

The Farmer's Advocate AND HOME MAGAZINE.

THE LEADING AGRICULTURAL JOURNAL IN THE
DOMINION.

Published weekly by
THE WILLIAM WELD COMPANY (Limited).

JOHN WELD, Manager.

Agents for "The Farmer's Advocate and Home Journal,"
Winnipeg, Man.

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Agricultural Department Should State the Case.

In the meantime, for the good of all concerned, it would be well if the farmer's side of the story were stated plainly and periodically in the daily press by the heads of our Departments of Agriculture. Farm papers circulate in farm homes, and do not reach city readers. Authoritative statements intended to educate consumers and coming from the Dominion Minister of Agriculture, or some of his worthy assistants, would be read and we believe a number of people would learn a good deal from them. The Canadian people must get down to brass tacks and the agricultural problem must be properly known and appreciated in city as well as country before the desired results can be effected. To the man who calls the farmer a profiteer we should like to point out the fact that the so-called back-to-the-land movement is not crowding the highways and byways with those who have had a taste of city life and are now on the way to the land because they think it offers big chances in a financial way. The fact is they do not seriously think there is so much money in farming or surely more would make an effort to get on the land. But they will talk about the money in farming and the hardships of the city consumer, while they go right on consuming and keep as far as possible from the land.

The Food Controller has been making suggestions to the Department of Agriculture re calf distribution and other matters. It might be in order to suggest that the Food Controller get a few suggestions from the various Branches of the Department of Agriculture and that these suggestions and the educational material so procured be given the same amount of publicity as most of the ridiculous stories of the farmer as a food profiteer have received. The heads of the Branches of the Agricultural Department through the Minister can do unlimited good by championing the cause of the farmer. They know his viewpoint and his problems and it is their duty to back him up for a bigger agriculture and broader Canada.

Put Producers on Committees.

One point more. When the Food Controller appoints committees to look into problems directly affecting the producer as well as the consumer, in the interests

of all it might be well to have the producer adequately represented. The committee on the milk supply has one representative of the milk producers and one of the milk distributors and a "food expert" from each of the principal cities. One Medical Officer of Health could have looked after the problems of milk purity better than one lone producer can solve all the producers' problems, and one distributor all the problems of distribution. The milk problem is one of production and distribution. The cost of production has increased. So has the cost of distribution. Production cannot be cheapened without cheaper feed and cheaper labor. Distribution brings in all the difficulties of our overlapping distribution system. These are the problems and the "food experts" of the cities cannot solve them. Again we say give the producer fair play in the matters of control which affect the things he produces. Give him fair representation and consideration. It is just as ridiculous for groups of consumers to attempt to stampee the producers as it would be for a committee of farmers to formulate a set of price regulations for departmental stores. All must get together and work out the solution together, each group with adequate and fair representation. It is a mistake, too, to direct all the educational effort at the farmer. There are evidences aplenty that a little educating is necessary elsewhere.

Educated Character Necessary in Politics.

BY ALLAN MCDIARMID.

According to all signs, promises and predictions, we are to have a moving among the dry bones on Parliament Hill inside the next six months at least. In other words we are going to be given another opportunity to choose men who will give expression to our ideas for us at headquarters in Ottawa during the next five years, more or less. In theory this plan of a representative parliament is O. K. As to the way it works out every man has his own private opinion. The man who was all fair promises before election does not always live up to the ideal that he created in our minds, and we can only console ourselves by meditating on the frailty of mankind in general and of would-be members of parliament in particular. It has come to the point now, where, if our representative isn't considerably better than we expect him to be, he's in serious danger of getting into jail. It seems to me that a good many of our members of parliament get elected on the strength of their own good opinion of themselves, however. We take their say-so for it that they are all right. A friend of mine was in the city the other day and naturally got into conversation with his County Representative, who was a man who had what the Scotch call "a pretty good conceit o' himself." About the first thing he said, after the war and the weather had been disposed of, was, "Well, what do they say of me back home when they hear of me in parliament?"

"Oh," said my friend, "they don't say anything. They just laugh."

It's time we quit asking our would-be members of parliament where they stand on any particular question. It's a foregone conclusion that they stand just where you stand until they get your vote. It's not so important to find out where a man stands as it is to make a note of the direction in which he is going. If we keep our eyes open we can always see that for ourselves. Viewed at a distance, from the standpoint of time, we always get a better idea of a man's real character than we can by any personal cross-examination. To question a man in regard to his fitness to go to parliament is something on a par with a man asking a young woman if she thinks she will make a good wife. An entirely disinterested answer could hardly be expected.

The trouble with the majority of our public men who specialize in politics is that they are men whose character had not been educated. They have a purpose in life, but that purpose is not primarily to be a good citizen. They wish to make a success of their lives, but their ideas of success are, as a rule, selfish. There is just one way to attain success that is worth the name, and that is by being of service to mankind. The man who devotes himself to this object will eventually find himself in possession of most of the things in life worth having, and will develop the personality that will fit him for the position of representative of his fellowmen in any parliament in the land. Without this education of character men are like the weather-vanes that some of us have on our barns, and are blown about by every wind of partyism that passes by. Strength of will is part of this education of character and is a part that is very evidently lacking in professional politicians. If they had strength of will they wouldn't be bound by partyism.

It has often been said that if more farmers were elected to political offices it would help to cure many of the ills that governments suffer from, but it all depends on the kind of farmers we elected. There are several farmers in our legislative halls at the present time, and as far as we hear anything about them their activities must be confined mainly to drawing what they call their "sessional indemnities." There are two species of farmer. There is what is called the "Gentleman Farmer," and there is what is known as the "Practical Farmer." The small boy asked his father, among

other things, what was meant by a "practical farmer." His father told him it was a farmer who grew grain and raised all kinds of live stock, including a family of boys and girls. The next question was, "And what is a 'Gentleman Farmer?'" "Well," said his father, "I guess it's a farmer who doesn't raise anything but his hat." It will never get us anything to elect this species to represent us in parliament. There should be and there are men in our country districts who could look after the interests of the farmer as a class and the welfare of the country as a whole, and these men would do it without introducing that element of self-interest which characterizes the politician rather than the statesman. The farm has produced eighty per cent. of the city's successful business men, so there is no reason why it shouldn't produce the right kind of politicians as well. The only thing that interferes with the realizing of this idea is the fact that the majority of farmers at the present time are so taken up with the work of making a living for themselves and their families that they are not giving the attention to matters of national interest that will qualify them to deal with these questions as statesmen should. There is plenty of natural ability but it has been developed to only a very limited extent.

We know that the difficulties to be overcome and the problems to be solved by the man on the farm help to give him the strength of character that, as a rule, he possesses, but it will not give him the complete education that will enable him to deal with problems outside his own particular sphere of labor. Besides being a worker with his hands he must become a student of the ideas of men, and above all he must become a thinker on his own account. The great leader and statesman is invariably the man who has followed his thought conscientiously, wherever it has led him, and who has been willing to sacrifice what seemed like a present personal benefit for the welfare of his country, as a whole. His is a good example of what we mean by an "educated character."

Nature's Diary.

A. B. KLUGH, M.A.

Owls are, as a rule, solitary birds and in most species it is rarely that more than a pair are seen at one time, but in the case of the Short-eared Owl this rule is not always borne out, as in the fall they are not infrequently seen in small flocks. This species is also much more given to hunting in the daytime than other Owls.

The Short-eared Owl is somewhat variable in size, ranging from thirteen to seventeen inches in length. The general color of the upper parts is mottled black and fawn, each feather having a dark centre edged with fawn. The females are darker above than the males. The wings are dark brown barred with fawn, and the tail is similar in coloration. The under parts vary from almost white to deep fawn, with broad streaks on the breast and narrow ones on the abdomen. The face has a very large, white or pale buff ruff and large black rings about the eyes. The feet are feathered to the base of the claws.

This bird is a cosmopolitan species, being found in nearly all parts of the Western Hemisphere and also in the Eastern Hemisphere. It is a bird of the open country, being particularly partial to marshes. When not engaged in hunting it remains hidden in the tall grass. Its nest is also made in a marsh, being placed on the ground and consisting of a few sticks, a little grass and some feathers, these being rather loosely thrown together.

The Short-eared Owl is a beneficial species, as its food consists mainly of field mice, with some beetles, locusts and other large insects. A small bird is taken occasionally. This is one of the birds of prey which flock to a locality when field mice increase unduly and which helps in reducing their numbers and preventing a plague of mice. As is the case with other Owls this species swallows its prey whole and later regurgitates the indigestible parts such as the bones and fur. Sometimes one pellet which has been regurgitated will contain the bones of several mice. These pellets are about two inches long and three-quarters of an inch in diameter, and their ejection is accompanied by contortions which suggest a violent attack of nausea.

This species winters from the northern United States southward, and is more frequently seen during the fall migration than at any other time. The name refers to the short tufts of feathers which project upwards from the facial disks.

Among the ducks that come down from the north and northwest to spend the winter upon the open water of our large lakes, one of the commonest is the Old Squaw. This duck varies a good deal in plumage. The male in fall and winter has the head, neck and front part of the body white, with a grayish patch on the cheek and a blackish patch below the ear, and with the rest of the upper parts blackish. In summer plumage the male is black with a white patch on the side of the head. In both plumages the male has the middle tail-feathers very much elongated. The female in winter plumage has the head and neck white, with a gray patch on top of the head and another above the ear, and the back brownish, while in summer she has the head, neck and front part of the body grayish-brown, with a large grayish patch around the eye and another on the neck.

This species has a host of common names, among them being: Long-tailed Duck, Swallow-tailed Duck, South-southerly, Old Wife, Old Injun, Old Granny, Old Molly, John Connolly, Uncle Huldry, Cowheen, Calaw, Calloo, Cockawee, Scoldenore, Quandy and Organ Duck.

The Old Squaw is an inhabitant of the northern portions of both hemispheres, and breeds in the Arctic