

The Brain Browers' Guide

Winnipeg, Wednesday, May 3rd, 1916

RURAL EDUCATION

Some time ago we asked the readers of The Guide to send us answers to the two questions shown on page eight. Quite a considerable number of answers were received and from these we have selected typical ones and published them. It is a pleasure to note that so many men and women are interested in rural education and are devoting thought to the subject. It will be noticed that there is quite a variety of opinion expressed, particularly in answer to the second question, which is the more important one. Our correspondents think they should have been taught practical mathematical problems and bookkeeping, elementary agriculture, political economy, conduct of business meetings, public speaking, methods of government, manual training, simple engineering, etc. The gratifying feature of these replies is that people are coming to realize that our schools can and should give more practical education on the everyday bread-and-butter subjects. Many are the factors that will enter into the great program of educational advancement of the future, but the work can only go ahead in proportion as the parents realize its necessity and are willing to stand behind it. The men and women on the farms of the West have been compelled to learn a great many important practical things since the day they left school that were never even so much as hinted at in their school life. How much of that could be taught to the boys and girls attending our rural schools today? How much more efficient would the men and women in the next generation be if they were started out from school with a knowledge of a large number of these practical things which they must learn in the hard school of experience later on? We would like parents to think it over and recall what they have had to learn about wood working, bread making, butter making, milk testing, seed testing, seed selection, weed identification, soil capillarity, children's diet and a thousand and one other things. These subjects mentioned do not cover a fraction of those that have to be learned some time, but they merely indicate the practical nature of them.

We would like the men and women who read this to think this matter over very carefully and then send us an answer to this question:—

Of the many things that must be learned by men and women in order to make rural life profitable, comfortable and healthful, how many of them should be taught in the rural schools?

An answer to this question does not necessarily mean the rural school as you have it in your community today, but the kind of rural school that you could have if every parent in the community were anxious for it. We want letters answering this question to publish in The Guide. The answers must not exceed 250 words in length. Sign your name and give your address so that other people may know what you are thinking about and will be able to discuss the matter further with you by private correspondence. The rural school is the greatest educational institution in Canada today and its improvement depends chiefly upon the men and women on the farms. The answers to these questions will help towards that improvement.

SIGNIFICANT WAR HAPPENINGS

Whatever one may think of the progress of the Allies in their fight against the forcing of the military idea upon the world, there are several facts which have a significant bearing on the situation at the present time. Probably one of the most important of these is the struggle around Verdun. Early in March the Western front was theoretically im-

pregnable, but some test was required to prove that this was true. Curiously enough it was destined that the Crown Prince, undoubtedly under the direction of the supreme war lord, should furnish unquestionable proof of the soundness of this belief. The full might of the German offensive was launched in March. For a time strategy demanded that the original garrison defend the position, since the action might be merely a feint on the enemy's part to draw reserves from some other part of the line thus making possible a successful concentrated enemy attack on that weakened part of the front. For about three weeks the local troops courageously held up against the fierce onslaught and, as was to be expected, the enemy gained ground. Since that time, however, practically no enemy advance has been made in spite of the expenditure of ammunition and men in quantity and numbers altogether unprecedented in the history of the world. The Germans are still pounding away at Verdun, but actually the position is less likely of being captured than it was before August, 1914.

Another significant development is the appearance of Russian troops on the West front. They landed at Marseilles in the south of France, but by what route they came or how many men there are has not been made public. Undoubtedly these are picked men, but far above their value as a fighting unit is the fact that their presence indicates whole-hearted co-operation between the Allies, it assures their united determination to proceed with the war to a complete and successful issue and suggests that the Russians are quite able by themselves to hold their West-front.

News is also to hand that the Germans are massing immense forces opposite the British front in Flanders, Artois and Picardy, but it is confidently expected that any attack can be successfully repulsed. Naturally the massing of men at these two points must be a drain on reserves as well as perhaps the weakening of the intervening lines. It cannot be long before the Russian armies will again take the offensive on the East, and when they do Von Hindenberg will need all the men available to hold them in check. While no definite indications can be said to be apparent of a speedy termination of hostilities in complete victory for the Allies, it must be beginning to dawn upon the military autocrats in Berlin that their bid for world domination is doomed ultimately to failure. When the masses of the German people begin to realize this actual condition of affairs there will be occasion to hope for a satisfactory conclusion of the struggle.

THE IRISH DISTURBANCE

Dublin has been the scene of serious fighting between members of the Sinn Fein Society and regular troops reinforced by loyal volunteers. Early on Monday, April 23, the Sinn Fein revolutionists assembled as for one of their usual parades, but instead of peacefully marching thru the streets, a body about 600 strong seized the general post office in Sackville Street. Immediately telegraph and telephone communication was cut and as yet at date of writing very meagre details are available regarding the situation. It is reported that several other points in Dublin are held by the revolutionaries, chief among which was St. Stephen's Green, but they were dislodged by the military with bombs from this part of the city on Friday or Saturday. There are rumors of risings in two other parts of the country, but these have been reported as of small importance.

Ireland is at present under martial law and Major Sir John Maxwell, who until recently

commanded the troops in Egypt, has been given complete disciplinary powers for the suppression of the rebellion. Considerable fighting has taken place and several officers and men of the imperial army besides an unknown number of the revolutionaries have been reported killed. Sniping still continues, but the military reports that a strong cordon of troops is drawing in on the rebel centre and that the situation is well under control. It is more than unfortunate that anything of this serious nature should have occurred at this time. The belief that the rising was of German origin is further endorsed by the capture of Sir Roger Casement, a leader of one of the revolutionary parties in Ireland and formerly a British Consul, who attempted to land on the west coast of Ireland from a German submarine which accompanied a ship loaded with machine guns, rifles and ammunition intended to aid the rebels. Sir Roger Casement is at present awaiting trial on a charge of high treason in the Tower of London.

It is confidently believed that the rising is restricted to a small body of fanatical irreconcilables. Leaders of all shades of Irish opinion the world over deplore the present outbreak and opinion generally can perhaps be best expressed in the words of Sir Edward Carson, who said in the British House of Commons, "I will gladly join with Mr. Redmond in everything that can be done to denounce and put down these rebels now and for evermore."

ASSISTING TRADE DEVELOPMENT

Some days ago Sir George Foster, minister of trade and commerce, made a lengthy speech in the House of Commons, describing in detail the work of his department and asking for a larger vote to carry out his scheme to assist trade development. The minister plans to establish a bureau of commercial information; to call together a convention of business men from all parts of the Dominion to discuss trade conditions as they have been affected by the war, and to send an honorary commission of business men to Great Britain, France and Italy to look for new openings that have been brought about thru the war for the development of Canadian trade with these countries. In connection with the proposal to call together a convention of the business men of Canada

"from the Pacific to the Atlantic—men in every kind of business, the captains of industry, the experts in industry, the scientific men in industry, the engineering men in industry, the transport men, the banking and financial men, representatives of all kinds of enterprises and industries; to have them sit down together in conference here in the city of Ottawa for three or four days in a heart-to-heart talk about these matters,"

the minister seems to have carefully ignored the claims of those engaged in this country's basic industry, the farmers. While the object of the minister's proposal is to be commended, there is no need for him to go so far afield seeking for avenues to assist trade development. The simple expedient of taking down the tariff wall and acceding to the unceasing demands of the Western farmers for "free wheat" would require no addition to the supplementary estimates, but it would increase the prosperity of this country and thus give an impetus to production which no artificial trade regulations can ever hope to do. If instead of spending so much time organizing trade commissions, the minister of trade and commerce would use his proven ability and great influence in urging his colleagues to eliminate the unjust customs duties (not forgetting the latest imposition in the shape of the tax on apples) he would be doing a far more lasting service to the Dominion than any trade commission can ever accomplish. With