

# The Farmer's Advocate

*"Persevere and Succeed."*

## and Home Magazine

Established 1866.

REGISTERED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE COPYRIGHT ACT OF 1875.

Vol. XLIII.

LONDON, ONTARIO, AUGUST 20, 1908.

No. 830.

### EDITORIAL

#### THE POINT OF VIEW.

The two following communications, referring to an editorial entitled "The Hide-bound Party Press," which appeared in our issue of July 16th, afford an instructive contrast of the partizan with the independent point of view:

"In your issue of July 16th you deal with the 'Hide-bound Party Press,' and while you denounce the local party press in unmeasured terms, and assert that the press of both parties is tarred with the same stick, you assume that the great metropolitan dailies and weeklies are free of this kind of thing. You are surely mistaken. The \_\_\_\_\_ is just as much a party hack as any 'local, measly, bickering, peanut sheet' in the country. You are also mistaken when you assert that both parties are alike in this respect. You should know, sir, that while our party is not without faults, it is by no means as black as that of the other fellow. Further, please explain why 'good administration' is 'a rankling curse,' and why a party that gives good administration should not retain the reins of power?"

\* \* \*

"Your recent editorial on the hide-bound party press of Canadian politics is sound. Every word is well put; every sentence is well taken. Would that there were more 'Farmer's Advocates.' Would that the independent press of the Dominion were more numerous. Would that the honest electorate were numerous enough to rise up in their might and purify Canadian politics."

Would there were more electors like our second correspondent. His letter has the right ring. The first letter is published because it typifies the prevailing partizan temperament and habit of thought, and also because it expresses a misunderstanding of our position, which we take this opportunity of dispelling. First of all, we did not assume that the metropolitan dailies and weeklies are free of prejudice, though our advice did imply that, taking them by and all, there is a larger element of independence among the metropolitan than among the local publications, but there are exceptions on both sides, of course. We have among the dailies of our leading cities quite a number of newspapers that are fairly independent of either party, and a still larger number of party papers that refuse to go the whole hog in responding to the crack of the party whip. Furthermore, the metropolitan journals, even those of decided party tendency, usually emphasize the larger and broader phases of political issues. For this reason, if for no other, it is better to read such a one than a local party sheet. Moreover, one can make more or less choice among the larger city papers, hence if his local town has no creditable newspaper of reasonable calibre, he can generally choose a broader and fairer medium of information from among the metropolitan journals within reach.

We did not state or imply by any possible construction of words that good administration was a rankling curse, nor was it contended that a party which gave good administration should not be retained in power. The point of the passage in question was that under the party system, good government was commonly regarded by the participants of politics not as the aim and end itself, but merely as a means to the end of party success. The ideal of the true statesman should be not party triumph, but national welfare. This, unfortunately, is seldom the ambition of the party leader. His great objective is to remain in or get into power; hence the root evil of the party system of government.

Our correspondent's protest that his party, while not faultless, is by no means so black as that of the other fellow, was probably intended as a bit of irony. It illustrates better than any

other part of his letter the characteristic partizan habit of mind.

There is not a Grit or Tory party man between the Atlantic and the Pacific who does not think of his own and the other party in just precisely that light. Always the other side is the worst. It will be a bright day for Canadian politics when twenty per cent. of the present party men on each side become so aroused and disgusted that they will be prepared candidly to admit that one party is as bad as the other, or, if anything, that their own party is rather the worse of the two. That will mean a large element of independent electors, and the independent voter is the hope of the country.

#### THE SEDUCTIVE AGENT.

It is no wonder that peripatetic agents and salesmen abound in the land. They are a product of the uninformed credulity of the people among whom they do business. The lightning-rod agent drives a thriving trade throughout the countryside, because many people have failed to take advantage of the information repeatedly published through these columns regarding the making and erection of cheap, efficient, homemade rods. Those shabby gentry, the book agents, pursue their importunate quest because there are a proportion of persons who have no adequate knowledge of the values of books, and in ignorance of the rich treasures of reading to be had free in public libraries, and for a nominal consideration in book stores, the much-extolled virtues of description, illustration and letterpress in the book agent's prospectus appeal seductively to the fancy of the victim, who buys, at several times its worth, a book or a set of volumes whose chief value to him will be the lesson learned through its purchase. Most books after passing through the subscription stage are put on sale in book stores, where they may be purchased at a reasonable price. So it goes from one thing to another. New devices are being continually introduced with which to separate money and fools. As fast as the community get wise to one trick, another is introduced, although it is astonishing how long the old game can be played. Not only in trinkets, but in staples the sharper operates. A familiar example to readers east and west is the stove business. There are, we believe, two or three companies operating in Canada which send their wagons through the country peddling stoves at farmers' doors. The article itself in this case possesses merit, but widespread hardship and inconvenience have been occasioned by the misrepresentation under which it has been sold, especially as regards terms of payment, the agents often deceiving prospective customers with verbal promises that notes given will be renewable at the convenience of the payers. Many, too, have been inveigled into purchasing, who could ill-afford such an expensive piece of kitchen furniture. But these are the penalties of allowing oneself to be drawn into the octopus clutches of the oily agent. The place to buy merchandise is in the store, where various makes can be compared side by side, and a deliberate decision arrived at.

Doubtless the agent has played a useful part in our social evolution, bringing the boon of experience to the unsophisticated, but his work is finished on those who have sense and prudence enough to turn him down with courtesy and firmness. This old bit of advice is still as applicable as when uttered: "When an agent approaches, or you are asked to sign another man's note, open the front gate and whistle for the dog."

#### TO IMPROVE CONDITIONS OF COUNTRY LIFE.

With a view to bringing about better social and economic conditions on American farms, President Roosevelt has asked five eminent American publicists to serve upon a commission, to report to him upon the present conditions of country life, upon what means are now available for supplying the deficiencies which exist, and upon the best methods of organized permanent effort in investigation and actual work looking to their improvement. He anticipates that the commission will doubtless find it necessary to suggest means for bringing about the redirection or better adaptation of rural schools to the training of children for life on the farm. The National and State Agricultural Departments must ultimately join with the various farmers' and agricultural organizations to secure greater efficiency and attractiveness in country life, for, as he once more emphatically affirms, "No nation has ever achieved permanent greatness unless this greatness was based on the well-being of the great farmer class, the men who live on the soil."

The immediate purpose in appointing the commission is to secure from it such information and advice as will enable him to make recommendations to Congress upon the matter, and for this reason he asks to have the report before the end of next December.

The men who have been asked to act as an investigating committee are Prof. L. H. Bailey, of the New York College of Agriculture; Henry Wallace, of Wallace's Farmer, Des Moines, Iowa; President Kenyon L. Butterfield, of the Massachusetts Agricultural College; Gifford Pinchot, of the United States Forest Reserve; and Walter H. Page, editor of *The World's Work*, New York. In a letter to Prof. Bailey, asking him to accept the chairmanship of the commission, the President outlines his desires in the direction of improvements on the farms. At the outset he notes that, while the United States is making great progress in the development of the agricultural resources, the social and economic conditions of the country are not keeping pace with the development of the nation as a whole. The farmer of to-day is, as a rule, better off than his forbears, but his increase in well-being is not in keeping with the general advance. In portions of the South, for instance, there is much unnecessary suffering and needless loss of efficiency on the farm. A physician who is a careful student of farm life in the South, writing about the enormous percentage of preventable deaths of children, due to the unsanitary conditions of certain Southern farms, remarked that he would prefer to see his nine-year-old daughter work in a cotton mill than have her live as a tenant on the average Southern tenant one-horse farm.

In the past, Governmental attention has been concentrated on better farming, which was all right as a beginning, for the farmer must first grow good crops in order to support himself and family, but the effort for better farming should be accompanied by the effort for better business and better living on the farm. The great rural interests are human interests, and good crops are of little value to the farmer unless they open the way to a good kind of life on the farm. It is especially important that whatever will serve to prepare country children for farm life, and whatever will brighten home life in the country, and make it richer and more attractive for the mothers, wives and daughters of farmers, should be done promptly, thoroughly and gladly.