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EDITORIAL.

Laborers for the Harvest.

The West's annual call for harvesters is ringing in our ears. Twenty to twenty-five thousand men are asked to help the Western farmers garner their crops. Whence are they to come? The C. P. R. advertises a low rate from Liverpool, and some gleaners may be expected from the British Isles, no doubt, but the principal quota will be drawn as usual from Eastern Canada. It is astonishing how many available young men will turn up from a country where there seems a very dearth of laborers. The railway companies offer their low rates—\$12 going, and \$18 additional if the harvester decides to return. It used to be \$10 going and \$18 for the return fare, but two dollars will not stop many on a trip of this kind. A healthy conviction obtains among the young men of the Eastern Provinces, particularly Ontario, that the West is a country worth seeing, and they take advantage of the opportunity to see it at its best at small net expense, for the high wages they receive leave them, in some cases, almost as much, after deducting the price of their tickets, as they would make by staying in the East. The boys do well to see the West. While "The Farmer's Advocate" believes that no likely young man need leave Eastern Canada today in search of opportunities, and while it counsels him to open his eyes to the magnificent country in which his lot is cast, it does not wish him to shut himself up in his own Province, ignorant of other portions of the Dominion. There is no education like travel, and there are few things which afford more profitable satisfaction than an actual knowledge of one's country. No young Canadian's education is complete, and none should permanently settle down, until he has seen the West. To see it, need not mean to remain in it, though there is no use denying that, so long as there are good lands to be had for a song in districts where the building of a railway will double or quadruple their value, so long will the pluck and enterprise of Canadian youth be lured that way. We need not begrudge them. Rather rejoice that they are finding in the new Canada opportunities which erstwhile seemed offering only in the Republic to the south. The harvest excursions, though they pinch Eastern farmers for help, are building up the West, arousing the East, educating our citizens, and forging links between East and West.

It looks sometimes as though the Westerners will have to do something ere long to accomplish their harvest operations with less transient help. The required number of men is spared from the East with increasing difficulty each year. Just what turn things will take in the immediate future is not easy to predict, but sooner or later the Western farmers will be induced by diminishing soil fertility, by enhanced prices of land, and by advancing wages likely to be demanded for short-term engagements, to shift more into mixed farming, which is by far the most substantial basis of agricultural prosperity. Then harvesting will not be quite such a problem, the regular staff of farm hands will more nearly be able to care for it, and the demands on Eastern labor will be reduced. No doubt we shall long continue to send a few thousand harvesters West in the fall, but these will not be missed as have the heavy drafts of the past decade.

Fast-working machinery has been employed to great service in the West. Had it not been so, the labor condition in the fall would have been far more acute than it is. Improvements in implements will continue, but this can hardly be ex-

pected to keep pace with the settlement. Mixed farming is the solution for the West. Meanwhile, the only solution for us is to take a leaf from their book, employ labor-saving methods, and seek to hold our men by yearly contracts, taking care not to let the hired man get squared up till the completion of his term. Such a precaution, though regrettable, seems necessary in the case of many of the roving immigrants, who constitute a considerable proportion—too large a proportion, some think—of the present farm laboring class.

Shall we Grow More Wheat?

The question, shall Canadian farmers grow more wheat, is being answered in vigorous and unmistakable terms by the newer Western Provinces, now being so rapidly settled and brought into cultivation, and in which for many years to come wheat will be the principal crop produced, as it was in the Eastern Provinces in the early years of their settlement, and especially in Ontario, where formerly winter wheat was very extensively grown, and spring wheat also very successfully produced. In the last twenty years the acreage devoted to wheat culture in the Eastern Provinces has been growing gradually less, until it has become a very limited quantity; and perhaps properly so, since the competition of the West and of other countries in the same field of production, where land and labor are cheaper, has tended to lower the market price for this cereal, while the improving prices for meat and milk, owing to the growth of our cities and the demands of our export trade, have rendered the feeding of cattle and other stock more profitable, and at the same time have helped to maintain the fertility of the land. While all this is true, there is no valid reason why, in many districts in the Eastern Provinces where wheat can yet be successfully grown, its culture should not be carried on to a larger extent than it is. Wheat is perhaps a more uncertain crop in most countries than are some others of the cereals, and a failure of the crop in any year in any one or more of the principal wheat-growing countries may raise the price to an unusual extent, making it exceptionally profitable for those countries fortunate in having a surplus in such seasons. Indeed, the world's wheat crop this year, according to an estimate made by Mr. Dobell, manager of the foreign department of the Ogilvie Flour Mills Co., of Montreal, who has recently returned from abroad, is 200,000,000 to 250,000,000 bushels less than that of last year, while stocks generally of wheat and flour in the foreign markets are light. This may not be regarded as an abnormal shortage, but it serves to emphasize the possibility of a serious shrinkage in any year. And even with the markets we have under normal conditions, fall-wheat growing has been fairly profitable, when we consider that it is a crop the preparation for which and the seeding and harvesting of which may be prosecuted at times when other farm work is not particularly pressing, that the straw of the crop is so useful as bedding for stock and an absorbent of the liquid manure, that the chaff is so useful as stock food, and that, as a rule, grass and clover seeds make a sure catch when sown on wheat land.

That land once suitable for the successful growing of fall wheat is not liable to become exhausted or less productive of that crop, has been abundantly proven in late years in many districts in Ontario where crops of thirty to forty bushels per acre have been produced, quite as large a yield as was possible in the palmy days when the land was new and full of its virgin fertility. And this crop is now produced with less labor and ex-

pense than in those early times when a summer-fallow, plowed three times in a season as a preparation, was deemed necessary to success, two years being thus required to secure a money return, while now a clover or other sod, with a single plowing after pasturing half the summer or harvesting a hay crop, is, with surface cultivation, considered an ideal preparation for wheat; or a pea field, without plowing, but with surface cultivation after harvest, furnishes nearly if not quite as good a preparation, and in limited areas fair crops have been raised by sowing corn stubble with or without plowing.

The enduring quality of Canadian farm lands for the production of wheat and other crops, under fair treatment, has been amply proven by its success in this regard in Ontario. To the knowledge of the writer, farms which forty years ago were considered run down and exhausted from continuous cropping in one line, have been restored under a sensible system of rotation, in which clover has had a full share, and, with no outlay for special fertilizers, are now producing as heavy crops of wheat and other grains as when first cleared from the forest. While it is not the object of this article to counsel the effort to grow wheat extensively in the older Provinces, we feel safe in advising the continuance of its culture to a somewhat larger extent than has been done in the last few years, provided it is sown on suitable land, properly prepared, and sown sufficiently early to ensure a vigorous growth before winter sets in. If, from undue exposure or severity of the winter, the plants fail to give promise in spring of a paying crop, the land may, with little labor, be prepared for sowing spring grain, the principal loss being the seed wheat. A sane conclusion seems to be that we may safely grow more wheat with proper preparation, but it is folly to sow on ill-prepared or unsuitable land, or later, as a rule, than the first week in September.

Is Warman's Prophecy Well Founded?

That English, German and Russian farmers will come and buy or work the fine Ontario homesteads whose owners' sons have gone West, is the prediction Cy. Warman indulges in, in an article headed "The Annual Hike," appearing in the magazine "Canada." Something of this kind, he says, has taken place in the States where the sons of men who pioneered in the West are crossing into Canada, Indiana and Ohio farmers taking their places, and New England farmers occupying the Indiana and Ohio land. Meanwhile, millions of foreigners are pouring into the States, to be assimilated and refined, while the Canadian West is being peopled with the finished product. He also goes on to point out the significance of the fact that, despite heroic efforts of railways interested in peopling the American Southwest, the Northwest is proving a superior magnet. He adds that the settlement of the Canadian West is now so far advanced—although it seems empty to ride through it—that nothing can stay the tide. The day is not far distant when the Canadian West, like the American West, will be supplying the grain and wool and meat for the balance of the country, and much to spare.

We agree with the writer in part. That nothing can now frustrate the development of the magnificent Provinces beyond the Great Lakes, is patent to all. The people there have now the making of their own fortune, and may be depended on to build with courage, judgment and energy. That they will supply a large portion of the country's grain and meat is a fact to be welcomed. The East will apply itself principally to more intensive and, for us, more profitable