

The Wrong Kind of Immigration Agents.

It is undoubtedly a fact that the scarcity of good farm help is seriously hampering farm operations, and making farm life more of a drudgery than it should be.

The situation is simply this: The manufacturers have far larger profits in their business than the farmer, consequently they pay much higher wages, which attracts many of the brighter and better men from the country to the towns and cities. The opening up of the Northwest has also been a large factor in drawing away a very desirable class of farm labor.

It may be that the Canadian farmer is more conservative in business methods than other employers, but it is difficult to systematize farm work and to know what a day's work should be. The same work differs with changing conditions and according to the thoroughness with which it is done. Heavier farm teams and faster-working implements would facilitate the work and reduce the wage account. Much time is lost by not properly planning the work so that every move will count and no time be lost.

Another cause of the scarcity of good farm help is the sadly deplorable fact that the youth of the present is becoming more and more averse to physical labor, not yet realizing that mental effort is far more exhausting and draws far more heavily on the resources of nature than does the weariness caused by manual labor.

Notwithstanding all the eloquent sentiment expressed in regard to the calling of agriculture, we do ourselves and our calling an injury by not, in many cases, admitting the fact that quite a large percentage of the farmers have not as yet set up a sufficiently high standard as to their dignity and power from the commercial, the social and intellectual standpoints.

Where the immediate remedy lies is a difficult question; it appears to me it must be found outside of our own people. We must not only look to, but go to the Old World for help. The fertile fields of older Canada should be tilled by the agricultural laborer from Europe, guided by the experience of our farmers here. To get this, we should have in those lands agents specially qualified to find and pick out just the right stamp of emigrant to send. I do not know anything about the success of the work done by our present oversea agents in other lines, but this every farmer knows: We do not get as good a class of agricultural labor as is available.

In my opinion there would be just as much good business in a man who wanted to found a pure-bred herd sending over to select the foundation stock a lawyer, a journalist or a politician, as there is in sending any of these to select the right kind of laborers for the farm.

Wentworth Co., Ont.

MURRAY PETTIT.

Expediting Farm Operations.

As I am not troubled with a scarcity of applications to work on the farm, I might not be a good person to write up this subject, and yet, perhaps, from my peculiar situation, I can throw considerable light upon the scarcity of farm labor, and it seems to me the whole question hinges on the undoubted fact that it is human nature for people to want to live where there is a crowd. It is the mission of many farmers to accumulate some wealth and then retire to a town or city to spend their last days, and this desire to live in town or city seems to take hold of mankind, and especially womankind, and probably it is here where we find the reason why so many have moved to town—the desire of the female part of the family for town life. That it is not a distaste for farm labor which makes a scarcity of help on the farm I should be able to show, as I have always a great many applications from people to work for me, but my present farm is all inside the corporation of the town of Tillsonburg, and the men have all the advantages of town life without some of its disadvantages. I keep four or five men the year round, and through harvesting have had seven, so that scarcity of farm help does not apply here. Neither do I pay extremely large wages; but a man living out in the country is better off and has a better chance to save money at \$50 a year less salary than he can live on in town, especially if he has to rent a house, buy his wood, etc. Aside from this, his necessities do not cost him any more in town, but the opportunity to spend is greater, and even a strictly temperate man will still spend a good deal in little things throughout the year in which he would not be likely to indulge himself in the country. In fact, I know of hardly any laborers in the town that are saving much money. It seems to me really deplorable that men on steady wages and in their prime are not laying by anything at all against sickness and old age, and, therefore, have to continue to labor as long as they can move at all. In fact, I know some long-established industries that are greatly handicapped that have to give work to their old laborers—men who should have laid aside for old age years ago, but as they have

nothing to live on they are given work by their old employers when younger and smarter men are worth nearly double on account of their greater activity and more up-to-date methods. As regards the bearing of the common-school education upon the farm labor question, I do not think it has anything to do with it. I really do not think it would be any better if more agricultural subjects were taught to the young, especially to those under fifteen years old, as those that live in the country would not be likely to be much interested in any subjects taught in the school at that age, as they get enough of the farm without being taught some simple thing at an early age. These subjects might be more interesting in a city school than they would to children brought up on a farm. I look upon education as simply to expand the child's mind, and besides giving it the ability to read and write and understand things, the main object should be to develop the reasoning and thinking faculties. I know when I was a boy at school studying Euclid, my first impression was that it was quite useless; in fact, I was inclined to look upon it as simply a subject to make more bother for the pupil, but I was not long studying Euclid before I got interested in it, and now I consider it one of the best subjects to be taught in schools, with the why and wherefore to be looked for, and the thinking and reasoning faculties to be developed. That many from the country enter the professions I do not think is solely due to the choice of the young people themselves, but in many cases the desire of the parents to see some of their children enter into professional life, is what puts many into that branch in towns and cities. A man with several boys would find it a great difficulty in putting them all on farms, and no farmer would desire to see his sons go out with the expectation of laboring for a living. The result is that many farmers that have not the prospect of starting their sons on farms of their own incline them to take an education and enter a professional life. Of course, with farm labor somewhat scarce, those farmers who engage their help by the year, and who have a reputation of using their men well, are the ones that are not likely to be bothered so much in wanting farm help. They must have their living all the year around, and should be used like men, and I do not see that we can ever hope to have a too-plentiful supply of farm laborers until the towns and cities are overstocked with laborers, because it seems to be human nature for so many to want to live in town if they can make a bare existence, and many farmers who have not been able to live in town entirely retired, sell or rent their farms and take up some light occupation in town. This, of course, withdraws more laborers from the country. I think farmers may well face the question and calculate upon having to pay the present scale of larger wages than we used to pay some years ago. The question with the farmers, then, from a business point of view, is to make that year's labor bring in a larger return to him. This can be done in many ways—by planning the work and taking up special lines that will bring in a larger revenue. If it is crop rotation, we can save much labor; for instance, I would take a piece of land, manure it heavily through the winter for corn. Grow a big crop of corn, and, if the land is well manured and well drained, the crop will grow faster, and I put my corn in the silo early enough so I can put wheat upon the corn ground without plowing it. We seed down with the wheat; we cut the hay off the field, or pasture it for one or two years. This will make one plowing of the field in three or four years, depending on how long the grass is kept on it. Then, supposing cows are kept, instead of keeping cows giving three or four thousand pounds of milk a year, the man should keep cows giving six or eight thousand pounds milk a year; the same in whatever line of farming may be taken up more particularly. Not only will the labor bring a better return, but the men are always much more interested in things that are above the average, quite as well as the farmer himself. Where the farm is large—like ours—we run one four-horse team, one three-horse team and two other teams, and, with the large implements, two men will do the work of four. We have a riding plow; a cart to fasten on the big wide harrows, and the double-rowed corn cultivator has a seat on. Our drill is twelve feet wide, and nearly all our implements are made to ride upon, so that really a man working on the farm has nothing like the hard work he had a few years ago.

Norfolk Co., Ont.

GEO. RICE.

WHEN YOU SELL YOUR FARM YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEE IT PASS INTO THE HANDS OF A MAN WHO KNOWS HOW TO FARM. HE'S THE MAN WHO READS THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE AND HOME MAGAZINE. AN ADVERTISEMENT IN OUR "WANT AND FOR SALE" COLUMN WILL BRING YOU IN TOUCH WITH HIM.

Co-operative Purchase of Implements.

A writer in an American journal makes the statement that "one of the greatest aggravations of the farmer is his hired help." Now, whether I would go quite so far as to use the word "aggravations" I am not quite prepared to say, for after many years of experience with hired help on the farm, I can look back with pleasure when I think of some of the good, honest, faithful fellows I have had in my employ for several years at a time usually. But I have had a few poor ones also, that were an exasperation in more senses of the term than one.

Truly the farm labor problem is a serious one, and is crippling the husbandmen greatly in Eastern Canada. At present there is such a scarcity of laborers that only the necessary work of each day and season is accomplished (the extra touches very frequently have to be left undone), and even then farm life almost savors of drudgery, especially in sections where dairying is the chief line of farming. Why this condition of things? Is farming not so profitable as in days gone by? Yea! more so. Are our farm homes not so comfortable, or has the farmer fewer privileges than formerly? I think he has more. Then why this condition of affairs on our farms, when we see other occupations and professions overcrowded? To my mind there are several reasons. Our rural school education in the past has had a tendency to lead the child's thought and ambition away from farm life. It fits him for any other profession than farming. To the ambitious youth the farm may seem slow and dull, and he becomes imbued with the idea that in the city is the place to make a great name, to get rich quickly, etc. But, alas, how many get disappointed! They soon are lost amid the whirl and bustle of city life, and before middle life they wish they were back on the old farm again.

Our great Northwest has been a factor in taking many of our best young farm hands from us. Free lands, and the possibility of having a home of his own, have lured many a bright young fellow, with brawny arm and a firmly-set purpose, from Eastern to Western Canada. Nor can we blame them. While we have great possibilities in Eastern Canada, yet to the saving, industrious lad there are greater ones in the West; and to the West they have gone and are going. The great diversity of farm work, pleasant and unpleasant; the employment for only a few months per year, seeking new quarters every six months or so; long hours and in some cases small pay: all these are factors that have sent our young men to seek work in other channels, where there was not such a diversity of work, requiring so much general knowledge as farm work demands; constant work, at a steady wage, with the assurance that their day of labor is to be only 10 hours or so, are also inducements.

I believe this thing will right itself in time, as I believe the tendency is growing to get back to the land, and while in the last decade the migration was from the farm to the city, now are there not signs that the order is going to be reversed? The farmer's occupation has a higher standing among the professions today than formerly, and rightly so, for he is the producer of a high-class article—that of food for the human race. And while farming still consists largely of plowing, sowing and reaping, etc., yet the knowledge and intelligence required is such as to make it a high-class profession. Let our rural schools give us more nature studies, such as are given in our consolidated schools, bringing the child in touch with the why and wherefore of natural laws. By studying nature he learns to love her, by loving nature he learns to love the farm, and loving the farm he stays with it. To relieve the present condition of things, we must work more on the co-operative plan, using labor-saving machinery, which represents too much capital for every small farmer to invest independently. Co-operative investment by three or four farmers in such implements as corn harvesters, manure spreaders, corn planters, rollers, etc., will assist very materially in economizing labor. Much can be done also by systematizing and planning our work better, aiming to do everything in season; by enlarging our fields, using three or four horse plows, harrows, etc., thereby enabling one man to do nearly the work of two; by shortening the hours of labor, for it has been proved time and again that man will do more work, and keep it up longer, working a 10-hour day than a 12-hour day; and by more convenient arrangement of stabling. Especially let our farm homes be convenient, not unnecessarily large, and so arranged as to save steps; female help is harder to get than male help, as a rule. But I believe the immediate solution of the problem will be to secure more of the experienced farm laborers from the British Isles, Sweden and Denmark. I have had a number of these men in my employ, and I found them good, thorough workers, adapting themselves to our ways and conditions very quickly. Some of the inexperienced help we would be as well without. If some better scheme could be devised than we have at present to get these men, it would be a boon to the farming community. If a number of farmers in a community would appoint one of their number to go across to England, Scotland or Ireland, at say end of May or October, they could secure many such men, that would be not only of value as farm servants for a time, but would make good citizens, and help fill up our growing country with the right class of settlers, instead of the undesirable foreigners that are foisted on us.

I had the pleasure of being in Glasgow on the 30th