the cattle business that would be done in the valley if we had 200,000 acres of alfalfa flourishing under irrigation with water from an adequate reservoir. Is it not about time for ranch owners to learn that squabbles over "prior rights" and "water rights" and all the incidental troubles due to shortage of water benefit nobody but lawyers—and never will? What does it matter if the equities of the situation are with this or that element of ranch owners, if neither gets the water needed? What does it avail the "priority right" man to know that he ought to have plenty of water, if he is always to have his "priority right" and insufficient water?—Phoenix Republican.

It is a lamentable confession made by the agricultural editor of the San Francisco Chronicle: "It seems impossible in this state, for any one to be credited with public spirit in public affairs." When the public is perpetually without confidence in the servants selected by the people themselves "there is something rotten in the State of Denmark."

PRECAUTION RECOMMENDED

D. H. Lenox of Los Angeles, one of the well-known nurserymen of Southern California, writes to the editor of the Press regarding vine diseases as follows:

"I have devoted considerable time during the past summer to a study of the California vine disease, still affecting many vineyards in the south, and I see in the Pacific Rural Press of last Saturday the report of Prof. Biolletti of the State University relating to pretty much the same trouble in Santa Clara county. My own investigations have lead me to firmly believe that all the trouble is caused by the grape leaf hopper (Typhlocyba Vitifex) of the Eutomologists. This insect, as found here in Southern California, is a very small fly of light greenish white color and so small as to be hardly noticed. Millions of these attack the vines in the affected districts, and it is my belief, founded upon observation, that they are capable of doing even more serious injury to a vineyard than Phylloxera itself. It is much more active, and having wings it is migratory. It can live to some extent upon almost anything green during winter, and be ready and waiting for the vineyard to leaf out in the spring. Having several broods each year in California, they are present in large numbers by mid-summer from only a small beginning in the spring, while by fall there are simply millions of them present, sucking the sap from the under side of the vine leaves so that the vine soon sickens, and stands a poor show indeed among so many industrious blood sucking leaches.

"I sent on to Washington for the report of Prof. Newton B. Pierce, the Government expert sent out to investigate the California vine disease, and who reported in 1892. I had no difficulty in recognizing the effect of injury by vine hoppers, as shown by several colored plates in the report of 1892, and which showed the characteristic mottled colored grape vine leaves so often found in vineyards to day, but which are never present unless the vine hopper itself is also present. To sum the matter up: It will kill a vineyard much quicker than phylloxera, the insects being much more active and numerous and on the wing. I witnessed their coming into a small lot of vines right in the city of Los Angeles this fall. Probably they were looking for something greener and better than some of the parched vineyards near town, and no doubt came into the vineyard from some outside larger planting of grape vines. However, within six weeks after their attack on these vines in the city, it could be noted that the vines began to show all the typical indications of having the California vine disease in its first stages. I have written at length on this subject, as it seems to me the matter is important to all new districts in which the people are planting vines where none have been planted before. Your people will be fortunate indeed if they prevent the introduction of this insect. I have just heard of a vineyard a few miles from Los Angeles that has the phylloxera insect also, but have not yet found time to examine it. But of the two evils I think the introduction of the vine hopper would be the worst. I think you ought to form a sort of horticultural society and see to it that all shipments of vines and trees are properly disinfected before planting, either by being submerged in liquids or disinfected by the gas process."

Alfalfa and Barley Seed

Just received from Utah a carload of alfalfa seed. Also choice seed barley for sale. Imperial Mercantile company, Calexico.

Pen Pictures

THERE is nothing more beautiful than the heavens as viewed from the Imperial valley. There are here more stars to be seen than most people have ever witnessed from any other portion of the world. The clear atmosphere makes it possible to discern stars so dim in other sections as to be beyond human vision, while the milky way is a veritable wave of light extending across the heavens.

Amid all the nightly illuminations, Venus shines with wonderful glory and with such radiance that at times the rare sight is witnessed of shadows being cast by this queen of the heavens so distinctly as to be clearly discernible, though myriad of other stars are casting their light in opposition to Venus.

When one obtains a view of the heavens from Imperial, he gains a broader comprehension of the reasons which led to the early study of astronomy. He can understand better than ever before why the Chaldean and Egyptian shepherds and the primitive people of all races, but particularly of races in semi-tropic and desert countries, should have first of all sought to interpret the mysteries of the heavens.

Where the atmosphere is less penetrable by vision, many of the stars being hidden from view, one can sit with charts of the heavens in hand and yet fail to discern the outlines which prompted the Egyptians and their successors in the evolution of civilization, to picture the heavens with all manner of real and mythical forms. But in the Imperial valley, one does not need a chart, nor must he needs be a dreamer of dreams, to see the stars take forms which he never beheld before.

The heavens are like the good old-time fireplace before which we used to sit in that lost age of our childhood and study the flames as they wrought their transformations in the structures of coals and wood and smoke. One can sit out-of-doors by the hour in the pleasant evenings of this so-called winter and study the starry forms, seeing here a head and there a full form of some object distinctly outlined, and he needs no chart of the heavens, unless he wishes to note whether the forms he discerns are the same as those which were seen by the pastoral tribes when the world was young. If he will but give rein to his fancy, there are few objects in real or fanciful existence the outlines of which cannot be traced, and one longs to be able to forget the facts, the facts of the books and the facts of personal experience, the facts which make this bondage of enlightenment and civilization, that he could turn himself as free as were the Chaldean shepherds, living for a time in the blissful ignorance of the elder day, and with poetic imagery seek to construct a new world and a new people, according to his own fancies and his own conceptions of expediency and the fitness of things.

Who knows but he would be able to then trace in those starry fragments of light outlines of new monsters more terrible than are known in the myths and angelic creatures more lovely than mythology records. But hemmed in by the imprisoning walls of fact we are less free in our speculations and in our imaginations, and while we sit enraptured by the gorgeous display in the heavens, we can add not one fancy to those which have come down to us from the age of the prehistoric man.

The Size of It.

When you come to think that the record of filings on land and sales of water stock in Imperial valley for only three months past represent an area equal to almost any other irrigated section of the state the immensity of the Imperial project is apparant.