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EDITORIAL

War and Greatness

Our politicians seem determined that we must have war with Germany, either immediately, or in the near future. For the time being the jingo spirit possesses a large proportion of our public men. Such a zeal for "national greatness" as has seized these worthy individuals, has not been displayed for many years.

And what does it all amount to? We do not want war for two very sufficient reasons: first, because neither ourselves nor Germany can afford to foot the bills, and second, because nothing is accomplished for the betterment of individuals or humanity, by a fit of national passion resulting in national murder.

Can anyone conceive of a more absurd blunder, on the part of any government in these days of modern business methods and machine warfare, than to try to force war with another government? With millions of debt hanging like millstones about the necks of every government of European countries, and the discharge of that debt the most urgent obligation of each government, how in the face of business common sense can a government welcome so expensive and destructive an agency as war? There is a lesson in South Africa in the practical results of war. England is annually paying millions sterling to discharge the debts of that incident, while the representative government, which she spent this money to establish is administering the affairs of the colony, according to Boer ideas of representative institutions.

There may be something in a military display that gratifies the national pride, but there is nothing in it that pays debts, nor that settles the question of national greatness, for greatness is not measured any longer,

by the number of men of the opposing army that are annihilated, but by the diameter of the moral character of the individual citizen, and the collective good sense of the people, in the management of their public affairs in an economical, humane and progressive manner. In modern times, Napoleon who once dominated Europe and ended his life in exile, is an example of greatness, according to the former standard, while Victoria of revered memory personifies national greatness, as measured by the latter standard.

Small and Bare School Grounds

New school districts are being created in the prairie provinces, particularly Alberta and Saskatchewan, as every week goes by; and in each, trustees are elected and debentures sold, a plot of ground procured, usually half to one acre, a two-roomed building and out-buildings are erected, and the district feels that if a teacher is secured, all that is necessary is done to set the feet of the young on the pathway to knowledge. To my mind such is not the case, the average board of trustees do not look deeply enough into the problem of education, for rural schools, and are far too prone to follow precedents they were familiar with, five, ten or more years ago.

Unfortunately, a bad start is generally made by the failure to procure sufficient ground; as a rule, there is barely enough to make a suitable play ground, rarely is there sufficient to provide for school gardens, plots and trees. The school should be the neighborhood centre for education and recreation, and can be made so if trustees and teachers will do their part. For this to be possible a five acre oblong plot, length east to west, should be secured for the school grounds, on a well travelled road and preferably facing south. This would afford space for trees, and good football, lacrosse, baseball and picnicing ground; it could be made to mirror the highest intelligence, love for beauty, and energy of the settlement, instead of, as it too frequently now does, represent the slovenliest, most unkempt and dullest of wits in the community.

Summer is the time for picnics, but the distances to be driven in the country to reach a suitable ground, often militate against these social gatherings and dispellers of monotony; the rural school ground, could by means of trees be made to serve very acceptably as a picnic ground for the neighborhood; it would also serve as the athletic ground for the young men. We are well aware that even yet a few isolated specimens still survive among the farmers, who believe that all work and no play, is the best thing for themselves, their family and their employees, but they need not be considered, for the world is fast leaving them behind.

Some trustees would blame the uninviting appearance of their rural school to the teacher, and if such happens to be one of those giggling nonentities, which occasionally steal out of a normal school, the people in the district are quite ready to accept the scapegoat—but wrongly so.

The tree gospel can be preached most eloquently by school grounds arboreally adorned, and the lesson will be an abiding one. An attractive school and grounds is a perpetual invitation to others to come and settle in the district, it shows that a higher than the average intelligence obtains, and that it is consequently, a desirable community in which to live, establish a home and bring up a family. Let the school and grounds be a nursery for real education, a fountain of learning from which will flow elevating tendencies and beautifying influences. The teacher can do much, but the real force and energy must originate and be perpetuated by the trustees. We have no power to change the homestead regulations, if we had, a tree-planting scheme would be included as part of the duties before a patent was issued; but every man and woman can do much towards the desired end, by studying methods for the betterment of the rural school and its surroundings, and thus improve and beautify the district in which they live.

The Railway and Stock Losses

Attention is again called by a correspondent, in this issue, to the law respecting the liability for damages to stock, that stray upon the railroads. This is a question that will not down. As the law now stands, it does not satisfy the absolute demands of justice. It relieves the railway companies of practically all responsibility and liability in cases of accident to stock on their roads. It practically says that accidents to farmers' stock are farmers' losses; and, while most farmers are willing enough to bear the losses due to accidents where there is no opportunity to prevent them, they rightly resent the bearing of losses where some responsibility naturally attaches to the railway companies.

Those of our readers, who follow these columns closely, will remember the letter of the late Judge Killam, chairman of the Railway Commission, which we published in the April 26th, 1906, number, calling attention to the need of an amendment in the Act that would determine when the railway companies were responsible for accidents. This need has existed for some time now, and is periodically referred to in these columns; but it is doubtful if many members of parliament have been confronted by their electors with their responsibility for the law as it at present stands. During the last election we heard men challenged for a declaration of their

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