

JAN.

THE CANADIAN THRESHERMAN AND FARMER

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"Everything begins and ends with the soil."

E. H. HEATH - President and Manager
E. W. HAMILTON - Editor
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The Canadian Thresherman and Farmer extends the wish to every one of its
Readers that the Year 1910 may be the Happiest and Most Prosperous Yet.

IN the State of Illinois there has been formed among the farmers a Society known as the Outdoor Improvement Society. This organization is a purely voluntary one and has for its purpose the beautifying of farm and home and country side. The farmers of that State seem to have come to a realization of the fact that there is nothing that will so improve the value of their land as beautiful home surroundings and while the organization is a new one and its work has not been of sufficient duration to become effective, it nevertheless it is a very laudable proposition and should receive the support of every farmer in the State.

The work of this organization has a particular application to the farmers of Western Canada. Canada West is a new country and practically everything is in the making. Very few of our farmsteads have been fitted up and handed down from father to son, or from one farmer to another. The average farmer buys a piece of raw prairie, picks out what he considers a most suitable building site and proceeds to erect temporary buildings to last him until such time as he can get a few acres under cultivation and yielding a crop. Once this is done and the farm begins to support itself and its owner, the farmer next turns his attention towards bet-

ter buildings, more fences, etc., etc., and at this point the work of an Improvement Society has considerable application. Travel through the country today by team or in a railway train and when you pass through a section of the country that has well kept buildings, shade trees, good fences, well kept lawns, etc., etc., you generally say to yourself that here is a prosperous community, that the soil must be productive and the value of land is high. This may be true and it may not be true, especially in the case of the productiveness of the soil, but from the fact that things look prosperous leads the observer to believe that there is something back of the prosperity. Prosperity is a thing that is not always on the inside. There is a great deal of it on the surface and appearances in the case of the farm as in the case of practically everything else, count for a great deal. It is a thing that no farmer beginning a farm should lose sight of. It will add to the value of his property and at the same time will give to him no small amount of comfort and satisfaction.

That the farmer is keenly alive to the matter of organization for the purpose of handling his farm products in order to realize their full value to himself, is being made more and more evident every day. At the seventh annual convention of the Manitoba Grain Growers' Association which was held in Brandon during the week of December 15th, the formation of a Farmers' Joint Stock Company along lines of the Grain Growers' Grain Company, for the purpose of establishing public markets, abattoirs, and cold storage, as a remedy for the conditions of the marketing of beef and for farm products, was given considerable discussion. These discussions and movements on the part of the farmer are an indication of progress, in fact there is nothing so indicative of the growth of business acumen on the part of our agriculturist as the fact that they are beginning to pay attention to the marketing of their produce as well as to the raising of it. The business man buys his stock in the cheapest possible market, the buying of this stock being in a sense the same as the crops and produce which the farmer raises. The next move of the business man is to market what he has bought in the best possible manner and at the best possible price to him, the difference in the buying and selling price being his profit. The cost of production of the farmer's crop and produce is in a sense his buying price and that which he received for his crop and produce is his selling price, the difference being his profit. The farmer may or may not have always gotten his just dues along this line at the hands of the middleman and if he has not gotten them it is high time that he has. In the majority of cases, discussions of this kind have never gone further than a friendly chat between two or more farmers at the post office or the country store and these discussions have in the main amounted to but little in so far as general results were concerned, but when the farmers as a body rise up and demand something, there is not the slightest question of a doubt but that they can get just what they want and herein lies the danger. These actions on the part of the farmer are of necessity somewhat

of a revolution. Our systems of doing business have been growing upon us for years and the commercial world has already well adapted itself to these particular systems. Now supposing that the farmers come along and demand something entirely new and entirely different, it will take some very careful handling and some very wise management to bring about the change and still not revolutionize a system of marketing that has taken years and years to perfect. This is by no means a reason why the things should not be done, only it should not be done in such a way as to work to the detriment of the farmer himself. It is true that the markets in a great many cases are in the hands of the middleman. He has built them up and he saw in the building, a business for himself, out from which he could make a nice profit.

It is almost a natural law that you cannot get something for nothing or in other words deliberately take it and if the farmer comes along and takes these markets, he must give something else in return. Just what that something else will be it is for the men who are handling these Farmers' Organizations to determine. The farmers of Western Canada during the past two or three years have shown more activity along this line than ever before and so far the results have warranted the effort. We have the utmost confidence in the farmers of Western Canada and in their ability to handle this matter and to carry out the proposition in a way that will not only be of benefit to themselves, but which will redound to the good and prosperity of the country as well.

Here are two ideas in contrast. Nobody can work harder or get more done than the interested farm owner, but if he devotes every day of his time to the regular work of the field hand he will be sure to neglect many things that should be seen and planned and done. He will leave his men as a manual laborer and follow the tradition of the old time successful farming.

The other idea is not to escape hard work but to work for much higher wages, to work a great deal more with his brain and somewhat less with his hands. If one does not actually figure out some of the losses he can prevent and the prolonged inconvenience of neglected tasks and the wrong construction in a building or yard or gate, and of the slow work and poor work that will be done by men and animals than machinery that are not given special and considerable attention, it may seem to him that he cannot afford to spend his time riding around or sitting down with a pencil and paper and thinking out the best way to do things; but on a large farm such as we have in a great many cases in Western Canada, good management will pay a far greater return than a man could possibly make with a team in the field.

Another question is that one who works physically almost to the limit of his strength every day during the busy season will be so tired and mentally sluggish that it will be impossible for him to think clearly and thoroughly about his practical farm problems. This is not a question of hard work, but of the kind of work and kind and amount of returns. Work with the hands is very necessary and in the case of the new beginner, there is really no other course for him to take but it is a principle of all successful business enterprises that a man really begins to make money only when he gets someone else working for him. It is a thing that it is well for every farmer to keep in mind in planning his work and it is a thing that will yield him many profitable results if rightly planned.

Every thresherman by this time knows just what his profits for the past year were. He knows whether he played a winning or losing game and if he has followed his work carefully he should know just why he has won or why he has lost.

It is a pretty good proposition to give this matter considerable thought and to lay out plans now for another year. If you were one of those who cut rates during the past season and you have figured it out that your loss was just the difference between the cut rate and what you should have charged, then of course you know what to do another year. If your old rig bothered you and your repair bill was exceptionally high, you know what you should do another year and if your percentage of bad debts was exceptionally large and your losses were in proportion to these bad debts you know what to do another year.

Don't forget that threshing is a business proposition in every sense of the word and don't try to fool yourself into believing that you can run it by any other rule.

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