

The Farmer's Advocate

and Home Magazine

"Persevere and Succeed."

Established 1866.

VOL. XLI.

REGISTERED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE COPYRIGHT ACT OF 1875.

LONDON, ONTARIO, MAY 24, 1906.

No. 713

EDITORIAL.

Have Faith in the Farm.

In these days of feverish rush from East to West, it is wholesome to reflect a little on what can be done right in the Provinces so many are forsaking. People hear great stories about the chances for money-making in the West, which doubtless there are. The bright side only is shown nowadays. The failures are not paraded for contemplation. Neither does one hear much about the seamy side of Western life—the monotony of their landscape and their occupation, the small houses, the frost, the hail, the mosquitos, the dry, wizening climate which is bound to leave its stamp upon succeeding generations, nor the absence, in so many districts, of the priceless boon of good water. These things are overlooked just now in the exhilarating chase for wheat and dollars. This is growing time in the West. Prosperity wings over the land, and the inhabitants bear lightly the deprivations they endure. But when the growth begins to wane, when economic conditions become closer, as they must, when the quickening effect of immigration is no longer felt, when crops fail and hard times come, then will homesick eyes be turned Eastward from the poplar bluffs and the dull, level prairie towards the once-forsaken hardwood groves, the picturesque landscape, the smiling fields, sparkling streams and stately homesteads of the Eastern Provinces. Then will dawn the revelation that acres and dollars are not the summum bonum, that it is better to live in a land with diverse production and opportunity for fuller individual development than to spend life in a scramble for wealth. That every year Manitoba farmers are selling their homesteads to seek a more congenial environment in the valleys of British Columbia, is indeed significant.

Eastern Canada is a favored land to live in, fertile, well wooded and watered, free from disastrous extremes of temperature, as well as from seismic disturbances and storms which endanger life and property in many less-favored countries, while fruits and vegetables of the north temperate zone flourish throughout nearly its whole area. While these advantages have been conceded, it has been frequently objected that it was a poor country to get along in. Hitherto there has, perhaps, been some ground for the assertion, and yet we submit that it was not the fault of the country so much as of certain conditions which have prevented us from making out of agriculture anything like what it is capable of. Tariff changes of our own and foreign countries have repeatedly upset our trade, and forced us, with disadvantageous celerity, into new lines of farming. A widely diffused academic education has drawn a large number of our best men away from agriculture and fitted them for professional life or positions abroad. The industrial opportunities and the illusions of town life have drawn multitudes from the farm, but at length the tide has turned. Free or cheap lands in the West have drawn progressive farmers and farm hands away to compete with us in grain and beef, products which we slowly gave up for more intensive lines of farming. Of late years, increasing employment at high wages in the towns has made it necessary to pay much higher wages than formerly to keep good laborers, and we have been tardy in changing our methods so as to produce more per man, and thus make the payment of higher wages possible. All these evolving conditions have been a grave though but temporary handicap to us, for we have been obliged to unlearn much before we could learn. Therefore, it has been only the thirty, steadfast and more or less progressive

who have done really well. That some have made thousands of dollars at straight farming is in the highest degree encouraging, for Eastern agriculture is on the eve of much better times. It is only a matter of a short while till our farm lands begin to increase in value. Then immigration will turn our way; new men, fresh ideas, improved methods will follow; a needed infusion will add virility to our blood; advancement will be more marked in ten years than it has been in the last twenty.

Ontario and other Eastern Canada real-estate is bound to appreciate. It now sells away below par. A Winnipeg business man said, recently, in reference to the enormous price of real estate in that city, that it was a safe investment, because every piece they bought they could turn around and sell at an advance. Its having changed hands increased someone else's estimation of it. Of course, there must come a limit to such boosting of values, but so far the tendency has been upward, and frequent transfer has stimulated the rise. In the East values have been going backward, for reasons alluded to above, and the dumping of large areas on the market has taken the heart out of the demand. They are now about at or near low ebb, and all that is needed is brisk and persistent advertising to attract the fickle appetite of investors and give real-estate figures an upward hoist that will finally send prices up to double, treble or quadruple what they now are. Every day there are good farm lands changing hands in Ontario at \$30 to \$50 an acre, which, under corresponding conditions, in many States of the American Union would be snatched up at from \$100 to \$150. Why all the difference? It is not, we submit, so much a difference of intrinsic value or productiveness as of estimation. Land in the older Provinces must go up, and the man who invests in it within the next ten years, and knows how to handle it, will be getting in on the ground floor of a winning proposition. Shrewd men voice freely their belief that as good a chance to make money as anybody needs is lying around loose on our farms, especially those near cities. A man with a few hundred dollars can start right in at home, and by steady work, thrift, and reasonable enterprise, make good money from the beginning, while enjoying a fuller and more comfortable life than he could on the plains, and building for himself a home worthy of a green old age.

What older Canada needs is not better opportunities, but a truer and more general appreciation of them, coupled with more mental energy. Both will soon be supplied. Meanwhile, we who are on the spot, should not leave it for outsiders to discover our possibilities. It is good to consider what has been accomplished at farming in Old Ontario by men without specially favoring circumstances. Take a typical case, which we came across the other day, from actual life. Some thirty-odd years ago a farmer's son in one of the older districts, with but a limited public-school education, an indifferent pair of horses, a few cows, a good wife, and a stout heart, bought a fifty-acre farm, on which he had only a few hundred dollars to pay down. He resolved to farm as well as he could know, and has been a reader of "The Farmer's Advocate." He supported church and local institutions loyally, paid the taxes, and raised a family well. He was a steady-going man who pursued mixed farming, as thousands of others do in old Canada. To-day he owns 100 acres of fertile, clean, well-drained land, with good house, barns and stock worth easily \$7,000, with a cash surplus of nearly as much more to the good, and owes no man anything but goodwill.

He did not hanker to run a corner grocery, nor did he dabble in silver mines, or cement en-

terprises, or pork-packing, or York Loan stocks, or rubber plantations, or take a fly in the wheat pit or any of the other "get-rich-quick" schemes that are dangled before the eyes of the unwary; he just farmed with the conviction that it deserved the best energy and brains he could put into it.

What man has done, man can do. Farming is a mighty good business. Stick to it.

Farmer, Save the Tree!

No apology is offered for the frequent attention "The Farmer's Advocate" has given the subject of the farm wood-lot. It may be argued that it is a matter in which but few are interested. True, but it is one in which everybody should be interested, and we have been pleased to note that our stand has been approved by leading thinkers. This means that it will sooner or later be commended by all. There is not a more urgent question before Canadian farmers to-day. Its immense import lies in the fact that upon the action of the present generation depends the welfare of the future. A man may run down his land by bad farming, but he cannot well exhaust it beyond the power of clover, cultivation and mineral fertilizers to restore. He may let the buildings go to rack and ruin, but others can be built. He may let his live stock run out, but a new foundation may be purchased by his successor. Not so the forest. Once gone, it will take more than a generation to renew, and the expense will many times exceed any slight loss of revenue that might be sustained from enclosing it and caring for it now while it stands. The letters from prominent manufacturing firms show the grave scarcity of merchantable timber already existing in Canada, a scarcity rapidly becoming more alarming. What will be the condition twenty years hence? Even now one cannot drive through Western Ontario without feeling disturbed at the all but exhausted woodlands. Looking about over the horizon, it appears as though there were quite a bit of bush, but approach any piece in sight, and what do you find? A few scattered trees standing in grass. In a few years these, too, will be gone, unless we act promptly? Better live on the prairie outright, where at least the soil is marvellously rich, and where trees planted, as they have been in some cases, grow well. If it is worth planting trees there, is it not better worth keeping them here? We want the forest to ensure a timber supply. We want it for the benefit it is to crops by checking winds. We want it for its effect in ameliorating climatic conditions, regulating the flow of rivers, and conferring numerous other benefits not to be enumerated here. We want the woodland as a harboring place for insectivorous and other birds which save our crops from insect injury and add a special charm to rural life. We need the wood-lot in the very worst way, and the future will feel the need of it very much worse than we.

It is our duty, our honor, and should be our pleasure, to take some thought of the morrow in this matter. Upon the speedy arousal of the public conscience to a realization of its duty depends the future attractiveness of rural Canada, and, to no small degree, its future prosperity. The problem of the farm wood-lot is a problem of the present for the future. It is one that must and does enlist the sympathy of every patriot. Prompt and practical action by every land-holder is the duty of the hour, and the only action needed in the majority of cases is a little fencing to keep the stock out of the bush. Simple and easy enough, everyone must admit, and, with the prices of merchantable timber soaring as they are, it bids fair to pay in direct return of dollars and cents.

Mr. J. P. Downey's Bill, empowering municipi-