

Farmer's Advocate

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EDITORIAL

If the English object to chewing, spitting and cursing, unfortunately far too common, we can find little fault with them for so doing.

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An observant Old Countryman thinks that the Western farmer does not appreciate enough the possibilities of the country towns and villages as markets for the produce that might be raised.

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It will be good policy for those intending to sow oats this spring, to test the germinating qualities before putting them into the soil. Who knows but what they were touched by frost last harvest!

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It is a common practice to dub a country by its vegetable growth; hence we hear of the Bunch Grass, and the Sweet Grass Country—it is correct then to speak of the farm land east of the range as the Wild Oat Country!

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It will be good business for those expecting to sow oats that were cut late last fall to test the seed as to its germinating qualities. Some Alberta farmers got nipped some years since through not observing this precaution.

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One of the worst defects of municipal ownership and operation is that it creates a large and powerful class of voting employees who are thus vitally interested in the maintenance of such operation, no matter whether done at a loss or not.

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Commenting on the question of provincial rail insurance, pro and con, one interested says, "It resolves itself into operation by private companies, the Government safeguarding the patrons and limiting the dividends allowed to be paid, provision being made against watered stock."

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The *Globe* is endeavoring to find out the cause of the Canadian antipathy to English people. The great Toronto journal sums the matter up by suggesting that the newly arrived immigrant should exercise patience and perseverance, and the Canadian people greater courtesy and consideration.

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The lumber business in British Columbia must be considered a profitable industry to engage in, judging by the men it has lured recently from professional careers. Dr. Judson Clarke, Forester for Ontario, and now E. Stewart, Superintendent of Forestry for the Department of the Interior, are two who have yielded to the fascination of turning trees into gold.

Fire Protection for Schools.

The recent school fire at Montreal in which the lives of a noble teacher and several little children were lost has drawn the attention of people to the need for fire protection. The bulk of that attention has been given to city schools, but many of the villages and towns need as much attention, in fact more, on account of the lack of paid fire brigades furnished with adequate means of fighting fire and rescuing the inmates of burning buildings. City schools have been forced to put on iron fire escapes, the great value of such being more in the way of furnishing access to the building for life savers than anything else. The cry "Fire" in a crowded building almost invariably causes a panic and at such times there is great need for cool heads and brave hearts. Fire drill is one of the best preventives of loss of life in schools; the children in obedience to a given signal fall into marching order and can be walked out of a building in a

very few minutes. Loss of life at a fire is generally nowadays the result of the confusion arising amongst those panic-stricken. Every large school should have the classes arranged so that the younger pupils are nearest the main entrance to the building. The provision of a few chemical fire extinguishers will also be an insurance against loss of life, on the value of which a figure cannot be placed. Many school houses are of frame construction and should a fire start it would spread quickly. In the newer buildings the heating apparatus is the furnace and it is essential that the installation be thorough and safe. Human life is so precious that monetary considerations should not be allowed to interfere with proper means of safeguarding the children at school from danger.

Farmers' Institute Workers Needed.

The need for a hand at the helm of the ship of agricultural education has been recognized by the Department of Agriculture for Manitoba, and Principal Black has been made director of agricultural societies, farmers' institutes and agricultural college extension work. Any person who has taken the trouble to study the farmers' institute system of the province must have been struck with the dearth of good institute workers. This is one field in which a director can work; namely, for the development of large crops of workers whose assistance can be relied upon—men with practical experience, who believe what they say and who can put fire into their utterances. It is in institute work as in the sports of youth, team play counts; a head is needed, but a head, no matter how good, can not do it all. It is to be hoped that the new duties will not bear unduly upon Principal Black, whose health has not been so good as we could wish for him, and it is also to be hoped that he will be able to find the men essential to his and the province's needs. In the past, and we refer to further back than a decade, there was just the least tendency to search only for workers amongst those known to side with the Government in power. Fortunately knowledge is not monopolized by any one party, and it is to be hoped that as the country and agriculture grow older, and the needs greater, men will grow broader in their views and unite in a campaign to improve an agriculture which, if not decadent, is dangerously near stagnation.

Northern Alberta Interests Well Looked After.

From a report to hand of the special committee chosen from the Edmonton Board of Trade to look into the matter of a market for farm products, it is abundantly evident that the northern city is alive to the importance of keeping the agricultural possibilities of the country well to the fore. In this matter the well-known "jumping-off town," at it used to be termed, sets a splendid example to other towns and cities in the Western country. Every observing person will agree that for many years to come the towns and cities of the prairie country will be directly dependent on the farmer, and that the business of such places will fluctuate synchronously with the yields on the farms and the prices obtained by farmers for their products. Once this fact is well understood and appreciated by the town dwellers, there can be expected an awakening on their part to the necessity of fostering creameries, poultry fattening stations, oatmeal and flour mills, even packing houses (abattoirs), tanneries, etc., at suitable points. A specific instance of this admirable solicitude of a city for the interests of farmers tributary to it is shown by the city of Edmonton in dealing with the wheat of the district and its suitability as material from which to make high grade flour. By some means or other the opinion had gained credence that Northern Alberta, and the

Edmonton district in particular, was unsuited to the production of wheat from which high class flour could be made; everyone admitted that that country produced splendid oats, but it seemed that wheat growing there was not to be considered seriously. The Board of Trade had greater faith than many others and went to pains to investigate, and they availed themselves of the assistance of that noted agricultural chemist, Prof. Snyder, of the University of Minnesota. Samples of Manitoba and Northern Alberta wheat were sent for analysis, the identity of the particular samples not being revealed to him. The professor's report has borne out the confidence of our friends at the big fur trading city, in the cereal producing ability of their part of the country; viz., that it is possible to produce as good milling wheat there as anywhere in the West. The committee make, however, the following significant remarks, which bear out the objections advanced by this paper to the seed distribution scheme followed by the experimental farms:

"It appeared, however, from information obtainable, that our farmers are not raising uniformly good wheat; and that a great many otherwise fine samples are spoiled by consisting of badly mixed varieties. While it is well known that it is the hard Fyfe varieties which give satisfactory milling results, there is comparatively little pure Red Fyfe wheat in the district, most samples being mixed with Ladoga, Club, Preston, and other undesirable varieties. It does not appear that the millers are doing much to discourage the production of these mixed samples by paying a high price for pure Fyfe wheat, and a lower price for these varieties less desirable for milling purposes. It also appears that a large proportion of otherwise fine wheat is injured by the smut which is largely preventable. It therefore appears that the farmers themselves could largely improve the average quality of the wheat raised by improved methods."

The committee as a result of its investigation feels warranted in making the following statement:

"Comparison of representative samples of local wheat with the standard samples furnished by the Dominion Government inspector, seemed to establish the fact that while a certain amount of low grade wheat is grown here as elsewhere there is an ample supply of wheat easily grading 1 Northern and 2 Northern, which are the grades principally used in the manufacture of the highest grades of Manitoba flour."

The Weed Campaign Needs to be an Aggressive One.

Several years ago the farmers of Manitoba were aroused from any lethargic attitude they might have held towards weed pests by the migration of the Russian thistle, whose bad qualities did not lack for exaggeration. The alarm did not subside for some time and in the meantime all the known weeds came in for attention. The mustard family got considerable attention, the weed suppression evangelist of that day (a decade or more ago) being Dr. Fletcher of Ottawa, and his teachings were convincing and inspired people to go to work. Bulletins were issued and a lot of weed knowledge disseminated. The agitation followed a period of rather hard times and that fact may have accounted for the heed given to the doctrine being preached. In any event it seems strange that as soon as good times get started, with good crops and fair prices, the campaign against the weeds died down, largely it must be admitted on account of the indifference of the farmers. Recent events point to the need for a very vigorous weed campaign to be waged for the next few years. The returns from the Chief Grain Inspector's office are in themselves enough to warrant the expenditure of public money for the