

THE MARITIME PATRON,

AND ORGAN OF THE

Maritime Provincial Grange—Patrons of Husbandry.*"In Essentials Unity—In Non-essentials Liberty—In All Things Charity."*

[All communications intended for this column should be sent to the editor of the Maritime Patron, EDWIN S. CREEK, M. D., Newport.]

We offer no apology for giving Agricultural Education precedence in this column. Nor do we feel called upon to offer arguments or facts in justification of precedence given to this subject. That agricultural education and increase and economy of agricultural production are related to each other as cause and effect, we will at present take for granted, and as a corollary, that the government of every country should, above and before all other duties, provide adequately for and foster Agricultural Education. Of course every one tacitly admits the utter dependence of every country upon agriculture.

Admitting the paramount importance of agriculture among our industries—granting the relation which technical education holds to agriculture, (as indeed to all industries), the debatable question presents itself for consideration—how shall the country best discharge its duty to itself in this matter?

The duty of the state is to make provision only for such instruction as authoritatively directs how economy and increase of agricultural production shall be best attained. This knowledge systematically arranged is the Agricultural Science, the first principles of which should be taught in all country district schools, and that should be thoroughly taught and practically exemplified in our Agricultural College and Model and Experimental Farm, which shall be when tenure of office and its emoluments depends upon compliance with demands for the faculties for technical education that civilized nations enjoy.

Leaving for the present all other branches of this subject we invite attention to what the government of Nova Scotia has done or attempted in the Act passed at the last session of the legislature, entitled "an Act to encourage Agricultural Education," and to that portion of the report of the Executive Committee of the Maritime Provincial Grange referring thereto. This Act we gladly presume to have been good in intention.

It provides for the appointment of a Lecturer on Agriculture, whose duty it shall be to instruct "pupil teachers in Agricultural Chemistry and the Sciences bearing on Agriculture." To conduct "a regular course of lectures on Agricultural Science, with experiments and laboratory practice, for the benefit of young men generally, who may wish to fit themselves for the successful prosecution of Agriculture, and with the view of training teachers for the special schools provided for in this Act." To "inspect and report upon any schools receiving special grants under authority of this Act, so far as the teaching of Agriculture is concerned," and to "deliver public lectures on Agriculture throughout the province," so far as his other duties will permit. We also quote for our present purpose, sections 3, 4 and 5, which are as follows.

Sec. 3.—"Any male teacher of the first class (grade A or B) who shall have attended the course of lectures above provided for, and shall have passed a satisfactory examination on the subject thereof, shall be entitled, subject to the conditions hereinafter named, to receive, when teaching school, in addition to the ordinary grant of his grade, a special grant of \$100 for the school year, or rateably according to the time he may have taught."

Sec. 4.—"It shall be the duty of the Council of Public Instruction to frame regulations as to the outfit and management of schools in charge of teachers holding an agricultural diploma, and claiming the special grant aforesaid; and without the due observance of such regulations by both trustee and teacher, the special grant shall in no case be paid."

Sec. 5.—"To encourage teachers to qualify themselves as Agricultural instructors, the Council of Public Instruction is authorized to distribute annually a sum not exceeding \$250 as prizes among the five teachers who shall pass the best examination on the subjects of the course."

In their Report the Executive Committee say—"sections 1 and 2 of this Act being in accordance with suggestions made in the Report of the Committee on Agricultural Education, presented and adopted at the session of the Provincial Grange held at Sackville in June 1883, is to be commended as being conducive to the purposes of the Act."

The Committee, after expressing their opinion that the general introduction of rudimentary Agricultural Education into country district schools by competent teachers should be the main object in view, further embody their opinions and suggestions in the following preamble and resolution:

"Whereas a special grant to male teachers of the first class would undoubtedly have a tendency to induce the few teachers of that sex and class to comply with the conditions named in the Act, but would also have a tendency not only not to encourage but actually to discourage female teachers from making any effort in the desired direction, while male teachers of grades lower than A or B would also be inclined to defer introducing the additional study until in a position to obtain the bonus offered:

"Therefore resolved, That in the opinion of this Committee, whatever sum the Council of Public Instruction might consider advisable to devote to the encouragement of Agricultural Education in the several counties of Nova Scotia, should be awarded as prizes to the teachers, irrespective of sex or grade, complying with the conditions of the Act, whose schools shewed the best results in the desired direction."

"Resolved also, That in the opinion of this Committee the Inspectors of Schools should be required to see that at least the use of a prescribed text book on the first principles of Agriculture be introduced into the country district schools under their supervision."

'Resolved also, That in the opinion of this Committee, every reasonable encouragement, such for instance as is provided for in Section 5 of the Act, should be given to teachers to obtain Agricultural Diplomas."

The practical operation of the Act, as it stands, will not be to favor the introduction of instruction in the first principles of Agriculture into every country district school. This, however, is very evidently not the policy of the Act, but rather to favor the establishment of one or two schools in each county, which should prepare young men for a more advanced and thorough course at Truro under Prof. Smith.

That such schools would be accessible to only a few farmers' sons in the immediate vicinity, all who know anything of the circumstance of the majority of our farmers will admit.

That the female teachers, who are the great majority, are quite as capable of giving instructions in the first principles of Agriculture, as the male teachers who have been singled out by the Act, will be as readily admitted, especially by those who have had an opportunity of testing the ability of our female teachers.

The subject is a large one, but we can pursue it no further at present.

We hope that the attention of the government will be directed to this matter, and that the Act in question will be amended as suggested.

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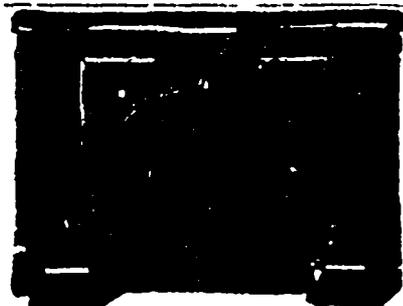
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