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EDITORIAL.

Compulsory Dehorning.

The introduction of a bill in the Ontario Legislature by Mr. Thomas Crawford, M. P. P. for one of the divisions of the City of Toronto, providing for compulsory dehorning of all cattle under one year old, subject to a penalty of \$10 in the case of any animal with regard to which neglect of the owner to comply with the provisions of the Act is proven, gives a somewhat serious turn to the discussion of a subject which has recently, and, indeed, for years intermittently, taken place in the columns of the "Farmer's Advocate." It is not surprising that, from his standpoint as a dealer in beef cattle, the father of the bill should entertain strong convictions on the subject, as it is in connection with the shipping and yarding of that class of stock that the horn evil is seen in its most objectionable form. Masterful animals, provided with such formidable weapons of offense, meeting strange cattle in stock-yards and in transit, certainly do, in many instances, inflict considerable pain and damage to the feelings and flesh of the weaker, and less pugnacious of the company, in some cases materially lessening the value of the carcass to the buyer and purveyor.

As a result of discussion and experience in the dehorning of cattle intended directly for beef, and in the case of ordinary grade dairy cows, the practice has become much more common in recent years than formerly, and is generally commended as a great improvement by those who have adopted it, and also by feeders and shippers handling them in the markets.

Strong protests have, from time to time, been made through the press and elsewhere against the practice of dehorning, on the ground of its cruelty to the animals, but it is now generally conceded that if skillfully and properly performed, the pain, which lasts but a very limited time, is more than offset by the comfort of the animals afterwards in herding with their fellows, and the convenience to their owners in feeding and handling them, though there is another side to the shield, which is, that if the dehorned are unfortunately herded with those having their horns intact, they are exposed to cruelty of the worst kind. It goes without saying that the earlier in the life of the animal the operation is performed, the less the pain involved, and in confining the operation of the proposed law to animals under one year, the author has done wisely, as, if it were adopted and universally enforced, we should, in time, when the old stock had ended its career, have a wholly dehorned supply.

But Mr. Crawford has evidently considered the question only from the viewpoint of the feeder and shipper of commercial cattle, and has not taken into consideration the great constituency of breeders of pedigreed cattle who take a pride in the horns of their animals, and who, rightly or wrongly, attach much importance in the selection of breeding stock to the size, shape, set and quality of the horns, as an index to feeding qualities, constitutional vigor and what is called character, but it is impossible to describe, though readily understood by the expert judge. It is, we believe, hardly overstating the case, to predict that the effect of an effort to enforce a dehorning act on breeders of pure-bred horned cattle would cause a rebellion. Fancy the feelings of a hard-headed Scotchman having a herd of aristocratic Ayrshires, in whose picturesque up-turned horns he has prided himself, and which he has been wont sedulously to train from their ad-

vent, on being required to trim them down to the level of the plebeian muley. Or, imagine the temper of a Shorthorn or Jersey enthusiast, who banks so strongly on flat, incurving, amber-colored horns, on being told he must abandon those cherished symbols of character and quality!

No, Mr. Crawford, it won't do, and even a legislature, constituted, as usual, of too small a proportion of practical farmers, will not dare to enact a law of such sweeping application without serious consideration, a protracted educational propaganda, if not an expression of the voice of the people at the polls. Would the Government dare go to the country on the question "Horns or No Horns"? We venture to say it would be even more risky than a test on the question of depriving the people of the privilege of indulging in another class of "horns" which so many hold dear, and the proposed prohibition of which never fails to raise the question of the rights of the individual, the liberty of the subject. Education and moral suasion must be the main factors employed in bringing about the object desired, namely, the more general adoption of dehorning young cattle. It is doubtful whether even the breeder of the polled breeds of cattle would favor the adoption of the bill in question, as, while they claim for their breed an advantage over others, owing to their being naturally hornless, the fact that all breeds were compelled to copy their fashion would deprive them of that advantage, for prevention of the growth of horns on the young calf is so simple and easily applied, that the champions of the Herefords or other beef breeds would be practically on the same plane with the friends of the polls, while the act might also possibly take cognizance of the case of some luckless descendant of Drumlaig or Castlemilk showing "scurs," and thus advertise his reversion to a rejected type.

[Note.—Since the above was written Mr. Crawford has withdrawn his bill.]

Teachers' Salaries.

At the Provincial Capital of Ontario, recently, the horse show at the Armories divided attention with another event that, in important respects, transcended it in importance, namely, the annual convention of educationists—trustees, public and high school teachers, kindergartners and university professors—from all parts of the Province. The convention divides up into a dozen or more sections during the day, and comes together for general session in the evenings. Attention to the discussions held will inform any thoughtful observer of the educational trend of the times.

The crowning achievement of the last Minister of Education was the introduction of the "New Curriculum," or the new regulations of 1903, aiming to make nature study, including agriculture and constructive art, realities, instead of mere names, as they had hitherto been. At the 1904 convention the advocates of the "word studies" strenuously resisted the proposed invasion of the "object studies"—the new regulations were not yet finally adopted—and they made Latin versus Nature the most prominent topic at the convention. This year heard but an occasional rumbling in some of the high school departments of last year's conflict. Instead of filling the air with protests and objections, a corresponding proportion of attention was given this year in nearly all the departments to discussion of the means of making the objective and constructive studies efficient for culture and utility.

The subject that claimed the next largest share

of attention was teachers' salaries. Strong addresses were made in the general and several of the departmental sessions upon this topic, although a bystander could not help thinking that they might be more fruitful of results if addressed to trustees and ratepayers. Chancellor Burwash, in his presidential address, quoted official reports to show that teachers are worse off now, financially, considering the expense of living, than they were sixty years ago. Their average earning is slightly higher than that of unskilled labor, and considerably below that of mechanics. A speaker in the public school department pointed out that the drivers of the scavenger carts in Toronto receive 27 cents a day more than the teachers in the first year of service for the Toronto Board of Education, and that a journeyman printer in Toronto gets \$289 a year more than the average male teacher in the Province of Ontario. Along with the decline in remuneration had come a great decrease in the number of male teachers. We have not to go far back to reach the time when more than half the teachers in Ontario were males; now they are less than one-fourth of the total, and the number is rapidly diminishing.

A joint committee from several of the departments brought in a report on salaries, which was adopted, containing, among others, the following recommendations:

"That the Government of Ontario be asked to fix a minimum salary for public school teachers, and that it also be asked to materially increase the public school grant, and apportion it on the basis of: 1st, the teacher's qualifications; 2nd, the rate of taxation for teacher's salary; 3rd, the rate of taxation for other school expenditures; 4th, equipment of the school; that a Provincial system of superannuation be adopted under the direction of the Government; and that the practice of requiring teachers to state the salary they are willing to accept when applying for schools, be strongly discouraged."

The last mentioned practice of putting up the school at "Dutch auction" to the lowest bidder, is too common; it cannot be defended. The trustees should know better than a stranger what it is worth to teach their school. They should offer what they can afford to pay, and select the best teacher who will accept that salary. No one will dispute that a competition of merit will lead to better results than a competition of cheapness.

Salaries in the Northwest are much higher than in Ontario. The teachers of schools with a dozen or fifteen pupils are there receiving \$500 to \$600 a year. The generous Government grant makes it easy for the school boards to pay these salaries. We suppose this is why teachers look to the Government, rather than to the public, for improvement. The Mail and Empire, commenting on the serious state of affairs disclosed by the statistics on teachers' salaries, puts in a claim for a largely increased Provincial subsidy, and proposes that the increase be applied to augmentation of the school fund.

In reviewing the work of the convention, it remains only to be added that the health and physical development of school children received unusually prominent attention. In the near future action will likely be taken to secure, at least in urban schools, periodical medical inspection of the children. Prevention is better every way than cure. Many a life burdened with sickness, or cut off prematurely, might have been saved to bless friends and society had a proper medical inspection in childhood or adolescence warned the parents against impending danger.