

Manitoba Grain Growers

A Good Fashion

IT is becoming fashionable among local associations to have their annual statements and all dues for the year forwarded to the Central office early in December. A few are still out. It is not always good to be fashionable, but when the fashion is of this kind it's worth getting in on. If your statement and dues for the year ending November 30 last are not yet in—you would be doing Central a good turn by moving them along as quickly as you can. Thank you.

Education for Citizenship

Topic for January

It goes without saying that democracy, placing the governing power in the hands of the people, requires of them intelligent acquaintance with the common interests of life and of the community, in order that they may exercise that power judiciously and effectively. To place power in the hands of the ignorant, the biased, the mentally untrained, is to prepare the way for speedy and certain shipwreck.

Hence democracy stands for universal and compulsory and effective education. The citizen must be furnished with that mental equipment which will enable him to be a man among men, a citizen among citizens, and I think it is becoming clearer every day that such education will mean more than the 3 R's—Reading, 'Riting and 'Rithmetic. I do not undervalue them—I wish they were more thoroughly taught in Canada today—and when I speak of something to be added I do not mean any fads or frills of ornamental studies. What I think is urgently demanded is that a child be definitely prepared for the duties and responsibilities of the life he is to live with his neighbors.

A boy should know not only how to grow wheat, but how to market it and how to handle a bank account. He should know in a practical way the work and methods of the municipal council. He should understand how to act as a member or an officer of an agricultural society or a school board. He should be acquainted by practice with working in association with his neighbors. He should know from boyhood know and feel that he exists to serve his community and that the man who lives only for himself or for his family is a shirker. In a word Education in our democracy must practically prepare for co-operative participation in the ordinary service of the community life.

Democracy in Canada

The perennial weakness of modern democracy has been its failure to prepare the youth of the nation for their responsibilities as citizens. As a result, democracy has never in any modern state had any sort of adequate trial. Even in the best nations only a paltry fraction of the people have ever intelligently impressed their personal ideals upon the community. Democratic government at best has been government of the people for the people, by a few of the people. The democracy of the future, in Canada and elsewhere must set itself diligently to the task of actualizing the ideal of equal opportunity, and of preparing its people for full participation in the life of the state. For this it will be necessary to extend national education far beyond the old bounds and to give it closer touch with actual life.

The Status of the Teacher

There must be radical improvement in the status of teaching as a profession. Judicious means must be devised for making it a national service to which men and women of first class ability will be attracted as a worthy life task. The training of teachers should be standardized so that an individual qualified to teach in one province shall have equal standing in any other province or territory in Canada. Teachers should not only be trained in the practical branches that have often been neglected, but as far as possible inspired with the ideal of becoming community leaders, devoting their lives to the interests of the people among whom they live. The provision of adequate remuneration, teachers, residences and provision for suitable retirement allowances, will operate toward the attainment of this ideal.

Wider Co-operation

In the matter of framing educational policy, democracy must provide for wider co-operation among the various elements

Conducted Officially for the Manitoba Grain Growers' Association by the Secretary

W. R. Wood

306, Bank of Hamilton Building, Winnipeg

in the community. The state must regard education as a primary obligation and provide for it with more generous allocation of funds than ever before. Trustees and the general public must take more active part in framing the program of studies. Wider units of administration than the local sections may be found to be advantageous. The increasing use of the school plant as a community centre and the progressive adaption of buildings and grounds for that purpose are practical changes that are demanded in the immediate future.

Country and City

As the towns and cities are increasingly being equipped with facilities for technical study, country districts must have established at convenient points, agricultural schools, on a basis similar to those of Denmark to which young men and women could come in winter sessions for general and technical training. This, with the provision of district scholarships for agricultural college and university tuition would assist in the great task of giving the country district and country school equal opportunity with the city and the city student.

The Democratic Principle

Pervading and permeating the whole system from the earliest classes to the most advanced there must be the democratic ideal and the democratic spirit. Lessons of self discipline and self control, of mutual forbearance and mutual helpfulness should reach the child in its home life, long before formal education is begun. And from the first school days the child should be taught, judiciously and sympathetically, by precept and example and personal practice, the great fundamental and democratic truth that we are members one of another and that the only satisfactory greatness attainable in human life is through simple loving service of one's fellowmen. As knowledge grows from more to more there should be the constant following of the expanding personality with the teaching of the larger opportunity and the increasing responsibility for service to one's fellowmen. Such teaching cannot be merely formal or technical or perfunctory. It must be thrilled with the power of devoted personality. It must be such as shall not merely teach, but inspire and impel to personal unselfishness and public spirit.

A New Responsibility

The idea that education is not a matter for the first twelve years only, or the first sixteen, or the first twenty-five, but a process which must be continued through life, is not a new one; but its practical implications scarcely seem to have been given so far any practical recognition. If we are always to be learning does it not follow that some provision ought to be made for pursuing the ideal? It is true there are opportunities, there are books and people and life—but if our education generally is lamentably deficient why is there no definite attempt to provide public educational facilities both in city and country for the adult population? Why should not every community have provided for it at public expense once every week in the year a two-hours' public lecture? "A dry old lecture?" do you say? No, a fresh, interesting, vivid, and enthusiastic, illustrated lecture. Why should not all our people know something about the three states of matter, about the theory of electricity, about the mechanism of a binder, about the plans for submerging a submarine, about the working of a municipal council, about the method of proportional representation, about the things which may be grown in the soil in Alaska, about the social development of the Philippine Islands, about the career of Lloyd George, about the adventures of Prince Kropotkin, about the thousand and one moving and interacting currents of the great world's life. Would two hours a week be too much time for every Canadian to give to study of spoken and illustrated messages in order to intellectual and spiritual enrichment? We have not begun the task yet. How long will our democracy be satisfied to leave the lives of our adult

population unprovided for so far as its social, intellectual and spiritual necessities are concerned? How long will it refuse to use the natural channel of developing and cultivating the spirit and the ideals of democracy by inspirational contact with the minds of the rank and file of the people?

Personal Initiative

A common and serious error in thought has been the view that if one did not get education in youth he can never get it. Stuff and nonsense! Life is a school and if one didn't learn to read and write before fifteen years of age or before fifty, there is no reason under the sun why he should not learn after that age. The same is true of other lines of learning. Scores of men and women whose early education was meagre have by personal application in later years fitted themselves for effective public service. Why do not more people follow that example? The reason is probably two-fold. First: Most people reach a stage where they are unwilling to acknowledge ignorance, and many are ashamed after school days to let it be known that they need instruction and hence are unwilling to seek it. Second: Few realize anything of the infinite possibilities there are of self-education, and not knowing its value do not energetically set themselves to seek it.

It should be a part of the work of our movement to overcome these obstacles and the prevalent inertia. We must make our people keen for progress, personally as well as communally. We must stimulate the ambition of our young people and give them no rest until they have begun the two great tasks to which our movement calls—personal discipline and development and community service. It is being done in some places. We have in the association some who are definitely working on this problem, getting people to do things for themselves and for others, encouraging the indications of progress and the signs of aspiration. Is there someone whom for the sake of the future you can encourage to make more of himself or herself than is now being done?

Educational Questions

Do your children learn anything about taxes or methods of taxation? Do they learn how to "move," "second" and "put" a resolution? Do they learn any of the details of grain marketing or stock shipping? How many men have you in the community who buy one book a year for personal culture? Should our children memorize the names of the skirmishes and the leaders who fought in 1812-13-14? Has your directors' board ever investigated the possibilities of the local school library as an agency for helping our cause? Are there any adult illiterates in your community? Is it your fault? What proportion of your young men could act efficiently as correspondent for a weekly newspaper?

The January Topic

The January topic for our locals strikes the keynote of the year. It is the preparation of our people and especially our young people for effective citizenship. We have other aims, but no need presses today as does the need for intelligent, informed, aggressive, enthusiastic citizens. We must cultivate the "divine discontent" in our people which will spur them on to seek amelioration of conditions. That is a very different thing from the bolshevism which sets its victim's hand against every man and every man's hand against him. The one is deliberate and reasoned and co-operative and sanely progressive. The other is spasmodic and irrational and segregative and revolutionary. The former is the very essence and spirit of our movement; the latter is its absolute antithesis.

Conditions have prevented the topics set for the last three months being taken up in many branches. It is hoped that January will open the possibilities of meetings being held in practically every local. Make one big Grain Growers' night in January if possible. Celebrate the return of peace. Adjust your machinery for the new year. Take up a topic, this one or some other that will inspire your people and make it a night to be remembered. That will take work. You can't inspire anybody with "could kail." Get some-

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