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EDITORIAL.

The poet of Ingersoll will now lower his coach to the Shakespeare of the speed.

Sentiment without profit is not a very satisfactory thing for our labor on the farm, or anywhere. Neither is profit without sentiment. Some of each is best.

Enthusiasm tends readily to exaggeration. To say that alfalfa is, in every respect, the equal of wheat bran is overstating the argument for our most nutritious forage crop. The chemist may find it so, but the feeder who relies upon that claim will be almost invariably disappointed. Call it worth three quarters as much as bran, and the case for alfalfa is still quite good enough.

During the last census decade the rural population of Canada decreased one per cent., our growth of over two millions in population having been exclusively in the cities and towns, observed Oliver Wilcox, M. P., addressing the Ontario Corn Growers at Windsor. It will take a good many ten-million-dollar grants for agricultural education to stem this cityward drift, so long as the economic conditions which induce it remain undisturbed.

Hon. Jas. S. Duff, Minister of Agriculture for Ontario, delivered himself of sound logic when, in addressing the corn growers at Windsor, he emphasized the importance of each man, finding out what his particular locality and personal aptitude are best adapted for, and then making the most of opportunities in that line. Essex and Kent farmers specialize on corn, hogs, tobacco and beans; Norfolk on apples, Niagara Peninsula on small fruits, Eastern Ontario on dairying, and other counties on mixed farming, while east of Toronto is an area ten miles square containing more men engaged in the pure-bred stock business than any similar area on the continent. Wide diversity of opportunity is presented by the premier Province. It is for each farmer to discern his main chance and make the most of it.

The ordinary railway cattle "guard" is a joke. It fulfils the letter of the law and is cheap. The claims' agent of a leading railway is said to have declared recently that his company paid out \$25,000 a year in claims for killing cattle; but so long as the railways were allowed to put down the cheap slat guard, they would be unlikely to adopt any other. An inventor of a steel oscillating-slats surface guard (a guard the slats of which rock from side to side when stepped upon) complains that, though demonstrated to be successful, the railroad companies refuse to use it. Personally, we know nothing of the cost or efficiency of the new guard, but it is claimed to be very effective, cattle absolutely refusing to cross it. The question is, are readers of this paper satisfied with the guards in use? A vigorous expression of opinion on this point might do good.

"Mr. Farmer, Get Busy."

Repeatedly in substance, if not in so many words, the above counsel is being tendered farmers from the seats of the mighty in trade and commerce. That it is given in all sincerity, we doubt not, and under pressure of the widespread apprehension of the rising cost of living most keenly realized and expressed in the abnormally increasing populations of Canadian cities and towns. In soliloquizing on "The Farmer's Day," "The Mail and Empire" sees in the constantly enlarging home market for farm products that which makes the future for the Ontario farmer bright and makes this a time for buying rather than selling Ontario farming land. We commend the attitude, but let no one run away with the notion that the farmer's outlay for living remains at the old easy ebb. Because he happens to grow things to eat, they do not come to him without money and without price. If his land goes up in value, the assessment and taxes are likely rising. If his hay sells for twenty dollars per ton or his potatoes for a dollar a bag, it is costing him more to feed his horses and his family. The remuneration of hired help, when he can secure it at all, has gone up like that of other captains of industry, and his own time is worth more. Good prices do not mean just as much "found money." No, friend townsman, just get the idea firmly embedded in your noddle that the farmer's outgo for existence and for comforts has been on the rise like your own.

These things are not coming to him as a donation party, not even Government help, however happily conceived, for the benefit of his immediate or ultimate interests. We do not propose to return any railing accusation against the worthy gentlemen who are advising us in the back townships to "get a move on" and team in more stuff. "The Farmer's Advocate and Home Magazine" is in tolerably close and constant communication with farmers in all parts of the country pursuing different branches of husbandry, and also by experience and observation we are under a very distinct impression that the farmer is just about as busy and probably works as long hours and puts in as much overtime in the effort to "fill orders" as any manufacturer or purveyor of food products. If this is disputed, let some of the doubting Thomases accumulate a little experience by trying single-handed to carry on the operation of a hundred-acre farm, which is the situation in some localities. We are too few. It is probably within the mark to say that farming is to-day the most seriously undermanned Canadian industry of any consequence; and it is not altogether a question of wage, as we shall presently see.

Hon. Martin Burrell, the Dominion Minister of Agriculture, in a notable speech in the House of Commons lately, disclosed how keenly he realized the alarming trend of population away from rural pursuits. To the future of the State it means a serious menace, to counteract which, in some measure, is the purpose of the proposed outlay of about a million dollars a year for ten years to further the interests of agriculture by various educational means. That the expenditure will tend to betterment need not be argued, but that it will have any early or appreciable effect, as some newspapers are expecting, in re-

ducing the cost of living, will likely prove a dream.

The causes of present conditions are many and deep-rooted. Industrial tendencies that have been gathering strength and momentum for thirty years are not so easily diverted, nor are tenaciously entrenched educational systems very readily moved. With large outlays, the currents of immigration have been set running our way, and the material attractions of Canada will keep them coming, but multitudes of those intended to people the land are soon swept into the industrial maelstrom of the towns, which outbid the farmer. And, accelerating the whirl, we have the "boosting" organizations of one town rivalling its neighbors in the hot race for industries and population.

In the face of this, a disposition is undoubtedly growing in rural quarters to take the attitude of producing what can be done in comfort. "Why," queries the man on the farm, "should I make a slave of myself because the hurrying crowds elect to live in town?" He is told to follow more intensive farming, which means more work on fewer acres, but in many cases the trend is to till fewer acres and do more grazing of cattle and sheep, except in those areas where the returns from canning crops, fruit and dairying are yet a sufficient stimulant to effort; but a few years of the latter becomes over-wearying, even if the milk checks are large. Ominous enough it certainly looks when supplies of our old staple, beef, run low and when a country like Canada, where so much public aid has been devoted to dairying and poultry raising, has to import butter and eggs. Growing rich through the rise in the price of land is hardly farming, and the true friends of Western farming by precept and example are warning the settler against the perils of exclusive cereal growing, which is still booming.

It is idle, therefore, to bid the farmer get busy. He is busy now, and already overwrought amid forces and tendencies that are sweeping his children on to the pursuits of the city and luring away his imported help. The Mail and Empire rightly sees that rural conditions are growing more inviting, but "back to the land" is yet rather a real-estate slogan than a real current of population. To establish that will take time.

What, then, is to be done? A lowering of prices would only immediately aggravate the situation by further discouraging production. Does there not seem scope for such re-adjustment of fiscal and monetary conditions as will tend to restore the equitable distribution of population between city and country? Then public school systems must recognize the pre-eminence of agriculture and qualify for its pursuits, at least on a parity with others. The unified efforts of federal and provincial governments to stimulate agriculture focus public attention upon its conditions, and will, in time, compel the more speedy realization of long-needed and overdue fiscal and educational reforms. In the farm home let there come a wholesome recognition that its life and character constitute the true ideal rather than the almighty dollar and the city whirl. Let the heads of every farm house strike a new note of respect for the farm and domestic life with their substantial and enduring advantages, preserving in the country a worthy type and character of its own. The public security of Canada rests not in sky scrapers. Its foundations abide on the farm.