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EDITORIAL.

When a writer in the University Magazine describes our educational system as a "steam roller," the definition though depressing, is apt.

It is symptomatic of change—let us hope for the better—when the Ontario educational steam roller puts on a fresh head of steam.

Even a steam roller at the expense of some jolting, has been known to change its course on the public highway in order to get out of a rut.

Other causes play a part no doubt, but little wonder that people become exercised as they witness generation after generation of the brightest, and best of farm youth steam-rolled by an educational system from the interests and occupations of agriculture.

Electricity for farm purposes was but yesterday regarded as a dream of the future. Through the offices of the Ontario Hydro-Electric Commission it now seems likely soon to become a reality over large areas of country. May the most sanguine hopes be fulfilled.

In the rush of autumn work after a summer when bad weather has impeded progress as was the case this year, it is sometimes impossible to look properly after the odds and ends of work. Still it will hardly pay to neglect the stock and implements. Inattention to the former diminishes the arterial current of revenue, while neglect of the latter opens a steady leak of loss.

In placing dependence upon educational expedients instead of dealing with root troubles, there is a danger of imitating the enterprise grocer, referred to by a recent writer, who put upon the market a line of artificial liver and bacon which he modestly advertised as "wholesome, or nearly so"—exceedingly ingenious in conception, but innutritious as a regular article of diet.

It seems to have been an excellent season for tree-planting. Out of an orchard of 346 trees planted at Weldwood the past spring all but three are living. One of the three was a peach "filler," killed by borers, while the other two were apple trees which were dried out and dead-looking when planted and only inserted in mid-spaces on the bare chance that they might survive. Every tree that had a fair chance lived, and excepting a few, where the rows ran up into an old blue-grass sod, which received no cultivation but a little digging right around the trees, all have made vigorous growth. This orchard was planted on a new seeding of clover, the trees being set on narrow ridges plowed last December and top-dressed during the winter. Between these ridges a crop of 2½ tons of hay to the acre was cut, also five loads of aftermath to thresh for seed. On the ridges between the trees potatoes and mangels were planted and have yielded heavily. The inter-cropping should thus go a long way towards paying for the first year's culture of the orchard.

Less acid and more substance is the aim in ensilage nowadays.

For all the cold, wet summer season many silos have been filled—or partly filled—with extra well-eared and well-matured corn.

Sunshine is essential to plant growth. Moisture was abundant this year, but at the very time precipitation was as heavy as at any time during the season the millet crop was noticed to practically stand still for about three weeks. The lack of sunshine was believed to be the cause.

No system of stable ventilation may be considered complete which requires the presence of an attendant to keep it working. Perfect ventilation should be secured by a system which is working incessantly with a minimum amount of attention. Of course the man in charge may aid considerably by the manipulation of parts of the system which admit of it, but on the whole the most satisfactory scheme is that which requires the least looking after.

This has been a very good season to demonstrate the value of underdrainage. In travelling through the country it was a common sight, during the harvest season, to see one farm stripped of its crop, while that on the neighboring place was still in the fields. There was a little fine weather at the beginning of the harvest, and those who had their grain sown early were fortunate because it ripened early, and missed the worst of the season's downpour. What was the secret of the early seeding? Simply underdrainage.

There is more in the variety of many of our farm crops than most of us realize. The potato experiments carried on at the O. A. C. this year have shown that certain varieties are more resistant to blight than others. We know that certain varieties of wheat stand the winter better than others, and that certain varieties yield more heavily than others, and that some varieties have better quality than others. These various points should be considered in connection with every crop. It is not enough to know that the crop is oats, wheat, barley, potatoes or corn, as the case may be. Study the different varieties. Select the best and insist upon its being true to type, pure and vital.

Drainage demonstrations have been carried on by the Department of Physics at the Ontario Agricultural College, and by the district representatives of the Ontario Department of Agriculture for several years with good success, but the first practical demonstration of digging the ditch and laying tile, was recently held in Bruce Co. This is perhaps the greatest step forward which this work has made, and it is not to end here, for extensive experiments are to be carried on in different counties in Ontario to determine the best depth and the most suitable distances apart to place tile drains in different kinds of soil. There are those who believe very heavy clay cannot be satisfactorily underdrained. These experiments will determine the point. Nothing convinces like a practical demonstration. The more of these that are held the better.

Closer Touch With Farm Life.

By all accounts, the editorial "Why?" appearing in the "Farmer's Advocate" of September 26th has struck fire, if we may judge by exchange comment, correspondence and interviews. The Christian Guardian was greatly surprised to see us "break loose in such violent fashion and say such unparliamentary things about the Provincial Department of Education." The Guardian itself proceeds to discuss the subject in a more chastened spirit as befitting a religious publication, but we are pleased to note that its views are in perfect accord with our own, as once more elaborated on the editorial page of October 10th. "Some arrangement should be arrived at, says the Guardian, by which our whole educational system, from the University downwards, would be brought into closer touch with farm life." Just so. It is, indeed, time. As for our own utterance, we have only to say that repeated efforts at constructive criticism, with little apparent thorough-going heed at headquarters, had led us to try a different tack. We hope we may not have to "do it again."

Real Reform for the Rural Schools

A considerable display of well-intended effort may be made in respect to the reformation of rural public-school education without reaching the real roots of the trouble, which are deeply entrenched in system. A brave show may be made on paper while the tangible results are disappointingly meagre, as the public will sooner or later learn to its cost. At a large gathering of teachers in an Ontario school inspectorate recently enquiry was made regarding the use of a very fine chart, illustrative of plant and insect life, that had been especially distributed to the rural schools months before. The response, as reported, was that but one teacher had made use of the chart, and in that case only to a limited degree. This illustrates just what is liable to occur with the superficial or merely optional, no matter how well meant. Real reforms must, as The Farmer's Advocate has scores of times pointed out, editorially and by its correspondence, reach the regular program of normal-teacher training, the public-school curriculum and the text books in daily use by the pupils from the primary classes and upward. There is little time to accomplish much in a course that hurries to its end as a high-school feeder. A few years ago when the text books in the Province of Ontario were revised a grand opportunity was missed to give them some fitting relation to the country's foundation industry and life which politicians glory in periodically extolling from the hustings. Instead of containing more material conceived with this end in view the new ones if anything had less of it than the old. Nearly everybody is deploring the drift from country to city; we lament the evils of urban congestion and the over-crowding of the professions and commercial life. It is conceded that a knowledge of rural affairs and a juster appreciation of the advantages of rural life would tend to preserve a more wholesome balance in the affairs of country and town, and be for the decided advantage of the growing city population. In colloquial phrase it would tend to "even things up" and give all a more equal opportunity. Most of the rural teachers are young ladies who had practically taken leave of rural life in early years, and not a few of the others are from the