man back in the audience answered, and he said, "Why, a heifer calf, of course."

The Chairman: We have had in this State few politicians who have had the good sense to squander a portion of their energies in farming. I am happy at this time to introduce to you not the politician, but the farmer, W. L. Houser of Mondovi, who will present the subject of the Farmer's Horse.

THE FARMER'S HORSE.

HON. W. L. HOUSER, Mondovi.

Mr. Houser: Mr. Chairman, the Chairman stated at the conclusion of the address of Mr. Tormey that there was a sixty-year proposition involved in his address; that Mr. Tormey stated that "we" had been farming sixty years.

We have been farming about six hundred years this morning. In these very learned papers, in this very intelligent discussion,—the experiences, the successes and the failures of men since almost the foundation of the earth, have been reviewed, and we are able to profit as farmers by these experiences; they constitute a practical experience for all of us of the whole length of time. And what a system of education it is that brings to the mind, to the opportunity of the young farmer the chance to begin where all of the previous experience has left off and to make this a part of his own experience.

Now, my friends, I have learned something this morning, and I have formed a definite, positive resolution, and it is not to attempt to exhaust the subject that is given me, nor to exhaust the audience.

There are many problems surrounding the breeding and developing of horses. And these problems seem to multiply instead of diminish.

The most recent problem, or influence affecting the business, is the automobile. It will not do for the practical man to accept at par the oft repeated assertion of writers in the agricultural press that the automobile does not affect the prices of horses. This is not even horse sense. The automobile does af-
fect the demand for horses. Why, even in modern romance
we don’t read any more of the blood like horse, the splendid
hero and the beautiful heroine, but a Limousine driven by a
reckless son of the predatory rich who smokes cigarettes and
flirts with other men’s wives are the central figures of the light
literature of the present day. The automobile is a competitor
of the horse everywhere. However, it affects the demand for
some classes of horses less than others. The class, or classes
that it affects less should be the Farmers’ horse. In other
words, the farmer should produce that which the market de-
mands. The farm work must be carried on, largely by horse
power, and each year some good colts should be raised to turn
off at profitable prices. In order to produce the best selling
type the farmer should keep for his farm work, mares that will
produce the kind that will meet the demand of the market. At
the present time this is the draft horse. There is no real de-
mand today at profitable prices for any other type. And then,
in my opinion, the average farmer is better equipped to raise
drafters than any other type. To produce for the market the
coach, carriage, or trotting type of horses involves too much
care and fitting. The drafter sells well if he is big, sound, and
of suitable conformation. This type is not difficult to produce
if ordinary intelligence is brought to the management of the
business. And this brings us to a consideration of the ways and
means of breeding and developing the high-class draft horses.
First, What is a high-class draft horse? Answer: A horse
that weighs when mature not less than 1,600 pounds, having a
clean cut head, bright prominent eyes, an alert ear not too small,
a well arched neck of medium length, well cut up in the throat-
latch, moderately sloping shoulders, a short wide back, a rump
of proportionate length, neither too straight nor too sloping,
strong stifles, well sprung ribs, a good middle, and plenty of
heart and lung room. This splendid body must be carried on
good legs and feet. The flinty flat bone, short cannons, slop-
ing pasterns, tough round feet, complete the description of a
good horse. This kind will go well, look well and sell well.
How will we get them? Breed them, of course. Use sires that
are right, keep mares that are right, feed properly and you will
produce the right kind. “Like produces like.” If you breed
a sound good mare to a sound good sire the progeny will be
sound and good. There may be accidents that will work the
exception, but the rule will generally prevail. On the other hand, colts from an unsound sire or dam are reasonably certain to inherit the defects of their progenitors. It becomes very important, therefore, that great care should be exercised in the selection of both sire and dam if we are to produce good ones. It is better to keep a less number and have them right than to raise more cheap ones. I cannot too strongly urge farmers to keep their good brood mares. A sound good brood mare that is a regular producer, cannot be valued too highly. Keep the reliable producers, sell the young, untried ones. But make no mistake in selecting a sire. Under no circumstances breed to an unsound sire. I mean one that shows hereditary unsoundness. Take no excuses for horses with spavins, side bones, curbs, thick wind or any other unsoundness, or that show symptoms of developing them. The sire should be above suspicion of unsoundness. You had better travel fifty miles to find one that is right than to use an inferior one. And, by the way, the good ones are none too plentiful. After the mare has been bred return her regularly to the stallion until she is safely in foal. Don't take her when it is convenient to do so but when she should be returned,—in about eighteen days after the first service, and if she refuses then try her every week for three or four weeks. They are quite capricious sometimes, and great care must be observed or you are liable to lose the use of your mare for a year for breeding purposes, and with a good mare this is a great loss. After the mare is safely in foal she may be moderately worked even if she is raising a colt, but she should be liberally fed, not fattened, but kept in thrifty condition and in smooth flesh. Before foaling time prepare a roomy, light box stall for the mare and her expected baby colt. Thoroughly disinfect and cleanse it, and keep it clean. It is a safe plan to be with the mare at foaling time. Often it happens that a colt is smothered, and occasionally that the mare is lost through difficulty in foaling. A little vigilance at this time may be a very profitable investment. After the colt comes, the first thing to do is to thoroughly disinfect the navel cord. A solution of carbolic acid is a very good application. Make it quite strong. After this it is a question of feed and ordinary care. Feed the mare liberally. You can't feed her too much up to the point of her ability to digest and assimilate. The colt must be fed through its mother
up to the time it will begin to nibble oats. Then he will rapidly learn to help take care of himself. He, too, can be safely fed all he will eat of good oats and bran. Wean the colt when he is about four months old. Teach him to drink skim milk and it will put him ahead materially. I have found skim milk a very valuable feed for colts. Keep him going forward. You realize that size is important and there is no time in the colt’s life when he will grow so rapidly as during the first year. Keep him going, I repeat. Take care of his feet. Keep them level. This is important. Blemishes, cocked and crooked ankles, and other malformations may be avoided by a little care in this regard. And then it is good discipline for the colt. It helps break him. And, by the way, the time to begin to break a colt is when he is about an hour old. Begin to handle him then and continue to cultivate his acquaintance and confidence, impressing him with your mastery. When you get ready to harness him (at about two years of age is a good time to give him his first lessons in harness,) he will take to it like a duck to water on a rainy day. Now, about all there is to do is to wait until he is of suitable age to attract the buyer. Have him fat when you offer him for sale. He never should be poor at any time from colthood up to the time he goes on to the market. Buy thin, sell fat, that’s the idea. You cannot fail by following this method. Breed the right kind, feed properly, and the buyer will do the rest—pay you a price that will be profitable. This is the kind of horse in this day and age that the farmer should produce.

This is the practical, prosaic side of the story of horse raising and, of course, it is an old story. So is the story of salvation. But both are good stories and must be told and retold in order that men may learn the right way. It depends largely upon the way either story is told whether the message will be received and do good. This branch of the husbandman’s vocation is so important that too much effort cannot be made to keep in the right way. I look forward to the day when our beloved and highly favored Badger state will be the leading horse breeding state in the Union.

But there is another side to the story.

There is pleasure and inspiration in the business of breeding and handling horses. Some men may be enamored of a ma-
chine that stinks and stops, but for me, give me a horse. There is real exhilaration in holding the reins over a powerful, handsome draft pair, feeling the line of communication between mouth and finger tips and from thence to the very soul, or in being seated behind a pair of high bred trotters that are true to the master’s will. Their gait is the very poetry of motion. This the pleasure of men fit to be kings. And then the satisfaction of raising good ones is a measure of compensation for the use of a man’s intelligence and effort. Who does not admire a beautiful horse? There ought to be some sentiment, some romance, in all we do. There is in the breeding and raising of horses, and all domestic live stock for that matter, something that thrills and exhilarates—that satisfies. We deal with the mystery of life, the susceptibility to training, response to kindness and an honest return to man for his ministrations, and these multiply into a sense of satisfaction that helps to balance and brighten a man’s life.

DISCUSSION.

The Chairman: Mr. Houser says he has made no attempt to exhaust this study. It cannot be exhausted and I am sure you have many questions which are in order now.

Prest. McKerrow: Mr. Houser, is there any danger of our horse breeders getting too much of what is sometimes termed “quality” and thus losing the necessary weight, and is that danger encouraged by some of our show rings?

Mr. Houser: There isn’t any danger of getting too much quality. There is some danger of getting too much fineness of bone. You ought to know all about the show ring; you do know all about it. The tendency has been as I have observed it in the show ring, to sometimes put your judgment where you wouldn’t put your money; that is, a fine, high quality horse of flashy appearance and flashy action sometimes takes precedence over the more substantial, reliable draft horse; I mean in draft rings. And the tendency is a little in that direction, although I could not impress upon you too strongly the advisability or the necessity in a good horse of that almost indefinable thing called quality. You cannot describe it; you have to see it and know how to see it.

Prest. McKerrow: Quality is separate from fineness?

Mr. Houser: Yes, in my judgment.
Prest. Mc Kerrow:  And separate from flashiness?
Mr. Houser:  Yes.

Prest. Mc Kerrow:  In a draft horse, do you want flashy action or strong-going action?
Mr. Houser:  I would look for straight, regular, strong action, I wouldn’t want them to wing or interfere or go too high, or too near the ground, but a straight, strong movement.

Prest. Mc Kerrow:  A movement that would appear to take a load with it?
Mr. Houser:  Yes.

Sec'y True:  In a breeding animal, would you allow coarseness in either the dam or the sire, and if so which?
Mr. Houser:  If I had to take coarseness in either, I would take it in the dam; but I would be sure to get high quality in the sire. I want them to nick well.

Mr. Michels:  At what age would you begin to feed the colt?
Mr. Houser:  I stayed with a neighbor of yours once while you were gallivanting around the country trying to teach the farmers, Mr. Dixon, former member of this college. He had a pair of colts, and I said, “Why don’t you feed these colts some skim milk?” and he said, “I never tried it.” I said, “Try it now,” and he set a pail of skim milk before those colts. I said to him, “If they ever get their noses in it once, you will have trouble to get them out.”

Prest. Mc Kerrow:  When we were growing more colts than we do now, twenty years ago, we found some colts that refused to drink skim milk, but we gave those colts a little water, and put a little milk with the water, and when they got used to the color we gradually increased the milk.

Mr. Houser:  I never have had to fool them that way.

Mr. Convey:  Was that Waukesha water?

Prest. Mc Kerrow:  It was Waukesha water, and if my friend here had had Waukesha water in Ireland, he would have been bigger than he is.

Mr. Hill:  Was it Shropshire milk?

Mr. Cunningham:  Would you say that a stallion that has broken wind is unsound?

Mr. Houser:  Well, I would rather not use him. That is an unsoundness as defined by the law in this State.

Mr. Cunningham:  Then why do they give a certificate of soundness in such cases?
Mr. Houser: I respectfully refer to the Department of Horse Breeding at the College of Agriculture.

Prest. McKerrow: Will the Department answer?

Mr. Houser: The law is undoubtedly somewhat lax in that matter.

Mr. Cunningham: I knew it was lax and I also knew of that circumstance.

Mr. Houser: I believe the veterinarians define broken-windiness as hereditary, and I think it is to a certain extent. It is so considered by veterinarians, and they are very learned, you know.

Mr. Stone: I would like to ask, is there any locality in Wisconsin more favorable with reference to the selection of either one of the draft types?

Mr. Houser: No, I don’t think so.

Mr. Convey: While I consider Mr. Houser’s discussion of this subject this morning one of the best I ever listened to, yet we are not here to commend entirely, but to find fault if there is an opportunity. I think he has left out one thing that is a controlling consideration from the farmer’s standpoint, and that is the advantage that the farmer has after his foal becomes three years old in using him on the farm, and that he will be a very much better horse for that use. That is the only criticism I would have to make on the subject as presented by Mr. Houser.

Mr. Houser: I think that is true, and if a man can hold himself and his horse too, it doesn’t do any harm to use them a little when they are two years old, but I would not advise that, because they are too apt to overwork them. But they certainly can be worked nicely when the are three years old. Two years ago I sold a three-year old mare. I worked her all summer and then sold her at a good long price, and she had worked steadily all summer long.

A Member: Do you find it profitable to raise a colt from a two-year old?

Mr. Houser: I do not advise breeding fillies at two years old. I picked up a treatise on breeding a short time since by some noted Frenchman, and he said that it will do very well to breed them at two years old and skip the three years and breed again at four. I would rather breed them at three and four.

A Member: What is the matter with a 1,300-pound horse?
Isn’t it a fact that a horse of that weight is more in demand than any other size?

Mr. Houser: I admit that a 1,300-pound horse, or a 1,400-pound horse is a very useful horse on the farm, but when you put him on the market he doesn’t sell well except possibly to your neighbor farmer. You are breeding for the market, and my contention is, that you must breed something that will accommodate the market, and in order to do that you must breed 1,600 pounds. You have enough 1,400-pound horses to supply the local demand on the farms.

Mr. Convey: Is not the popularity of the 1,300-pound horse due largely to the fact that you can buy him for a whole lot less money?

Mr. Houser: I presume so. He isn’t popular with me.

Mr. Convey: What age do you think is the most profitable to dispose of your stock?

Mr. Houser: Well, pure bred stock can be sold very profitably at two or three years of age, if you are raising geldings for the Chicago market, of course, you must wait until they are mature, but you can make use of them, as has been suggested, during their three-year old form, so it does not cost anything to keep them during that time really, they can be worked profitably, while you are developing them, by using them on the farm.

Dean Russell: Gentlemen, I have a matter that I want to bring before your attention just for a few moments. It is a matter which, it seems to me, is one of the most important things that we can take up in the State of Wisconsin. That is a pretty big statement, but I believe it is a justifiable one.

It relates to the question of the removal of stumps on our central and northern lands. I called together a few of the people last night to talk over some matters in regard to the legislature, and among them I mentioned this one of stump removal. This is a matter that is going to be one of the greatest things that we have got to contend with.

I have gone over the records in the State to find out the amount of available land, and we have nearly ten million acres in Northern Wisconsin of arable land that is uncleared, that is fit for farming purposes.
Now, how much is it going to cost to get the stumps off those tracts of land? As a matter of fact, the people who have done anything along that line say that it has cost them anywhere from five to one hundred dollars, I suppose the average would be $20 or $25 per acre. There are ten million acres of land at $25, $250,000,000 that is going to be spent on this land before it is ready for practical agriculture. Of course, after the forest is removed we can put in grass seed or clover and use it for pasture purposes, but when you talk about land which you are able to plow, the stumps have got to be removed. How is that to be done? Practically, the only methods that have been developed are those that have been developed as the result of experience, and they have ranged all the way from the use of the stump puller of various kinds to the use of dynamite, and certainly the latter method is too expensive.

This is a subject which has given considerable trouble and has received no investigation by any of our Experiment Stations, or by the National Department of Agriculture, and I have put up a proposition to the National Department to know if it were possible to secure the co-operation of the United States Department of Agriculture on an investigation of that sort.

We do not know even how much it costs those farmers where this work has been done, and we ought to know. This matter we have taken up in conference with the State of Minnesota, and they have very energetically taken hold of the matter and today I have received a communication from two of their people saying that they thought that it was of such importance that they propose to ask their legislator for a fund along this line.

They have also suggested a rather ingenious idea and that is the possibility of the State entering into the production of dynamite, causing it to be developed at the State’s prison in some way, and Mr. Craig says that while there would be some danger, it is not more so that what we are now doing with our industries in the State’s prison.

If this question is investigated to find out the best way for using dynamite or any other system for stump removal, it will certainly be a long step forward.

I have looked over literature to find out if there is anything along that line, and the only thing I can find out on this matter is an article which was presented at a Minnesota Farmers’ In-
stitute last year by a man who had practical experience along that line. There is a picture showing the improper and the proper methods for using dynamite.

How many farmers at work in Northern Wisconsin know these things when they start out? They have got to learn them by practical experience, and one of the things it would be well for us to pay attention to would be a problem of this character. Minnesota has taken hold of this matter; they are going to take the matter to the Legislature, and see if it is not possible to make provision for co-operating with Wisconsin and Michigan, and this matter was presented at the meeting of the Minnesota Agricultural Society this week.

I thought it was perfectly proper to bring this matter to your attention, and if it was deemed advisable that the officers of the Association be instructed to present with favor a resolution, to the proper committees of the Legislature, to take up the consideration of this question. This is one of the items which we have included, and is one of the things we want to take hold of this coming year in our agricultural extension work. We want to secure an accumulation of evidence as to the cost of the best methods, and then prepare such illustrated material as will be helpful to be put in the hands of the Commissioner of Immigration, in the hands of all our Northern Wisconsin people, so that they will be given the benefit of this knowledge which they so much need now.

Minnesota is moving in this respect, and I think an expression of opinion from the State Agricultural Society of Wisconsin would be heeded by our Legislature, along this line, as well as appreciated by our sister States with whom we expect to co-operate.

Pres. McKerrow: There is no doubt that this is a very important question. If my memory serves me right, a few years ago, our present chairman, Mr. Scott, talking about the advantages of Northern Wisconsin at one of our round-ups, discussed this question somewhat, and gave some of his experiences in dynamiting stumps and told us how it should be done. So we do not want to acknowledge that Minnesota is the first to bring up this question. Mr. Nordman has brought up this question before.

But as Dr. Russell says, there seems to be nothing definite
done, and if it is profitable for the United States to expend money along agricultural lines, here is one of the fields that ought to be looked into, and it strikes me it is perfectly proper for this convention to take action upon it.

It might be your pleasure to wait until afternoon and bring it up in the shape of a resolution. It might be well to have a committee on resolutions this afternoon.

The Chairman: I will ask President McKerrow to appoint such a committee on resolutions.

Prest. McKerrow: Is there any objection to that? If not, to save formality in putting through a motion, I will appoint as such committee, Mr. Scott, C. H. Everett, and R. E. Roberts. Recess till two o'clock.

The Convention met at 2 o'clock in the afternoon, February 4, 1909.

President McKerrow in the chair.

Prest. McKerrow: Many years ago when I was young like most of this audience, I read in our livestock journals of a farmer and stock breeder down in Kansas who had the push and energy to launch out into the breeding of a comparatively new type or family of shorthorn cattle. That since has become a popular type of a noted breed—Dutch cattle. Later we have all read of the gentleman and the principles that he has advocated in the congress of the United States—in the United States Senate—as a promoter of the reciprocity idea as it relates to farm products—meat products in the main, produced by the farmers of the United States.

To-day we have on our program the subject of "Conservative Farming." President Roosevelt gave something of an impetus to this idea of conservation in calling together the governors of the various States to discuss this great question. It applies as forcibly to agriculture as it does to timber and mines.

We have with us today this gentleman of whom I speak, and I am now pleased to present to this audience Col. Harris, Ex-Senator Harris of Kansas.