

# Farmer's Advocate

## and Home Journal

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### EDITORIAL

#### The Winnipeg Industrial Prize List.

The annual issuance of the premium list of Western Canada's biggest fair is always looked forward to by stockmen and farmers—the former figuring the opportunities for glory and pelf, the latter, the prospects for keen contests in horse or cattle rings, dairy or grain show, likely to be interesting and educational.

The revision of the prize list is a work on which considerable care is expended, committees of stockmen, dairymen, grain growers and women meet and sift out the various classes and sections, and the result of their labors goes through another sifting at the hands of the prize list committee of the fair board. The recommendations made at the first being adopted if the funds permit and the suggestions are reasonable.

The live stock sections of the Industrial's prize list are more or less interesting to the general public and especially so to the stockmen.

This year the Shorthorn list takes pride of place on account of the large amount of money offered, and a careful scrutiny of the classification is warranted. A few improvements might be made, we think, in the 1907 list, by totalling the monies in each section, as at Toronto, and also by readjusting the amounts in the Shorthorn schedule, somewhat as follows, for the aged bull class 70, 60, 50, 40, 30, and 20 dollars; for the year-olds 50, 30, 40, and 20 dollars, and for the junior yearlings 30, 25, 20, and 10 dollars; as it is at present, the second prize junior yearling bull gets as much money as the 3rd prize aged bull, which is clearly inconsistent, when the probable values of the two animals are compared, the same fault, only more pronounced, is seen in the Toronto classification. The prizes for aged cows should be increased to 60, 50, 40, and 20 dollars, the three-year-olds 50, 40, 30, 20, and 10 dollars; as it is the two-year-olds are practically offered as much as the three-year-olds, and in the Toronto list more money is offered for heifers than for cows.

We believe it to be advisable to do away with the Western bred herd section, and in its place would suggest the adding of fifty per cent. of the monies won, or a duplication of the prize, for Western bred stuff. As this provision for home bred stuff is not made in the horse or sheep classes, we fail to see by what manner of reasoning it should be continued for cattle and swine. Inferior stuff should not be provided for in a prize list, simply because it is Western bred or home bred; such a doctrine in live stock is rank heresy, and is bound to have a degenerating effect on Western live stock standard.

We believe we have the climate, the feed, and the men to produce live stock equal to that brought from elsewhere, therefore, we submit there should be no limit to the competition; the pampering of inferiority accounts for a statement occasionally heard in the beef ranks, to the effect that the prevalence of so much poor quality stuff is due to the prepotency of the pure bred cull used.

The horse classes are improved, more money being added, especially for heavy draft and agricultural teams, the monies now being 50, 30, and 15 dollars. The addition of prizes for stallions best calculated to produce saddle horses and carriage horses will, if the selections are made by competent judges, be educational in effect.

The change in the prizes for wheat, in which White Fife has been dropped, was, we understand, decided upon for several reasons, a very strong one being that competition in the section for White Fife was practically nil. A correspondent takes us to task over our commenting favorably on the change, and champions the cause of his favorite wheat; in connection with that, it will

be well to read what Cerealist Saunders has to say on the different wheats. In the field grain sections there was abundant need for change, so that encouragement might be given to seeds of grains and fodder plants grown for commercial and feeding purposes by the general farming public.

More benefit is likely to accrue to the community, and more competition at the fair, if the direction of the monies is towards fewer classes and higher quality, bearing in mind, first, the needs of the country and the requirements of the markets.

#### A Little on Life Insurance.

And now the probe is being used on the Canadian life insurance companies and the policy holders look on and wonder vaguely what's coming. Let us hope the truth will come. The truth will help to make us free—free from graft and grafters. It is not the fact that crooked acts become public that ruins a company's prospects; the existence of the spirit of wrong doing in the directors carries with it the bacillus of decay. People are too prone to judge the merits of a thing by size alone. Mere bulk doth not make men or insurance companies better. Strength must come from the soundness of the foundation and also of the superstructure. There is little use in having an inspector of insurance companies if he does nothing but inspect. He should see to it that the companies obey the laws. It would be a good idea to use the probe before the trouble comes and set the wrong doers right on the start. Meanwhile watch the fraternal companies. The glitter of the word "fraternal" does not cover up some traces of unsoundness in the make-up of some of these organizations. Meanwhile the insurance business will be shorn of much of its mystery and people will look at it more rationally when the mists have cleared away.

#### Railway Crossings in Towns and Villages.

There has recently come under our notice a little incident in connection with the railway crossings in a central Alberta town, which calls for some consideration. The town is divided almost evenly by the C. and E. line. A certain crossing had been in use ever since the beginning of things, until a few days ago the railway company decided to close it. The town had built sidewalks and constructed roads; and buildings, both business and private, had grown up with the conditions thus established, until one bright day a strong wire fence went across the road and mellow notes, not sacred but profane, agitated the ambient atmosphere, as man after man drove up to the old crossing to find that it had ceased to be.

There is no necessity for such a condition of affairs. If the railway company owned that crossing and had the right to close it they should never have allowed the public to use it, and to close it at this advanced stage of the town's development means a measure of confiscation of certain property in the district. There will be more towns to build in the West. Provision should be made for such contingencies. Now is the time to settle these questions and not twenty years later when conditions have greatly changed. Any railway company in Canada has its just rights. These the people must respect, but at the same time the people have theirs, and to the people the railway companies owe a certain measure of justice and fair play. The railway commission is just for such purposes and if the townspeople, think the matter of sufficient importance, the road to redress is open.

#### How Have Your Clover Plots Wintered?

We shall be pleased to hear from those of our readers who are growing red clover or alfalfa on their farms as to how those valuable legumes wintered. Encourage and advise your neighbor to try some clover this year, even if only an acre. Preach the clover gospel!

#### Educational Reconstruction A Pressing Necessity

The letter of George Kerr in this week's issue is only a sample of the common utterances of many farmers and parents in both rural and urban communities regarding the school system as working to-day.

Point is given to that gentleman's letter by his reference to salaries and holidays, and while all may not agree with his views, as expressed in their entirety, the fact remains that the opinion is abroad, and is growing, that the school system needs revising.

The statements, by school inspectors or teachers, either in their conventions or in their reports, that the public are not qualified to speak and that those who dare criticise their methods are narrow in their views, are poor arguments for the retention of present methods or avoidance of change.

A school system to be of value must demonstrate that it improves the standard of citizenship, that it makes for better homes and improved ways of living, that it fits the child to be a more efficient worker in a community of workers.

Where and what are the changes needed? It would we believe be a move in the right direction for ministers of education to appoint a commission of capable men, not teachers, to investigate and report on the educational system so that it might be reconstructed, be brought into line with the needs of the people at the least possible cost to the people. A disposition to spend money for education is only half of the work; ministers of education and their subordinates should thoroughly appreciate the fact that their duty to the public is to see that value is obtained for the public monies so expended. We have had too much prating about culture, and fault finding with parents because they groan under the burden, by some of our superintendents of education and too little in the way of attempts to remedy the grievances. A frequent charge made and never disproved is that too many subjects are attempted, not taught, in the schools, that thoroughness and quality is sacrificed for a smattering and quantity. Another matter affecting the parent adversely is the frequent and unnecessary (we believe) changes in text books; for which no good reason is ever advanced. The real reason is that the success of the book-making business depends on the making and selling of books, and that publishing firms, by some means or other, persuade those in control of the educational system that a change in text books is needed; yielding to that persuasion is not hard, more especially when a share in the profits is the price of acquiescence or complaisance. No sane person would assert that education in schools is undergoing such a rapid process of evolution, as to need or call for a change in text books oftener than once in a decade. That inferior text books are sometimes authorized owing to friends at court, we do not deny or assert, but a commission as suggested could have power to look into the matter. Unfortunately the various governments trust entirely too much to the professional influence, and seem ever ready to adopt all the suggestions emanating from that quarter. Reports of departments of education contain admissions of the fact that not only are many pupils deficient in reading, spelling and composition, but many teachers also. How can the blind be expected to lead the blind?

There seems to be little justification nowadays in the West for complaint of low salaries; in recent reports, the average salary paid to all teachers employed is stated to be for the new provinces, \$47.67 per month, and for Manitoba (1904) the average salary for the province, \$54.28; far better salaries than the average stenographer gets, working 5½ to 6 days in the week for fifty weeks in the year; especially are the complaints unfounded when the cost to the teachers them-