

# Farmer's Advocate

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### EDITORIAL

#### Motors Wanted.

There is plenty of evidence that the country is ready for traction gas engines. People are continually asking for such machines and for storage batteries to be used in lighting farm buildings. These are two devices that will be perfected and manufactured in such quantities that they will be familiar to every country person in the next ten years. At present there are a few gas engines on the market, but their manufacture and sale is not being pushed so as to meet all the demand. This spring we understand there will be at least one gasoline motor at work in Manitoba, and the way in which it handles the plow, seeder, binder, etc., will be carefully watched by those who are finding the annual expenditure, for what the Boston people call "animal traction," rather a severe drain on the revenues of the farm.

#### Aids to the Making of Contented Farmers.

The retention of the fertility of Western farms is a problem just beginning to be appreciated by many farmers to whom the law of diminishing returns is yearly being demonstrated by declining crop yields and increasing weed and fungous pests. The testimony of many good farmers in recent issues of this journal shows conclusively that this fact is appreciated by some, and, we are able to assure our readers, leading farmers in their respective neighborhoods. When such men feel it incumbent upon them to put their ideas and opinions upon the printed page in the way they have done for the benefit of their fellows, we may be sure that they are under conviction as to the necessity for seeding to grass and manuring. Others it will be noticed, are strong advocates of some system of crop rotation. A careful perusal of these letters will have shown that timothy and rye grass are most in favor for seeding down; some few advocate brome, but their advocacy is half hearted, while many others have no scruples in condemning this luxuriant grower, on account of the difficulties experienced in getting rid of it. If these experiences are to be taken as a fair index of Western farm practice, and we assume they can be, the absence of the mention of clover and alfalfa cannot help but be remarked and deplored. Grass is stated to be of value as a preventive of soil drifting and is also of some value in the direction of weed suppression, but those most closely observant state that grass alone will not fill the bill as a soil renovator, that manure must be used in addition. This opinion is held most strongly by the occupants of Manitoba farms which have been under cultivation for twenty to twenty-five years. In the newer sections, such as in Saskatchewan and Alberta, a considerable number pin their faith to summer-fallow, and in dry seasons it seems to work out all right, but not so favorably in wet years. The point raised by one correspondent, that of the beginner on new land anxious to get on his feet, is well taken; such a person can get along without, unless on very light land, grass or manure for the first eight or ten years, although at the expiration of that time he will find that having skimmed the cream he must needs content himself with smaller yields of grain and greater dockage when he markets that grain, and then must adopt the more reasonable system of rotation of crops, manuring, and seeding to grass. Attention has also been drawn to the quality of manure, the statement being made that manure of value can only be obtained from well fed (grained) cattle. A summing up of the various opinions shows that, sooner or later, it will pay every farmer

to seed down to grass (either rye grass or timothy) or better, clover; to apply manure (obtained from well fed live stock) on the land and by these methods retain soil fertility, and further to practice a rotation of crops, thus increasing the yield of marketable grain as well as decreasing the loss from weeds. All will not agree as to the best method of applying manure, but we opine that the testimonies given and the comments made will be helpful in no small degree in helping Western farmers to solve the important problem of retaining soil fertility!

#### Weed Suppression in Alberta.

The endeavors of the Alberta Government and its officials to eradicate and suppress weeds are to be commended. The province has a Noxious Weeds Act and an earnest capable chief weed inspector, Mr. Arch. Mitchell. The chief inspector has engaged the services of quite a large staff of inspectors and has instructed them how to proceed to enforce the provincial act and also the Dominion Noxious Weeds Act. In framing the provincial act the Government has made it compulsory for threshermen to separate the weed seeds from the grain to such an extent that to fulfil the demands of the act threshers will have to equip their machines with extra cleaning apparatus and even where this is provided there will be considerable difficulty in conforming with the law. The making compulsory the equipping of threshing machines with grain cleaners may possibly be the shortest way to a desired end, but the weed inspectors and all farmers should endeavor to see that the efforts of the thresher to deliver clean grain are not unduly taxed. Under the circumstances the person who is most directly responsible for the production of weeds emancipates himself from the responsibility of having them as a nuisance, when he gets the thresher to set to his crop. Cases will no doubt arise when the grower of weeds will escape the detection of the weed inspector while his crop is growing, and succeed in turning the crop over to the thresher to clean. For this reason, if for no other, every farmer who wishes to maintain a clean farm should lend his assistance to the weed inspectors while the crops are growing and not wait until threshing is being done and then see the responsibility of handling weed seeds shifted upon the thresher.

#### The M. A. C. Preparing to Branch Out.

The announcement has been made that it is the intention during the coming summer to erect a building for domestic science purposes at the Manitoba Agricultural College and also a dormitory to accommodate two hundred and fifty students. The former idea we are in hearty sympathy with, believing that the daughters from the farms of the country should have equal opportunities of education to those afforded their brothers. The institution of a course in domestic science would undoubtedly be popular with the farmers of this province, and the benefits to the country would be far greater than the expense of such a course would be. With regard to increasing the dormitory accommodation, it is the opinion of this paper that the province would do well to go slowly. The college is undoubtedly popular. It is a new thing, and the halls and dormitories are crowded, but it is doubtful if such a condition would exist were the accommodation increased three or four fold. Alberta and Saskatchewan will soon have agricultural colleges of their own, and the Manitoba institution will be dependent solely on its own farming population, and rightfully so, for support and attendance, but we believe it will be better in view of the difficulties which are bound to arise in securing money for equipment, to be a little short on dormitory accommodation than otherwise. Enthusiasm for the cause is a valuable asset, but it will be well to temper it with some caution in the matter of increasing the dormitory accom-

modation so largely. The FARMER'S ADVOCATE never favored the dormitory idea. We do not believe it to be the best thing for colleges, although it may be all right for boarding schools. The dormitory system is a relic of mediaevalism, the outcome of the monastic idea of getting learning, and we believe the advisory board will do well in dropping the idea of providing more accommodation at the Manitoba Agricultural College, and save the province an expenditure that might better be devoted to equipment for experimental work with a view to solving the many problems of Manitoba agriculture.

#### The Location of the Winter Show.

One of the encouraging signs to the live stock fraternity of Manitoba is the enthusiasm displayed by the Brandon people in regard to the erection of a winter fair building in that burgh. It would appear that better results are likely to accrue from its location at the Wheat City than at any other town or city in the province, it being a great rendezvous for farmers. For the show to be a success it must have the support of the farmers, both in the way of contributing live stock to the show, and in attendance. The Brandon citizens have organized a company, have the site secured, and have had the plans drawn for a suitable building and further have evinced greater interest than has been shown at any other point. Winter shows cost money to run, and even with Government grants some go behind. The Ontario Winter Fair at Guelph lacked \$7,000 of making a profit last year, we understand and that annual affair is well attended. The winter fair is supposed to have an educational value, and it is this idea that warrants the expenditure of Government funds on its behalf. Such fairs should include a show of fat stock, illustrating the feeder's skill, in the animal on foot, and by carcass on the hooks, as well as demonstrating acceptable or unacceptable types for such skill to be exercised upon. The lectures by experimenters and others which go to make up the winter fair, bring fresh to the audience the latest deductions from agricultural research work. Taken all in all, nothing but praise is the meed of a well conducted winter fair, and it merits the support and good wishes of all those who are enthusiastic for Western agriculture, irrespective of their geographical location in the province.

#### The Coal Supply and Transportation.

Two decidedly acute economic conditions have been prevailing in Western Canada during April, so acute in fact that every day witnesses some change. We refer to the trouble in the coal mines and the protests against the service of the C. N. R. by the boards of trade of different towns, headed by organizations of business men in Winnipeg. The trouble in the coal fields is another of those unfortunate disagreements between capital and organized labor, with the blame for it being prolonged attaching to both parties. In this dispute the Federal Government has taken a more active part as an arbitrator than has been the custom heretofore. Generally the working men have the sympathy of the public in their strikes, but in this case almost everyone is satisfied the miners are receiving ample justice, and that the mines should be kept in operation at full capacity, even if the terms upon which the men are employed are not decided upon for some time. The country needs fuel now and will need it much more in a few months. The thought of entering upon another winter with the stock not ample and the supply in danger of being curtailed through personal pique is intolerable. As in all cases of the kind, the real expense and hardship that attend such unsettled conditions as have prevailed at the coal mines in Alberta for the past year, fall upon the consuming public, and the public has a right to demand that a settlement or compromise be made.