

Our Platform—It has been, will be, Agriculture.

POLITICS.

We have attempted to avoid the bitter and abusive plank, party lines. So strictly have we carried this plan out for the past fourteen years since we commenced the publication of this journal, that we have not recorded a vote for either party. Still, so sensitive is the feeling that even the slightest observation that might be turned against us has been used to its utmost against us by friends of either party. This journal, we feel, has an influence. We wish it to direct or bend the minds of its readers to what we and our counsellors (namely, an Englishman, an Irishman, a Scotchman and a Canadian) consider the best for the prosperity of this Dominion. Therefore we deem it proper to show our flag, the material our ship is made of, and the kind of sails that are used. Our keel is this Dominion, our ribs are her institutions, our timbers are agriculture, our figure-head is Dreadnaught, our helm is Right; the captain, officers, men and passengers are Canadian farmers. Should any of you notice a rotten spot it is your duty to give notice and aid in its removal; or if you see breakers ahead, give warning. If too many barnacles adhere to the hull clean them off; if our vessel is overburdened and a storm sets in, cast out valueless and cumbersome freight; and when a fair breeze blows hoist the sails.

Do you not think that at the present time we are carrying too much sail? A heavy strain weakens and eventually destroys any vessel. Are we not paying too much and too many officers? Are not many very weak and inefficient? Should we not reduce their pay and number? Have we not too many worms eating at our timbers—too many barnacles adhering to our keel—too much useless freight in our hold—too many and too large salaries and superannuation pensions to pay to men that have never done good to the country, that always have been suckers and always will be?

If people have nothing they must try and obtain something. As a man of straw can pay no tax he cannot feel the burden. We make the following statement without fear of confutation by any legislator, namely, that the Ontario School of Agriculture was not established by or for farmers. The farm at Mimico was purchased to make an office for a political supporter; for political purposes that land was sold and the farm at Guelph was purchased; for political purposes an American professor was engaged, and for political purposes every expenditure and every appointment has been made. If we, the farmers of this Dominion, are hoodwinked by this, how much more so are we by many important steps that we know less about. We believe it is now the time to agitate the question of reduction of expenses and an examination into the character and means of every member and elector—in fact, an elevation of the franchise. This matter will take some time to bring about; it is a reform. You may now think of it, and a few of the most independent may now begin to act on it. How to do it, is to go to the nomination, propose the most independent and honest man you know of in your county; if he is now a member for any part of your county, nominate him for your riding, and get some one to second him. Although he cannot hold two seats, never mind that. Get as many as you can to pair off and not vote for a man that is not the fittest in the county. The new voters might show their approval of such a course. It is far better not to vote at all than to have it said that you voted for an unnecessary encumbrance. Do not allow this party line cry to lead you. Vote for an independent, unpledged, unbound, unfettered, free man—one who has an independent spirit.

The Elections.

The inhabitants of Ontario will shortly be called on to record their votes for the members of the Local Legislature. You are unfortunately compelled to pay for such a large number of representatives, and therefore you may as well vote for or against some member or would-be member. It is our impression that if the vote were taken on the question, "Shall we continue to send the same number of representatives or not?" and the question fairly and honestly discussed, nine-tenths of the really independent farmers that are free from debt would vote for decrease in the number.

We wish to impress on the minds of our readers the necessity of close examination of the merits of a member before recording votes. Examinations are necessary in our schools. You, the farmers of Canada, are now to be the examiners and judges. Each one has a right to examine his candidate. You are the judges and the paymasters. Do not be satisfied with the labors of a few office-seekers who assemble at conventions to select a party man; rather avoid and try to break down this dangerous, exciting and demoralizing cry—the party. Select the most independent and the most honorable person that you have in your riding; prefer a farmer if you can get a suitable one. Give him a nomination and do not withdraw; stick to that man if you only have two votes. This year show a desire to have independent representatives. A poor man who is returned on borrowed property placed on the assessment roll cannot act independently; he is bound to the party that aids him. Such men care little about the expense of a Government; they are poor and pay nothing towards it, therefore they must gain because they cannot lose. We will suggest a few questions that you may ask any candidate. Do not be afraid to let your voice be heard, even if you cannot speak as fluently as these trained and practised speakers. Are you a practical farmer? Do you get your living from farming? Do you read any agricultural journals? What are the most dangerous stock diseases that have been in Canada. What steps have been taken to prevent the spread of such? How much has a single farmer lost from any infectious disease in stock in Canada? How much would you estimate the loss to be that might accrue to this Dominion if either of the contagious stock diseases were allowed to spread; what has been done to avoid or check such danger? Why is a special prize paid by the Board of Agriculture for the Egyptian or Eldorado wheat; of what value is this wheat?

There are scores of other questions on subjects pertaining to agriculture. If you deem it of importance to have your business and your interests looked after, you should have a member that really understands your wants, and one who is ready, willing and able to represent them, or rather have none. As agriculture must pay all expenses, it is but right that you should have representatives that know something about our agricultural affairs. Examine them, and you may depend such an examination will eventually do good. Act from your own judgment; be no longer hoodwinked. You cannot form a correct opinion by reading either of the party newspapers; you must read both sides to be enabled to judge.

We have given considerable information to enquirers about sorghum and something about sugar beets. Our opinion is asked if we think it advisable to enter extensively into either of the above branches of agriculture. We have never yet been on any of the farms where these crops have been raised. We would not like to advise or to dissuade without further knowledge. We have only given such information as we have received.

The Ontario School of Agriculture at Guelph.

The closing exercises and the awarding of prizes at this institution took place the latter part of March, at the time of our last issue.

The young men appeared in good health and good spirits, and of good average mental and physical capacity. The Principal, Mr. Johnstone, appears to be an excellent disciplinarian and good master; in fact, we think him the most efficient person that has been engaged in the establishment. But his department has nothing to do in regard to agricultural instruction.

There were very voluminous papers prepared for the examination in different departments of instruction, the most useful and practical of which might with advantage be taught in our common schools. Only a few of the questions were asked. We should judge the answers were satisfactory in general education and uncommonly good in the veterinary department; but in the plain, everyday farmers' talk we did not consider the examination satisfactory. Many farmers from the vicinity attended and they were invited to put questions to the boys, most of which were very satisfactorily answered to the majority in attendance. We asked what were the symptoms of the Foot and Mouth Disease. The class stood aghast and did not appear to know anything about it. The fact was we used a farmer's term; the veterinary instructor perceived the stumbling-block and gave the technical term, which not one of our readers would understand if printed.

The boys then gave very correct and satisfactory answers, in fact, equal to any veterinary. We draw this inference, that the boys are taught more from books than from the agriculture of the day. This instruction is more of a theoretical than a practical kind. Had they been posted in the plain, practical talks of farmers, among farmers, such as are to be seen in the agricultural periodicals, they would not require a veterinary to interpret to them the technical terms of Hog Cholera, Foot and Mouth Disease, and Pleuro-Pneumonia.

We intended to have asked two more questions at this time, but the Lieut.-Governor, Hon. E. B. Wood, and suite, entered at this moment. V. S. Smith asked a few questions, after which prizes were awarded by the Lieut.-Governor. A few sensible and appropriate remarks were made by this gentleman, among which he said he knew nothing about agriculture, and that there was only one other Government appropriation it gave him more pleasure to grant, that was to the Normal School. The Lieut.-Governor's Secretary made a few pertinent remarks. Then the Minister of Agriculture, Hon. E. B. Wood, fluently addressed the meeting. Had Mr. Wood acknowledged his ignorance in regard to agriculture as openly as did the Lieut.-Governor, we would have credited him, but from remarks that he made in the House of Parliament we know he has much to learn.

A good practical farmer in Brant made this remark to us: "I believe the FARMER'S ADVOCATE has done more good for the farmers of Canada than the whole Board of Agriculture and the School of Agriculture combined." Of course one farmer's view is nothing, but we would advise the Minister of Agriculture and every other politician or would-be politician to look more after the farmers' interests and economize by reducing the many numerous and large salaries and heavy, unnecessary public expenditures, or the farmers will say as they have said before: "Make way for your betters."

About 18,253,562 bushels of grain are in store at Chicago, Detroit, Milwaukee, Toledo, Cleveland and Duluth, awaiting transportation by water, against only 4,951,700 in store a year ago.