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## EDITORIAL.

### Forward Movement in Agricultural Education.

The report comes from Ottawa that Prof. Jas. W. Robertson, LL.D., has resigned his position as Dominion Commissioner of Agriculture and Dairying. The "Farmer's Advocate" speaks advisedly when it intimates that Prof. Robertson has for a considerable length of time been considering the advisability of devoting his whole attention to educational rather than to what might be considered strictly agricultural work, though it may be taken for granted that the advancement of Canada as an agricultural country will bulk largely in any enterprise or movement with which he associates himself. A worthy son of the soil, his sympathies are and always have been with this great industry. During the past few years he has been identified especially with the establishment of schools for instruction in manual training; the Macdonald Institute in connection with the Agricultural College at Guelph, Ont., for the training of teachers and others in nature study and domestic science; school gardens and consolidated rural schools, such as those in the Maritime Provinces, and the one opened a few days ago at Guelph. In this educational crusade he sees the most secure hope for the future of this country, and, as the apostle of what has been styled "the new education," we believe he is upon the right track. Knowing somewhat of his enthusiasm and his indomitable Scottish determination, we are inclined to believe that having put his hand to this educational plow he will not be disposed to turn back. Graduating from the farm and the cheese factory, Prof. Robertson's first public work of note was in the Ontario Agricultural College, from whence he went to the Central Experimental Farm as Agriculturist, giving special attention to dairying. He soon became Dairy Commissioner, under the Dominion Department of Agriculture, his duties widening into those of Commissioner of Agriculture and Dairying, under which divisions have been created for live stock, dairy, market extension, cold storage, seed, fruit, and poultry. A great deal of the work which he originally looked after personally is now carried on by the chiefs of these divisions, and the suggestion has been made that in the event of his resignation it would not be necessary to continue the general office of Commissioner, which would appear to be a reasonable proposition.

As our readers are aware, Sir William Macdonald, of Montreal, has provided the funds for the greater portion of the educational work which Prof. Robertson has been carrying on. It is understood that the philanthropist has now larger schemes for educational development on hand. As was recently announced in these columns, he purchased the magnificent farm and stock of Mr. Robt. Reford, at Ste. Anne de Bellevue, Montreal, and additional land beside, upon which will be projected an institution for scientific instruction in agriculture and agricultural research. In all, 700 acres will be available for the carrying out of Sir William Macdonald's great plan. Prof. Robertson has been some sixteen years before the Canadian public, and it was in recognition of his attainments and his distinguished services in the cause of agriculture and education that Queen's University, Kingston, last year conferred upon him the honorary degree of LL. D.

### "Doing Things" at our Fairs.

As excursionists were leaving an outside city park one evening last summer, a "hot-box" on the rear end of one of the trolley cars caused some delay. The workmen fussed around a little, and in the end decided to cool it by pouring on cold water. Three children, two girls and a little boy, jumped up and leaned eagerly over the side of the car. "Come back and sit down," said the father. "Oh," pleaded one of the girls, "let us see the men do it," and they had their way, watching with great interest until the simple performance was over. It is one of the instincts of our nature, that we like to watch when something is being done. We may know that "something is going on" wherever we see a crowd.

The claim was made for the World's Fair at St. Louis, that it was an exhibition of processes rather than of products. In part that was true. There was a mining gulch where rock was drilled and real metal smelted. Cotton was being spun on spinning jennies and on machines of more modern device. There were two shoe factories in operation, where the whole process of manufacture from the tanned hides up to the finished article could be seen. In the educational department a real kindergarten was conducted, with live children, brought each day from the St. Louis public schools. Every afternoon the U. S. Life-saving Service showed by actual performance how shipwrecked persons are brought by rope and basket from ship to shore; how a lifeboat may be overturned and filled, and yet rise none the worse, and how a drowning man who has gone under the second time is rescued and revived. A monster locomotive on a turntable whirled around continually. Silk looms were in operation, weaving suspenders, handkerchiefs, shawls. The various machines used in the manufacture of steel pens were at work day by day. These and many other operations that were being carried on in full view, show that an honest attempt was made to justify the claim concerning processes rather than products. But, in spite of all, what was to be seen being made was only a very, very small part of the whole exhibit. This, however, must have been noticed by all visitors, that it was to the general public the most interesting part. Wherever a particularly large crowd was congregated, there it would be found was some practical operation in progress. Even the scroll sawyer cutting wooden puzzle blocks was always surrounded by a lot of people, and his sales were vastly larger because of the interest excited by the sight of him at work. In all this there is a plain hint to fair boards who are studying how they may keep up or increase interest in their shows. At a slight expense, or even by only judicious management, much more might be done in the direction indicated. The large crowds that have been attracted by the buttermaking contests and other competitions at our fairs, show how the efforts of the directors in that line have been appreciated, and how the public would welcome more of the same nature.

We direct attention to another means by which interest in exhibits and the instruction derived therefrom might be much increased, and that is to have the exhibitor or attendant give talks about them. At St. Louis in many places could be seen this placard, "Please do not handle; the attendant will be pleased to give any information desired." This was very good. It was noticed, however, that when any question was asked a little knot of people always gathered about to

hear what was being said in reply, showing that people were hungry for more than they were getting. It is the same at all shows. Wherever any one is talking, the veriest fake not even excepted, there are sure to be a number of listeners. Why should not this characteristic be turned to more account in our agricultural fairs? Have not only objects, but object lessons. This is being worked out to some degree with great acceptance in the instructive lectures at the Winter Fairs, and this feature might with profit be introduced at our fall fairs as well.

### Stability in Farming.

In comparing the methods of Canadian farmers, as a class, with those of the neighboring republic, our people have been wont to claim, and with good grounds for the claim, that our farmers, as a rule, are the more stable, that they are not so generally disposed to speculate or to change from one thing to another, from one line of farming or stock-raising to another, or to sell out an improved farm and flit to an unimproved one, taking chances to make a financial gain, though they sacrifice much of convenience and comfort, and much of social attachment. The tendency to this disposition is evidenced in the less substantial nature of farmhouses and outbuildings in most of the States, as compared with Canadian homesteads, the former being generally built of wood, and often without even a stone foundation, while brick houses and stone basement barns are common in Canada. The "prairie schooner," a canvas-covered wagon, carrying the belongings of farmers from one section of the country to another, still common in the States, was, comparatively, an unknown quantity in this country before the advent of the American invasion, as the recent trekking of farmers from across the line to the Canadian Northwest has been termed. These, however, are warmly welcomed as a desirable class of settlers, and the hope is cherished that they will prove to be permanent settlers, and partake of the stability which, up to the present, has more generally characterized our own people, and which we would fain hope to have maintained.

The opening up of our Western prairie country, affording the opportunity to secure good land at a low price, naturally attracts young men from the east who have not the means nor the prospects of being in a position to secure farms where prices rule high, and there is no valid objection to their striking out to share in the favorable opportunities afforded by a new country so well calculated as is the Canadian West to provide good homes and a competence for millions of progressive people. These young men are worthy of commendation for their courage and enterprise in making such a move, and there may be instances where older men, who, from various causes, have not been making headway in the east, may, with the capital they can command by selling out, improve their position by moving to the newer sections of the country, especially if they have a family to provide for and start in business. But for the man in middle life or advanced in years, who is fairly well off and comfortably situated in the older Provinces, the resolve to break up his home and migrate to a new country is a serious proposition, and should be well considered before being acted upon. Here, from experience and observation, he knows the capabilities of his farm, and can gauge with some precision the risks he has to run in the average of years, which are comparatively few. Here, if he has been fortunate, he has social ties and friendships of long standing, which it may take