

A Farmers' Training School

By Walter C. Murray, President Saskatchewan University

EDITOR'S NOTE—The following article by Prof. Murray indicates most strikingly how rapidly agriculture has come to the front during recent years. It is now realized that attention must be turned to the agricultural classes if civilization is to march on. The aim of the agricultural work in Saskatchewan University is not only to render farmers able to earn more money, but to make them more useful and happier citizens by securing to them their just due.

TO indicate in a general way the policy of the University of Saskatchewan with respect to agricultural education is the purpose of this article.

In the first place the university's sole reason for existence is to serve the province. To conserve the interests of any particular class, any one sect or any section is not its purpose. It is to be a democratic institution in the sense that it is to serve the people as a whole; but it is not, therefore, to be an institution which exploits every novelty, which caters to every whim of the popular fancy. The prosperity and happiness of the people depend upon principles which operate through ages and not for a day only. Consequently, the university, as a faithful servant of the people must take long views. At times it may be necessary for it to proclaim very unpalatable truths. Again for years it may be necessary for it to carry on work that is unappreciated, work that may even be decried as useless, as a shameless waste of public monies. The most valuable discoveries of science were preceded by long years of patient but apparently fruitless toil. The inventors who once were laughed at or abused because of the time and money wasted in trying to fly are now beginning to be appreciated. A university must encourage the spirit of research and invention even though the immediate results seem to be trivial.

Advocates Mixed Farming

The university will be an advocate of mixed farming. While it will not neglect the study of wheat and the most effective methods of tillage, it will in season and out of season proclaim the advantages of mixed farming. This province cannot afford to put all its eggs into one basket; nor can it afford to confine itself to an industry that occupies little more than half of each year. Stock raising will fill out the life of the farmer in the winter months as it will fill his purse when wheat begins to fail.

Looking Ahead

Close to this question lies another, the conservation of fertility. The university must look beyond the enriching of this generation. Like a nation its life extends over centuries. It must proclaim the teaching of experience elsewhere

—the gradual impoverishment of soils once fabulously rich, the enrichment of soils once contemptibly poor. The abandoned farms of eastern America and the rich dairies of Denmark and Holland have their lessons. Mixed farming and the conservation of fertility do not lie far apart.

Self Improvement

A third interest the university must foster. Unless the lives of the workers are happy their labor is in vain. The acquisition of riches may bring happiness to a few, but it alone is not sufficient. In urban centres of population the great problems arise from vice and poverty. These in turn are due to the congestion of the crowds. In rural communities poverty of the oppressive kind—the poverty that starves, enfeebles and degrades—is absent. The vice is more personal, less social, more injurious to the individual and less to society. It must be met not so much by laws or by schemes of social betterment as by personal instruction, by filling the individual's life with better things. To overcome the isolation of the farmer, to bring him into closer touch with his neighbors, to provide for the social side of his life by co-operating with his societies, by bringing to him such advantages of the towns as lectures, entertainments, opportunities for social intercourse, opportunities for improvement and instruction must be one of the aims of the university.

Through what agencies can the university realize these aims?

Farmers' Need Organization

Through its experiments in the fields and in the laboratory it proposes to attack the problems of conserving the fertility of the soil, the problems of the most effective and most economical methods of cultivation, the problems of the most profitable type of plant and animal, the problems of protecting the farmer against his enemies—early frost, drought, disease, parasites—animal and human. It will not be the least important work of the university to study those economic conditions which lighten or burden the farmer's life—questions of transportation, questions of markets, questions of tariffs, questions of the production and distribution of the things the farmers use, questions of law and contracts. Every other industry because of the concentra-

tion of its workers finds organization and joint action easy. Not so does agriculture. Some agency must stand ever on guard to help the farmers. His traditional enemies, who exploit his wealth for their gain, his power for their advancement, are ever on the alert and are well organized. Unless he can secure the help of his fellows he is an easy victim for the glib agent or the greedy corporation.

The Road is Long

By its success in research, by the thoroughness of its instruction in the scientific basis of agriculture, the university must in the long run prove its serviceableness to the province. This, however, will require time. Not five, ten or fifteen years will be sufficient. The period between seed time and harvest is long.

There are other phases of the work of that college which will give immediate results. Its courses for farmers' sons, extending over the winter months of two or three years, will aim at making the boys more skilful farmers—not scientific investigators. They will become familiar with the most recent advances in agricultural science, will learn new methods, will become better judges of seed and stock and will incidentally pick up many things that will make their lives happier as well as more useful.

Demonstration Farms

In time, as population increases, schools of agriculture must be started in many centres, probably in connection with demonstration farms. These schools and farms will become educational and social centres for the surrounding districts. Because of their nearness and because of the local interest their influence within the narrower sphere will be much greater than that of the central institution, but their influence will depend in a large part upon the supervision exercised by the college and the instructors sent out by the college.

Another side of the college work—a side capable of indefinite expansion—is that of the extension department. This department, through institutes, travelling instructors, agricultural societies, correspondence courses, lectures, travelling libraries and the various agencies which it will adopt, will come into closer touch with the life of the people than any other. Its work is vast. The task of organization will be great and the demand for men and money, will not be trifling. Its full development will be reached only after many years.

Research Work Needed

Three main avenues of work then open up before the college of agriculture—first, scientific research with its dilatory but far-reaching results; second, the technical training of the farmers' sons and daughters whereby they become more skilful in their daily work; third, the work done throughout the province by the extension department. The value of the second and

third is evident to all; the first alone is sometimes not appreciated, yet it requires but a few moments' reflection to see that the researches of the bacteriologist have not only protected the farmer and his stock and his plants from disease, but have almost revolutionized the dairy industry as well as certain methods of cultivation.

Of ways in which the university may aid the farmers other than those through the agricultural college this is not the time to write. But it is an unquestioned truth that every farm of university work that makes men better and happier citizens is as beneficial to the farmer as those forms which fill his purse.

TO LEASE H. B. R.

A Toronto wire of August 9 said: "Oh, I suppose newspapers must be talking," said William Mackenzie, president of the Canadian Northern Railway, when questioned about the story from Ottawa, that his road would be given the operation of the new Hudson's Bay Railway, which is a government road on a plan similar to that of the G. T. P. and National Transcontinental.

Mr. Mackenzie, however, made no secret of the fact that he expected to operate the new line.

"We have a charter to build it, and as it is right at the end of our road isn't it a likely thing that we would operate it?" Mr. Mackenzie said. "No," he added. "Of course nothing has been definitely settled yet. Sir Wilfrid, I see, has been saying in the West that the Hudson's Bay line must be built at once, and that the point of its operation remains to be settled by parliament."

Pressed for further particulars Mr. Mackenzie would say nothing further than that it was "probable" the new government line would be leased to the C. N. R.

WILL VISIT WEST.

The assistant C. P. R. land commissioner, J. L. Doupe has returned from the East where he has been arranging the details of an exhibit of agricultural products of Western Canada at the Toronto, London, Ottawa and Sherbrooke fairs, at which points the company has exhibited for many points past. Mr. Doupe stated that a great deal of interest was manifested in the western crop conditions.

Mr. Doupe is leaving the city soon when he will accompany a party of American agricultural editors on a tour to Saskatchewan and intermediate territory. The editors are visiting Western Canada at the invitation of the three railways. The party will leave for the west on the Canadian Pacific and will visit among other points the Indian Head and Brandon experimental farms, as well as Moose Jaw, Regina and Outlook. At Saskatoon they will become the guests of the C. N. R. and at Edmonton the party will be taken charge of by the G. T. P.

The following gentlemen are included in the party: Prof. A. W. Fulton, of Springfield, O., editor of the American Agriculturalist and Farm and Home; Clarence D. Strow, of Fort Dodge, Iowa, managing editor of Farm Life and the National Fruit Grower and Gardener; Andrew W. Hopkins, editor of the Wisconsin Farmer; Prof. E. E. Faville, editor of Successful Farming; E. H. Brown of Augusta, Me., editor of American Farm World; Warren Noble Burns, magazine writer and Sunday editor of the Chicago Inter-Ocean, and Herbert Vanderhoof, editor of Canada West Magazine, Chicago.

A number of these gentlemen have already visited the West and their articles in the various papers they control bear witness to the favorable impressions they have received. The present trip will no doubt be productive of considerable benefit in making still more widely known the resources of the west.

CANADIAN NAVY

An Ottawa wire of August 4, said:— Replies regarding the building of ships for the new Canadian Navy have been received by the naval department from three Canadian and two British ship-building firms, and there is a possibility that there may be an amalgamation of interests. Though the British admiralty plans are not completed, it is expected that contracts will be let before the winter and that construction will be begun within a year.

The Rainbow will sail for Vancouver, August 20, and the Niobe for the St. Lawrence, during September.



It Pays To Be Enterprising