

The Brain Growers' Guide

Winnipeg, Wednesday, August 11th, 1915

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

One of the most important factors in the proper equipment of the farm boy and girl is a good education. Thousands of parents on our western farms who will not be able to leave their children a large share of worldly goods can provide them with educational opportunities of infinitely greater value. A boy or girl of good character who has a sound education is well equipped to take up life's work with a good prospect of making a success, not only from the financial standpoint, but also from the standpoint of service to their fellow men—which is something that cannot be measured in dollars and cents. In spending money to educate their children parents are providing them with a life-long asset. A good education, fortunately, cannot be traded away, mortgaged, or used as financial security. Some cynical people have declared that education makes fools of some people. The truth is that such people were fools before they became learned.

Another thing to remember is that learning is not necessarily education. A person full of knowledge which cannot be imparted to others nor put to practical use is not an example of education. One of the greatest authorities described education as "A sound mind in a sound body," and in its wider sense it is true. Parents, in doing their duty by their children, should see that they are enabled to complete the common school courses no matter at what cost. The high school course is the next step, and thence to the colleges and universities, tho many choose the agricultural and commercial colleges rather than the arts courses. No mistake can be made in sending the boys and girls to our best schools and colleges—and we have plenty of such institutions all over Canada. Our future civilization depends largely upon the number of broad-minded, clear visioned, well educated men and women we are now preparing to guide the future destinies of our country.

ALBERTA WANTS MORE

The passage of the Prohibition Bill in Alberta has amply demonstrated the value of Direct Legislation as a means of translating the will of the people into legislative enactment. A very large vote was polled, more people going to the ballot box on this referendum than at the last provincial general election, and having the opportunity to express themselves directly upon a clear cut issue without the complication of party considerations, the electors of Alberta showed clearly that they desire the wiping out of the liquor traffic in their province as far as that is possible under provincial law. One inevitable result will be that the people of Alberta, finding such an effective instrument of reform in their hands will want to make further use of it. When they get a good thing the people usually want more of it, and we would suggest to our Alberta friends that they should next give their attention to two matters of great importance, Woman Suffrage and the amendment of the Direct Legislation Act itself so as to make it more easily used and wider in its application. The present act, while it was wide enough to

permit the securing of Prohibition, is very seriously limited in its usefulness by some of its clauses. It is provided, for instance, that no bill which provides for any grant or charge upon the public revenue may be initiated by means of petition, and that no act of the Legislature may be subjected to a referendum unless it is specially so declared by the legislature. Then the petition required for the initiative is unreasonably large, 20 per cent. of the voters, and at least 8 per cent. in 47 different constituencies, having to sign the petition before it can be considered by the legislature. In order to make the Alberta Direct Legislation Act thoroughly democratic and to place the power of self-government fully in the hands of the people it is necessary first that women as well as men should have the vote, and second that the Direct Legislation Act should be amended by making it possible for any law which the people desire to be initiated on a petition signed by 10 per cent. of the voters, irrespective of what part of the province they reside in, while every act passed by the legislature, except emergency measures, should be subject to the referendum if demanded by 10 per cent. of the voters. A great deal of labor and considerable expense is involved in the preparation and circulation of initiative petitions, but we believe that those anxious for better conditions in Alberta will consider the sacrifice well worth making. If two petitions, for Woman Suffrage and the amendment of the Direct Legislation Act, are circulated at the same time the labor and expense will be practically no more than it would be for one petition. Here is a winter's work in which the United Farmers of Alberta, both men's and women's sections, may well take a leading part.

CO-OPERATING WITH THE CLERGY

Last week a new policy was inaugurated at the Manitoba Agricultural College, which should have far-reaching results. A large number of rural clergymen from Manitoba were invited to the college to take a course of lectures on agricultural, educational and sociological subjects. No body of men have greater opportunity to aid in the allround development of our rural civilization than the country pastors. They have a high standing among their own people, both old and young. Their term of residence in the community is long enough for them to know intimately the conditions of the people, their habits and their possibilities. The spiritual work of the pastor would be much more effective if he were always able to co-operate with his people effectively in the solution of their material problems. The clergymen who were sufficiently interested to attend the sessions at the Agricultural College would be the type that would take back to their communities a wider view of their work, and be better equipped to lend a hand in the problems which their people continually face. The expenditure of public money in this work is to a good purpose.

If more farmers, business men, men of standing generally, were to enter politics and represent the people the road to reform would shorten wonderfully.

TITLES ARE UNDEMOCRATIC

It seems about time that something was done to stop the promiscuous distribution of titles in Canada. No one has yet ever been able to discover any system by which these titles are bestowed upon Canadian people and certainly the larger proportion of them are not bestowed according to merit. So long as these so-called honors are distributed to the Roblins, Siftons, McBrides, Mackenzies and Manns they are going to have a degrading effect upon public life in Canada. Certainly none of these men have merited any special distinction over their fellowmen in Canada in the way of honors and the same could be said of many other recipients of titles. At the present time these titles are awarded chiefly to men who have succeeded in gouging a lot of money out of the public by fair means or foul, or to politicians who have won their positions by very questionable methods. The men and women of this country who are really doing good service for humanity and for the cause of civilization are never recognized by these honors. If Canada is to develop into a Democratic country it is time to cut out all these tinpot titles and give real merit the reward it deserves. At the present time if a royal commission were appointed to sift the records of the title holders in Canada we fancy they would unearth a very sorry mess.

A NECESSARY REFORM

Among the many factors on which successful business operations depend one of the most important is the creation of a feeling of confidence between the producer, the consumer, and the middleman, who in some cases is necessary. It is essential that the consumer can depend upon a certain product being always what it should be and it is equally important that the producer shall be sure of obtaining a fair market value for his product. Where the producer is so situated that he can develop his own market he can arrange so as to deal only with reliable customers, but the proportion who can do business in this way is very small indeed.

Where grain farming is carried on extensively and practically the whole of the returns from the year's operations are received during a few months in the year any means whereby some ready money can be made during the months when no crop can be marketed are most acceptable. In the west there is quite a considerable amount of farm produce raised by farmers or their wives and sent into the large towns and cities during the year. It is impossible for these producers to each obtain individual customers and hence farm produce merchants buy their goods from them or sell them on commission. But under conditions as they exist at present country shippers have absolutely no guarantee that they will be paid for any of the produce they send to market. Of course, there are some reliable firms, but the condition of the trade is such that any person can set up as a produce merchant, can advertise for farm shipments, can sell these to town customers and, if he so desires, can quietly abscond with the proceeds, never paying the farmer anything for his product. Of course action can be taken against these