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EDITORIAL

Making People Happy

It is evident from the readiness with which our American neighbors are coming forward with testimony and suggestion, that dearth of information from which conclusions of some kind may be drawn, will not be one of the difficulties that President Roosevelt's commission on country life will have to face when it comes to compile its report to the government. The idea, when it was first made, of having a commission inquire into the conditions of life in the rural districts, was received in some quarters with ridicule and regarded in others as merely a dodge of a Republican President to swing the good old honest country vote into line and ensure of the election of a Republican successor. Perhaps the interest of his party was Roosevelt's chief concern, at any rate, it is as common in that country as in this, to attribute a good deal of governmental action to party motives, but whatever the real motive was, the commission certainly is going to persist. The interest of the country at large in its investigations and enquiries has become altogether too great for anything short of a thorough inquiry into the matter which the gentlemen comprising it have been set to enquire. The country life commission is going to be a success so far as popular approval of its aims go, and the only thing that seems possible to mar the usefulness of its conclusions, is that too much evidence may be forthcoming, and so many and varied suggestions made that it will be beyond the power of the commission to arrive at any definite conclusions.

What is the matter with country life that governments create bodies to inquire into the rural dweller's welfare? Why is it, that all over this continent the population of our towns and cities is increasing at a more rapid rate than that of our rural communities? It is no guess to say that it is. Census figures disclose the fact that there is a great townward trek going on all the time among the masses of the country. The majority of those flocking in are young men and women. The reason they are leaving the country is that life there is unsatisfactory, and the reason life is unsatisfactory is largely—not entirely by any means, because the training of these people, both home training and the education they were supposed to get at the public school, has unfitted them for doing anything in particular. The public school creates ideals and raises ambitions which life in the rural communities, or the practicing of the gentle art of agriculture will not satisfy. And what the public school with its hard and fast curriculum and its inexperienced young female teacher fails to do, the parents of the average boy or girl generally succeed pretty well in doing. The mothers always seem to have the idea that their sons and daughters are born for nobler work than merely the tilling of the soil, or being wife to a soil tiller. The father as a rule does not concern himself much with the future of his offspring. He is content that the boy should follow in the father's footsteps. The boy generally follows readily enough at first, but loses zest for his calling gradually as he works away year after year, the father attending to the management of the business, doing all the spending, getting all the money, and the boy, or man

as he becomes, getting nothing much out of the business except physical exercise. He gets dissatisfied, disgusted in fact, and finally cuts out the whole thing entirely, urged on to the step on the one hand by an ambition which public school and mother have succeeded pretty well in misdirecting and, on the other, driven by a father who seems to think a boy ought to be content to drudge all year from daylight to dark or later, for his board and an occasional suit of hand-me-downs.

Some of these things the American men and women in the cities who went there from the country are telling the President's country-life commission. They left the country because they got started out wrong at the first, and because their parents were raising them up, the one with no particular care about their up-bringing, except that they got to work when they were old enough, the other with a half secret, half expressed ambition that her child should become something more than a farmer or farmer's wife. With this kind of training there is little wonder that a boy prefers being a half paid clerk in a city grocery, to a farm hand on his father's place without wages, or that a girl would rather work on starvation wages in somebody's office where she thinks she sees something of life.

When the country life commission gets through with its labors there may not be anything new reported in the matter of bettering conditions of living in the country, but the body will have served the purpose of focusing public attention upon a problem that is as important as any that can come before the people of any country. The welfare of the people should be the first care of governments. But welfare and happiness are so closely allied that one sometimes is enabled to serve the former without arranging to satisfy the latter. That is what Roosevelt's commission is trying to do. Find out what to recommend to make the people happy.

"Producer" on Cattle Raising

The letter on another page from "Producer" represents the attitude of the majority of our Manitoba farmers on the subject of cattle raising. It further indicates the course that should be followed by the provincial department of agriculture in the way of helping to find out just why prices are not better and in suggesting how cattle may be produced more cheaply than by the methods followed by "Producer" and others who cannot see money in stock raising. Farmers have heard enough for the time being about how to select a good feeding steer, square body, short head, mellow skin, mild eye and all that sort of thing, what they want to know now is how can cattle be handled so that they can be sold at a profit at prevailing market prices and how they can get the top price for their cattle.

Our correspondent has made out a case on paper which seems to be conclusive proof that the cattle raising business is one of the most certain of known means of squandering a fortune, one, in fact, that should be brought to the notice of Mr. Carnegie, so that he may be assisted in his heroic resolve to die poor. But on the other hand it is a most exceptionally sound business that cannot be made to look dangerous on paper.

Two Men

Two men are known to us, probably every reader of this paper knows the same two men. They are both farmers, and make it pay, but the singular thing about them is that their methods of management are directly opposite. The one man came west while young, homesteaded, bought more land, broke it all up, grew wheat, sold it to the elevator companies, and used the money to pay his debts and improve his farm. The other man did exactly the same thing. Then came a time when the suspicions of the producers of wheat were aroused. Later they began to think that the expense in handling wheat from the elevator to the consumer was out of proportion to the cost of raising it. Every one decided that with just weights, reasonable dockage, and fair grading, considerably more money could be realized on the crops.

The one man made up his mind that if he were to get all that was coming to him he would have to keep his eye on the elevator man, on the company he represented, on the banker who cashed his checks and on every one in general. Soon everyone knew he was sharp on weights, grades, dockage, etc. He jealously watched the scales, he noted down the weights, compared them with the storage slips, disputed their correctness, insisted upon higher grades, and in every possible way made it known that he was attending to his own business and did not intend to be beaten. Was he ever beaten? He says he was sometimes.

The other man realizing the temptations that beset an elevator operator and the endless work and inconveniences of checking him up, took council with himself and reflected upon the peculiarities of human nature. He sized up the different operators at his home market, considered the financial standing of the companies they represented, had a casual chat with each, asked those who appeared congenial to his temperament out to see his place and have tea, talked with them over the ins and outs of the trade and made up his mind. He could easily divide his business. He decided to make the matter of weighing, docking and grading a matter of honor with the operator. He simply put it up to the man's better sense and relied upon his honesty, where the other man had challenged the operator, practically accused him of dishonesty, and said he preferred to believe that the operator's object was to defraud.

The second man concluded that in man's better nature there is more security than in any means of defence; that if inherent honesty, given every encouragement and opportunity to assert itself, would not insure him all that was coming to him, there was little chance of getting it otherwise. He went about his work of hauling wheat to the elevator with a serenity and trustfulness that to the other man looked pitiable. He never had a suspicion, never a doubt, never a care as to weight, dockage or grade. His attitude was a continual compliment to the operator and a incessant appeal to his better nature. Was he ever beaten? He says not.

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