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EDITORIAL.

GIVE THE RURAL SCHOOL A NEW TREND.

It is Woe, declared the prophet, when all men speak well of me, because that meant settling down into a condition of hopeless content. This has been the soporific bane of the public school, particularly that great section of it in which the sons and daughters of the country receive their training in the fundamentals, and indeed where most of them finish their "schooling." We trust that a recent announcement that the Ontario Department of Education is inaugurating changes in relation to the Departmental Examinations portends a movement in the direction of improvement. The significance of the proposal lies in the separation of the Departmental from the University Boards of Examiners. Heretofore, as we understand it, the same Board, consisting chiefly of University men, set the Departmental as well as the University examinations. In future, the Departmental Examination Board is to consist of men selected from the staffs of the Model and Normal Schools, the faculties of education, the Inspectors of High Schools and Continuation Classes, and the Inspectors of Public and Separate Schools. As a consequence, instead of being known as District and Junior and Senior teachers' examinations they will be respectively known as the entrance examinations into the Normal and Model Schools, and into the Faculties of Education. To our mind, the hope of this change exists in the expectation that it may prove more than one in name only, and result in the initiation of a general reform, whereby the status of the public schools will be raised, making them more of an educational unit instead of what has befallen them with their abbreviated curricula as subservient feeders of the High Schools, which, in turn, are moulded to suit the ideas of the University and a bunch of "professions," while the greater profession of Agriculture and rural affairs have been practically ignored. How could such a policy prove other than detrimental to rural-school interests?

We are glad to note that the force of this reasoning commends itself to the judgment of a journal like the Toronto News, which devotes so large a share of its editorial space to the consideration of educational topics. From a recent issue we quote the following observations, which will assuredly commend themselves to all who appreciate the value of the rural public school as an educational agency:

"Fifty-eight per cent. of the whole school population of Ontario, according to the Report of the Provincial Department of Education, attend its country schools. Only five per cent. reach a High School. Consequently, an exceedingly small proportion of the scholars attending rural schools receive any other school instruction. This condition of affairs is not in itself unsatisfactory. On the contrary, country schools should give the best possible education to children who live in the country. The point emphasized beyond all controversy is the importance of the rural school.

"What is the present character of the rural schools of Ontario? They are said to be inept as related to the life and work of the people. The curriculum of the rural school, it is alleged, is planned to send the pupil as rapidly as possible to a High School. This end is attained in contradiction to the real function of the country school, which is to furnish its pupils with as thorough and complete an education as possible, fitting them to understand and deal with the conditions by which they are surrounded. An editorial in a recent issue of 'The Farmer's Advo-

cate,' discussing the character of the rural school, says that even advanced pupils display inability to apply their knowledge to practical affairs. Proceeding, 'The Advocate' says: 'Beyond any question, the public-school influence drives the country youth directly in large numbers to the town. It fails to give them any appreciation of the advantages of rural life and nature, or to fit them to be more successful in rural pursuits.' Such a statement, from a source so well informed on the subject, is strong evidence that the general trend of instruction in the rural school cannot be in the right direction.

"It is not to be supposed that there are not trustees, inspectors and teachers connected with the rural schools of Ontario who appreciate and aid in carrying out the proper work of a country school. The main difficulty seems to be that the country school has not been regarded as an end in itself, but on the contrary has been treated as preparatory to a High School. It is not urged that rural education should be placed on a lower level than it is at present. It should be made a better education, inspired by other ideals which, to be effective, must be felt by trustees and inspectors, as well as teachers. The country public school, as it ought to be, is one of the most powerful training instruments, if not the most powerful training instrument, in the educational policies of a nation."

FROSTED WHEAT FOR EASTERN FEEDERS.

Reliable Western advices indicate that there are quite a few million bushels of frosted wheat beyond Lake Superior this year which will be at a discount, and some of it altogether worthless for milling purposes. Not all this crop will be threshed, but doubtless a large part of it will, and, owing to the improvidently small number of live stock kept by Western farmers, the supply of feed will greatly exceed the local demand. Here is a case where the Westerner's misfortune may prove the Eastern farmer's opportunity. Throughout Ontario and parts of Quebec feed is generally scarce, with prices climbing for everything from hay to bran. Twenty-three-dollar bran, twenty-eight-dollar shorts, eighty-five-cent peas, seventy-five-cent corn, eighty-cent barley, and fifty-cent oats, are the kind of values staring us in the face and threatening to sink the bottom out of feeding profits. Combined with and resulting from these extravagant values of feedstuffs is the more or less general desire to sell stock this fall, thereby depressing prices for animals, which, could they be carried over winter, would command tempting prices next spring. Under these circumstances, why should the Ontario and Quebec stockman and dairyman not have the advantage of the surplus feeding grades of wheat in the West, to the mutual advantage of buyer and seller? Frosted wheat has a very considerable feeding value. Henry, in "Feeds and Feeding," appraises its feeding quality almost as high, pound for pound, as that of good wheat. The main thing necessary is to get the trade started. The railway companies have a grand opportunity to perform a substantial service in the present emergency by providing special rates and facilities for the winter shipment of frosted wheat. No doubt the Dominion and Provincial Governments will lend willing aid through their respective Departments of Agriculture by putting purchaser and seller into touch with the chief sources of supply and demand. Eastern farmers with friends in the West should correspond without delay. There are some good openings for business.

THE FARMER'S YEAR.

Notwithstanding the capricious character of the weather conditions of the spring and summer of the present year, the farmers of Ontario and the other Eastern Provinces, as a whole, are in a position to reassure themselves as to financial prospects. It is true that in some districts owing to protracted drouth at a critical period, the supply of fodder for stock is distressingly short, and in these sections, the reduction of the number of animals kept or the purchase of feed, at high prices, appears inevitable. But this condition applies to only limited areas, while in other sections the opposite extreme of weather has been experienced, the unusually wet and cold weather having unduly delayed the ripening and harvesting of the crops, which, however, have mostly been secured in fair condition. Yet, in by far the larger proportion of these Provinces the crops in nearly every line have been fairly well up to the average in yield, the chief exception being the oat crop. The hay crop was not heavy, but, for the most part, was saved in unusually good condition, so that, in the case of those who have these two classes of foods to sell, the remarkably high prices prevailing will make up for the lack in quantity.

Owing to a partial failing of the pastures for a while, the milk flow in cows was seriously checked, but the late rains refreshed the grass and increased the milk supply unexpectedly, while prices for milk, butter and cheese, and indeed for nearly everything the farmer has to sell, have ruled so high, and promise to continue to do so, that he has little cause to complain of the conditions that face him. It is, we believe, safe to say that at the present time, while what appears to be a temporary financial stringency in commercial circles is causing some uneasiness, farmers, as a rule, are in comfortable circumstances, and, with reasonably good management, need have no anxiety as to the outlook.

It has been the common experience, when feed has been scarce, that, by economy in dispensing it, the supply has held out better than was expected; but, with abundance in store, it has nearly, if not quite all, been used. And so, by the judicious handling of supplies and the use of good judgment in purchasing and mixing foods, and the disposal of the least desirable of the stock on hand, the winter may be weathered more safely than is anticipated. It is a time to weed out inferior-producing cows, but care should be exercised to hold onto the more profitable ones, for it is practically certain that dairy products will continue to sell at a premium, and that good cows will be dear and hard to secure next spring. The mistake of selling the cows when feed is scarce was made by many farmers in the Maritime Provinces a couple of years ago, and now that feed with them is plentiful and market prices for dairy products abnormally high, cows are scarce, and cannot be bought, except at very high figures.

The secret of success in carrying the stock through the coming winter profitably will depend upon making and keeping their quarters comfortable, and using good judgment in feeding, so as to make the most of the supply on hand and of that which may be purchased. And the secret of success in making the most of the product of the herd and the farm lies in paying close attention to the quality of what one has to sell and placing it on the market in the most attractive form and condition. The best and the most attractively presented will always sell most readily and for the highest prices.

As has hitherto been pointed out in these columns, the season will re-emphasize with unmistakable force, the necessity of greater care in the