

# THE FARMERS ADVOCATE AND HOME MAGAZINE

THE LEADING AGRICULTURAL JOURNAL  
IN THE DOMINION.

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JOHN WELD, MANAGER.

Agents for "The Farmer's Advocate and Home Journal,"  
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1. THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE AND HOME MAGAZINE is published every Thursday. It is impartial and independent of all cliques and parties, handsomely illustrated with original engravings, and furnishes the most practical, reliable and profitable information for farmers, dairymen, gardeners, stockmen and home-makers, of any publication in Canada.
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  12. WE INVITE FARMERS to write us on any agricultural topic. We are always pleased to receive practical articles. For such as we consider valuable we will pay ten cents per inch printed matter. Criticisms of Articles, Suggestions How to Improve "The Farmer's Advocate and Home Magazine," Descriptions of New Grains, Roots or Vegetables not generally known, Particulars of Experiments Tried, or Improved Methods of Cultivation, are each and all welcome. Contributions sent us must not be furnished other papers until after they have appeared in our columns. Rejected matter will be returned on receipt of postage.
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In no Province of Canada has the work been promoted and expanded with greater vigor and progress than in Ontario, where it falls under the direction of the Superintendent of Agricultural and Horticultural Societies, J. Lockie Wilson, who early discerned the possibilities for good that lay in the system and started competitions in 1907. As an encouragement judges were sent out by the Provincial Department of Agriculture and the five prize-winners in the local competitions are eligible to compete at the Canadian National and Central Canada Exhibitions and at the Provincial Winter Fairs of Guelph and Ottawa. The grain and sheaves winning prizes at these exhibitions are retained by the Department and sent out to the county agricultural representatives, who distribute the grain among farmers in their localities on condition that they supervise its growing and have an equal quantity returned to them in the autumn for further distribution. The Department supplies stencilled sacks for the exhibition grain and what does not win a prize is sold and the money received returned to the exhibitors. As readers of The Farmer's Advocate will recall from our report of the late National Exhibition in Toronto, prize collections from these competitions made a striking display in pyramidal form under the great dome of the new Government Building. This year in Ontario 3,000 farmers entered the competitions, 30,000 acres of land being in use for that purpose. The average size of the fields judged was smaller than in the earlier years, when perhaps the whole of a fifteen-acre or twenty-acre field would be entered. The number of agricultural societies engaging in the competition of 1912 was 154. Vast quantities of high-class seed grain and potatoes thus become available for use, and a great deal has gone to Great Britain and the United States, particularly the latter. The liberality with which the Ontario Government deems it wise to promote this plan of agricultural advancement is shown by the

fact that this year \$18,000 was placed in the estimates for standing field-crop competitions, \$10,000 of which, however, was a supplemental allowance from the Dominion Government.

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Under the old arrangement, when the Provinces assumed control of the competitions, the assistance through the Dominion Department of Agriculture was withdrawn. Last season the Minister of Agriculture (Hon. Martin Burrell) authorized a change of policy under which the grant through the Seed Branch to each Provincial Department is made an amount equal to two-thirds of the money paid out in prizes for field-crop competitions, seed fairs and Provincial seed exhibitions within certain limits. For competitions up to \$50 will be paid for each kind of crop in which a competition is held by any agricultural society, the total amount not to exceed \$150. Approximately \$30,000 is available to the Provinces from the Federal Seed Branch for these purposes.

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Of all considerations, the prize won by the competitor, though liberal, is the least important. The objects sought in holding these competitions have been to encourage the production of high-class seed grain, to promote its distribution and to obtain and impart knowledge of the best cultural methods. The most competent men available, systematically trained-in-advance, are sent out as judges, and the awards are made by a score card, in which freedom from weeds and other good points are enumerated. Men learn that to grow a prize-winning crop it is desirable to begin preparations at least a year in advance with the land and the seed. The grower learns to observe critically his own and other fields and put theory into actual practice. The judges accumulate a fund of valuable data in relation to weed pests, smut, rust, and methods of cultivation. In the West, for example, one of the first things learned was the discouraging fact that fully ninety per cent. of the prize-winning fields were first crops from the land, showing the swift deterioration taking place in the fatuous grain-growing system so commonly practiced, which sooner or later must be abandoned for more rational methods. As time goes on it is probable that the field-crop competitions will be modified in form so as to take in a considerable variety of crops and apply to other processes on the farm.

## Independent Opinion re Education

In another column Prof. S. B. McCready, Director of Elementary Agricultural Education for the province of Ontario, essays a reply to the editorial "Why?" appearing in "The Farmer's Advocate" of September 26th. He takes the ground that we are doing pretty well, but might do better, and appeals for united interest and support.

It is nothing to the purpose to pat ourselves on the back, and boast of having the best schools, the best teachers and the best educational department in the world. We have already been doing that too long, and the worst feature of the present educational situation in Ontario is the dry rot of self satisfaction, which has impregnated the people of the province with the idea that they have the best school system in the world. It is just that sort of contentment that quickly relegates an individual, a community or a system to the back-number class, and that is just where we are getting. Let us take a little outside evidence.

At the Ontario Corn Growers' Convention in Tilbury last February, this subject was discussed by an old Ontario boy, Prof. A. E. Chamberlain, now of Minnesota, who began life as an Ontario school teacher over thirty years ago, and has been interested in educational institutions in several of the Northwestern States. According to reports, Prof. Chamberlain expressed the opinion that our rural schools had not kept pace with those in other parts of the world, and that we had made little if any improvement along this line in the last twenty years. Following this address, J. O. Duke, a wide-awake and substan-

tial farmer of Essex County, contributed a pointed letter to "The Farmer's Advocate" so thoroughly in line with our views that we quote a part of it in complete answer to Prof. McCready's letter.

"Now, we have been patting ourselves on the back and assuring ourselves, and even making the assertion to others, who by the way, pay little attention to our boasting, that we have the best school system in the whole world. Can it be that we are mistaken in what we think we have, and that our rural schools, instead of being the best, as we are boasting they are, are really not very good—are really among the poorest? When I look closely, I find that my own children, thirteen and fourteen years old, have already left the farm in order to secure even a fairly good education. I find that our old schoolhouse, part of which was built over sixty years ago, is just as overcrowded and unsanitary as ever. I find that, while the children who have attended the old school are naturally as bright-looking as any children anywhere, they have great difficulty in passing the Entrance examinations. In fact, many of them never succeed in passing at all.

"And yet so much of the time in this common rural school is taken up in preparing pupils for to prepare him for his life work, if he is to be a the High School, and none at all given the child farmer, that, maybe, after all, our school system is to blame for lack of rural population, though really it hurt us to be told so in as many words."

## Education in Ontario.

Editor "The Farmer's Advocate":

As a reply to the editorial dealing with Ontario schools under the heading "Why?" in your issue of September 26th, I beg leave to submit the following statement. I do so with the object of securing for the schools of Ontario the interest and faith of the people of the province. I believe that we can best make for the advancement that so many people desire to see by encouragement, and the development of an optimistic outlook.

It should not be forgotten by those who criticize schools, teachers, courses of study, methods of teaching, and Departments of Education, that throughout the world at large there is great unrest at the present time in the field of education, as evidenced in expressed dissatisfaction with courses of study, in the shortage of teachers, in the need for more financial support, and in the appointment of commissions to investigate conditions and find remedies.

In this unrest Ontario shares, but it can be honestly claimed that we are at least no worse off than most other places. And nowhere are the educational authorities striving harder to meet the difficulties of the situation. Progress is being made and will continue to be made.

## NOTHING TO BE ASHAMED OF.

Permit me to offer my beliefs in the matter:

1. I believe that there are no better schools, taken as a whole, in America than those of Ontario.
2. I believe that nowhere in America is there a better body of teachers than those to be found in the schools of Ontario.
3. I believe that there are no schools in America more carefully supervised and inspected than those in Ontario.
4. I believe that there are no schools in America receiving better support from the people at large and from the government, than those in Ontario.
5. I believe that there are no schools in America, taken as a whole, making for more progress in the new demands that are being placed upon schools everywhere.
6. I believe that, with the help of everybody, we can make our schools still better.

## HOW I KNOW WHEREOF I SPEAK.

In the face of the criticisms that are often made, this may look like stupid optimism. Permit me further to offer some support for my beliefs:

1. I have been a school master in Ontario for nearly twenty-five years, and have taught in all grades of schools.
2. For the past seven and a half years my duties have been to promote the teaching of agriculture in the schools through the training of teachers at the Ontario Agricultural College, and to help the work forward in all other possible ways.
3. In connection with my work I have visited a large number of schools throughout the province with inspectors, have attended several Teachers' Conventions every year, have taken part in the conventions of County Trustee Associations, Corn Growers' Associations and other organizations promoting agriculture.
4. I have seen something of other schools outside of Ontario through travelling.
5. I have come into personal contact with a great many educationists from the United States,