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EDITORIAL.

THE RIGHT HAND AGAINST THE LEFT.

Why is it that the publisher referred to last week could get scores of editors, but not a hand for the mechanical department? Why have we always had an overplus of professional men to export, while engineers and practical men of affairs, city laborers, farm laborers, and even farmers, have been so scarce? Why is it that a rural country like Canada was so tardy about developing her fertile Northwest, and is even now importing a large proportion of the settlers who occupy it? Is it not due principally to the inconsistency of those who have shaped our school systems?

As a nation, we have been sorely in need of constructive genius, skilled labor for manufacturing, and, most of all, labor for the land. On the one hand, we have been crying out for these. When the demand could not be met at home, we insisted that the Government must secure immigrants—immigrants who, without reflecting ungraciously upon their character, in many cases have failed to measure up to the standards of Canadian citizenship. Above all, we have insisted on obtaining the best of farm laborers from Great Britain, a country with a comparatively small rural population, and few good farm laborers to spare.

On the other hand—and we defy contradiction here—on the other hand we have, through our public educational systems, been doing all we could to reduce the ranks of native labor; to train away from the shop, the forge and the farm, and to send as many as possible of the brightest boys and girls up through Public School, High School and University into the so-called higher professions, when, these becoming overcrowded, the surplus was forced to new fields in foreign countries. Thus has Canada been drained of much of her best blood to contribute to the upbuilding of her Republican rival, and many of those who have remained with us have failed to follow out their natural bent because of an educational system which perverted their ideals in youth. Hon. Geo. W. Ross used to be fond of likening Ontario's school system to a ladder with one end in the kindergarten and the other in the university. Did he ever stop to think where such a ladder would lead? A system of that kind may answer all right for countries where only the few are educated; it will never do for Canada, where education is so general.

Canada needs a practical education in her lower schools, an education conceived chiefly, not in the interest of the one per cent. of pupils who go on to the university, but of the ninety and nine who finish in Public and High Schools. We need an education in which nature study, school gardening, manual training and domestic science have a place. Above all, we need teachers imbued with a proper appreciation of the dignity of labor. Go back, Reader, in memory to the old school. You probably studied under half a dozen different teachers, or more. Did ever one of them uphold farming or manual labor? Did they not incite you to study by holding up the prospect of a job without hard work? Our schools have been saturated with the pernicious idea that education was a means of avoiding physical exertion, a means by which the son might rise above

the station of his parents. The father was "only" a farmer, or "only" a day-laborer, or "only" a mechanic, as the case might be. The son, if he was clever, aspired to something "better," and was encouraged in this ambition. All this must be changed. We must inculcate into our young people, through school and press, that it is not the degree, but the nature of a man's ability, that should determine his calling; that it is just as worthy to be an expert farmer or mechanic as a first-class doctor or lawyer. We need a school system that will give the child with a mechanical turn every chance to develop his natural inclination, instead of weaning him away from it by means of a purely academical course of study, calculated to develop a preference for sedentary employment. In other words, we must stop trying to make second or third-class professional men out of boys who might have become first-class farmers or carpenters. President Roosevelt says the United States hasn't begun to take in the real dignity of labor. No more has Canada. False notions are undermining our national progress. We need a complete revolution in our whole idea of school education. We want one framed in the interest of the nation and of the general people.

Just here a word of warning. The new education will not develop peasants or white slaves. In proportion as we educate the workingman and make him proficient, just to that extent will he demand more intellectual scope in his calling. He will demand an occupation in which he may rise according to his ability. He will insist on being provided with the opportunity to accomplish more and earn more as his intelligence, diligence and experience increase. He will insist on steadily-improving opportunities. The new education will train such laborers, and it will also train employers who will endeavor to provide the opportunities; employers who will, in short, study the labor problem from the laborers' standpoint, as well as from their own. Our present system of school education has not been judiciously calculated to train either capable employees or progressive employers.

We have said, in earlier issues, that the school, among other agencies, had tended, by broadening the individual citizen's outlook and stirring humanitarian impulses, toward an ultimate betterment of the laborer's position. Broadly speaking, we believe this is correct, but the reader must not miss the force of the qualifying word, ultimate. The direct and immediate influence of our ill-conceived school systems has been to complicate the labor problem, which has now reached a stage which demands a solution; and the obvious solution lies not in abolishing free education, but in remodelling it. We must cease playing the right hand against the left. We must recast our school systems so as to educate our people according to the national needs. This will also be in the best interests of the individual citizen.

It is encouraging and but fair to note that the most progressive educationists in Canada, as well as in the United States and Great Britain, are now alive to the situation. The new movement is no party issue. In Nova Scotia, under a Liberal Government, a system of technical instruction is being introduced. Ontario, with a Conservative administration, is inaugurating agricultural classes in six High Schools, and the last report of the Provincial Education Department, recently to hand, shows that the Department is ready and anxious to institute further reforms and improvements as fast as public opinion is prepared to approve. The aim of "The Farmer's Advocate" is to awaken public interest in this subject, than which none is more vital to national progress.

THE SOMNAMBULIST ON THE FARM.

Somnambulism is defined as the act of walking and performing other actions in sleep. In this remarkable condition, long distances and exceedingly dangerous situations are traversed. Most of the faculties are dormant, as in profound slumber, and others, though prenatally acute and active, are apparently fixed upon some pre-existent impression or purpose of mind, in pursuit of which the individual goes forward, with eyes open, but in stony oblivion to surrounding realities.

In like manner, we have found in nearly every farming community young men with their eyes fixed upon the city and its pursuits as a goal of relief where their aspirations might speedily be realized, but all the while oblivious of the advantages and the opportunities for improvement lying available about them. The closing years of the nineteenth century witnessed a remarkable reaction setting in against the overwrought and artificial life of the city, and in the 20th century we find men of means and all who think below the surface reaching out eagerly after rural conditions, and finding the life more abundant nearer to nature's heart. And there is common sense in the movement. How few out of the multitudes that throng the cities achieve anything like what is called success. Here and there one holds out to the end, and the fortune he accumulates or the fame he achieves puts him much in the public eye, but what of the multitude? There is no doubt that, as a business proposition, farming makes an infinitely better showing on the average than commercial and professional pursuits, with more incidental good and less output of the energies of life.

At best, the town can only counterfeit or approximate the beauties, marvels and advantages of the country. What people need most of all is vision to see. Appreciation of values will follow. What have we? Instead of a darkened dome overhead, obstructed with grimy walls, smoking chimneys, forests of ugly poles, and a network of wires, there is the honest blue of the Canadian sky, silhouetted with magnificent forest trees, smiling orchards, glimpses of lakes and streams.

Instead of an atmosphere thickly saturated with disease germs, dust and soot, and laden with mephitic odors from which, in the congestion of humanity, there is all but no escape, the lungs of the country dweller are filled and his blood purified and invigorated by unlimited supplies of pure air, without money and without price. Just breathe it in, is all he has to do.

Instead of the incessant roar, grind and rattle of steam and electric cars, the insistent shriek of the whistles summoning to toil, and the whirr of dusty machinery, he hears the breeze southing through the trees, billowing across the waving grain fields, and the morning and evening choruses of birds.

Instead of the blackened moulds of the foundry, turning out a thousand stoves or plow-points, each a monotonous duplicate of the other, or the never-ending figures of the counting house, he sees going on before him, in endless variety, the magic ministry of sun and water, building up from plant food hidden in soil and air flowers of varied hue and fragrance, nutritious grains and toothsome fruits.

If he have but a little patience, he will see the fields and the herds respond in a miracle of improvement to the touch of better culture and intelligent selection. There is physical toil, of course, but those who have tried both find the country less exacting in the end than the town, and in no pursuit are the rewards of intelligence more certain than in farming; while, by study and reflection, every task becomes invested with new interest. Said a shrewd, observant city journalist