

### The Agricultural Text-Book.

Reference has been made, recently, in the MUNICIPAL WORLD, and widely through the Ontario press, to the new text-book on agricultural, prepared for use in public and high schools, by Mr. C. C. James, Deputy Minister of Agriculture. The matter is not one, however, to be passed over with the mere press notice usually accorded to new literature. No more important departure has yet been made in the educational system of the Province. No measure has been taken which promises more valuable results, than does the introduction of such a text-book into the schools.

That "the basis of Canada's wealth is agriculture" has passed into an axiom. We want farmers; educated farmers; farmers well equipped with ideas as well as with brawn; farmers who know that there is something in their occupation more than trudging behind a plow, or hoeing all day in a field of corn.

Vocations are apt to be, by the general public, divided into trades, professions, business pursuits, and farming. Farming is dignified with a class by itself. It is a little better than a trade, a little less than a business. This is an impression which has prevailed too long, and is crowding the cities and towns with young men who can better, far better, serve themselves and society by remaining on the farms.

There is no profession more honorable than farming. There is none which affords wider opportunities to a young man of ambition and intelligence. The ability demanded by a large business, if brought to bear on farming operations, will bring financial success. Parliament is open to the farmer. There is no office of the state, within the gift of the people, too high for the farmer to attain. The farmer who makes the most of his opportunities has everything to expect.

A glance over the new agricultural text-book will indicate the branches of strictly professional knowledge which a farmer should acquire. The text-book, while elementary, contains brief outlines of botany, geology, chemistry, entomology, and other branches of science. Beyond this, a farmer should possess a business man's acquaintance with commerce and the markets. A farmer who is well up in the science of his profession is a thoroughly educated man.

There are three important factors belonging to the use of text-books on agriculture, in the schools. (1) It will show to the rising generations that farming has a dignity far beyond that of mere manual labor. (2) It will create an interest in the science of farming, which will help to populate our unoccupied lands with intelligent farmers. (3) As a mere branch of education, there is no better training.

The first of these, the true dignity of farming, has already been commented upon. The two latter are intimately

related. No branch of science is taught in the schools merely to fill the brains of students with facts. The object of instruction in chemistry, in botany, and kindred subjects, is largely to train the powers of observation. To do this successfully, the student must be interested, and to be interested, the subject must be a living one, not a dead book-task. What could be better than to teach the pupils of the rural districts the facts of agriculture in order to train them to observe, in order to thoroughly interest them? They have, every day, opportunity to turn their knowledge to practical account. No expensive apparatus is required. Every barn-yard, every field affords the pupil a pleasant means of comparing his lesson with facts as he sees them, and thus unconsciously obtaining the best of mental exercise. As a means of education, there is no subject so meritorious for rural school as "Agriculture".

The use of the new text book has not as yet, however, been made compulsory, a condition which should be remedied at the earliest possible period. Perusal leaves no doubt as to its merits as a text-book. As a subject which will teach the dignity of agriculture, which will attract the rising generations to the farm, which will at the same time afford the best of training for the faculties of observation, nothing so satisfactory has yet been placed on the school curriculum. Left, however, as an optional subject, it will be taught by the teacher in only a half-hearted way; it will be received by the pupil in much the same spirit as that in which it is taught; it will find its way into a portion of the schools, only to please a few boards of trustees; and it will be left out of the schools to please others. Nothing of this should be permitted; the subject is of great importance, and should be compulsory in the rural village and town schools at least, and will do good in the cities.

The Barrie Council has passed a by-law to be submitted to the ratepayers on the 14th of this month, authorizing the sale of debentures to the amount of \$100,000. Of this, \$77,000 will be used in the purchase of the waterworks system, the balance to be spent in paying arbitration expenses, and extending the water mains to Allandale, and other parts of Barrie. The debentures are to cover 30 years, \$5,437.13 to be payable each year. A by-law to reduce the council to a mayor and six councillors was rejected on the second reading, it being the opinion of the majority of the council that the town is not ready for the reduction.

Berlin, Ontario, has appointed Mr. W. M. Davis, formerly of Woodstock, to the position of town engineer, with a salary of \$1500.

The Council of Amherstburg is laying 40,000 square feet of cement-concrete sidewalk this year at a cost of 12½ cents per foot.

### The Old Land and the New.

Everywhere in romantic, hilly Scotland good roads are to be found, and only those who have travelled over them know the great measure in which they add to the real merits of the rural districts. Not merely in the well-populated districts are the roads good, but in the craggy, mountainous parts as well, where sheep-grazing is almost the only possible means of utilizing the lands. When any portion of these roads is out of repair, the traveller may know that one man "is not earning his siller."

In Scotland farmers do not work on the road, but spend their time where they can do so to better advantage—on the farm. The repairing of roads is let by contract and is under the supervision of an engineer or inspector, the inspector advertising for tenders on so many miles of road. It is then the duty of the contractor to see that the gutters are kept open and the water drawn off, particularly in the fall and spring of the year. Broken stone is furnished him and with a one-horse cart, he draws this wherever needed for patching, filling up hollows and ruts as they form. In this way the roads are kept smooth as a floor—so smooth that very rarely in Scotland is a farm conveyance drawn by more than one horse.

Roughly estimating, the settled area of Ontario approximates the total area of Scotland—about 30,000 square miles, while the population of Ontario is about one-half that of Scotland. At the time when statute labor was abolished in Scotland—nearly a century ago—the population was less than the present population of Ontario, being then only 1,800,000, while Ontario has now over 2,000,000 inhabitants. Ontario with respect to her highways is one hundred years behind Scotland, but is better able in wealth, population and experience to make rapid strides for their improvement. The seed of a better system and better methods is being scattered over the province, and less than a quarter century should find us on equal footing in every respect with the older lands.

The *Belleville Sun* complains of the carelessness with which inflammable refuse is thrown into the street. The same condition of affairs is true of a great many other towns and cities. Shopkeepers empty paper, dust, ashes and other garbage into the streets; the people do not know that they are being imposed upon; the merchants do not know that they are working against their own best interests in thus littering up the main thoroughfare, and everyone goes along in blissful ignorance of the fact that they are surrounded by a great deal of unnecessary dirt.

Toronto sewers empty 250 tons of sewage daily, into the Bay.