

Prison Reform

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In Manila, Philippine Islands, there is a great prison in which are confined almost two-thirds of the prison population. In 1904 a penal colony was opened on Iwahig with forty-two men from the central prison. This number was speedily increased to one thousand "colonists."—Mark the word! Among those who have left the colony at the expiration of their sentence, or who have been pardoned, not a single individual has reverted to a life of crime. This is remarkable when it is remembered that the "colonists" were of the hardened criminal class—murderers, robbers, and the like.

The colony was started with the purpose of giving the prisoners a chance to make good. It was felt that the principles of self-government and self-support would be as effective in rebuilding the lives of criminals as they were in building the lives of young people in the George Junior Republics.

The colony has more than 100,000 acres. It is an island from which it is practically impossible to escape, but even if there were opportunity to get away few of the colonists would take advantage of it. They find it more profitable to remain, for they can pass from grade to grade in the service, and even the worst of them is able to look for ultimate pardon and freedom as the result of consistent good behavior. On arrival at the colony the workers are at first restricted to the barracks zone. On showing power to reform they may be removed to the home zone—in which they live in small houses along with their families. Later on they may get into the free zone, where they live on their independent small farms—which they work on shares with the government. From the beginning, each "colonist" works but a part of the day for the government. The rest of the time he can give to earning money for his family, or for use after his liberation. All the officers but nine are "colonists." The executive council is elective, and the punishments meted out to offenders, though severe, are just. The chief of police for a time was a murderer. Having by good conduct merited a pardon he returned to his native town and reorganized the police force. The success of the colony as a moneymaking proposition has not yet been assured, but it surely has been a maker of men—and that is the important thing. The ordinary prison—the prison of Western Canada—cuts a man off from all opportunity for self-development just at the time when his only hope lies in such development. The ordinary prison is a huge failure. It is constantly sending forth men who are a menace to society. Should we not unite in urging such prison reform as will make it easy for fallen men to become once more useful members of society?

Western Growth

At times we all grow discouraged. We hear the words depression and stringency until we begin to believe there is nothing but blue ruin ahead. It is like taking a tonic to read a little table of Western productions in 1913. Here it is:

Wheat	\$94,000,000
Oats	14,500,000
Barley	6,000,000
Flax	11,000,000
Cattle, Hogs and Sheep...	24,000,000
Potatoes, Hay and Roots..	13,500,000
Dairy Products	5,000,000

Total Farm Products ... \$168,000,000

A parallel illustration of growth is the case of the greatest local Life Assurance Co. The Great West had over thirteen millions more insurance than in 1912, and the income was increased by over two million dollars.

These figures show that in spite of occasional hardship caused by indiscretion progress has been abundantly evident. The West is all right.

Growth of Sentiment

A political platform has at least one value. It crystallizes public sentiment. Evidently one of the parties in Western Canada believes the people are in favor of the referendum, woman suffrage, the abolition of the retail sale of liquor. That is surely a great advance on the beliefs of twenty years ago. It seems also that all parties in the West are in favor of free agricultural implements, and lower duties generally for farmers. When people are only bold enough and patriotic enough to express their honest convictions the politicians are sure to get into line. Although the voice of the farmers has not been loud enough to reach Ottawa, after redistribution there will be a scurry to grant all just demands.

The New Education

Nothing that has appeared recently is more illuminating than the report of the Royal Commission on Industrial Education. Dr. Robertson, the chairman, has just paid a visit to Western Canada, and his addresses in Winnipeg, Moose Jaw and Lethbridge have aroused general interest and enthusiasm. Evidently the secondary school must change its methods and its attitude if it is to accomplish the high purpose for which it was intended. There are 387,000 Canadian children between 14 and 18 who should be in school, and if the schools were offering the bill of fare they should, at least, 200,000 of these children would be attending classes. To transform the secondary schools into institutions which will provide vocational, as well as cultural education will require an immense outlay of money, and the discovery and employment of an army of instructors, not now in sight, because there has been no demand for them. If the recommendation of the commission, that the Federal government give to the provinces \$3,000,000 a year for the purposes of vocational education, be carried into effect, the financial difficulties will be overcome. Time will provide the instructors. Winnipeg has shown what is possible in a few years. Courses are now given in domestic science, needlework, dressmaking, home economics, drawing (mechanical, freehand, architectural), iron work, wood work, painting, printing and half-a-dozen other lines—and this is but the beginning. The evening classes alone provide instruction to 1,500 people. If Canada is to hold its place with Denmark, Finland, Prussia, France, England, or, indeed, with any of the modern civilized nations it must wake up. We are hopelessly behind in the matter of education. We must not only protect ourselves against illiteracy, but must make certain that our young people possess intelligence, practical ability and co-operative power. It is comparatively few people who attend a university, but there are thousands who would attend secondary schools if the right bill of fare were provided. The following from a contemporary magazine, discussing the place of the agricultural college (which is but one department of the university) seems to meet the situation pretty accurately:

Agricultural colleges, such as exist today in Guelph, Ont.; Winnipeg, Man., and Saskatoon, Sask., fail to educate the farmers of the province. These colleges produce experts, who may help to educate the farmers, but the colleges themselves do not. In the very nature of the case they should not be expected to do it.

Take Ontario, for example, where there are 175,000 farmers. Not more than five per cent. of them ever had or ever will have a chance to attend the one agricultural college in the province. The other 165,000 farmers must get their farming education elsewhere, or go without.

The agricultural college is useful, but it does not produce an educational generation of farmers. The people of any province who think it will are doomed to the disappointment which has come to the people of Ontario. Professor Robertson makes this absolutely clear in his report on "Industrial Training and Technical Education." (See Part II. p. 344).

What, then, is more necessary than agricultural colleges? The answer is simple. A university is a fine institution, and every province should have one; but the great majority of boys and girls get their training at a high school. Applying this principle, there should be rural high schools for farm boys and girls. In Ontario, at least half of the present high schools and collegiate institutes should be turned into rural high schools. As a preparation for these courses, elementary agriculture should be taught in all rural schools.

Ten county agricultural schools have been established in Wisconsin, and a recent act provides for twenty more. North Dakota makes a special grant to any high school providing a special course in agriculture, manual training and domestic science. Carolina, in 1911, provided for "county farm life schools," which embody all the features of a rural high school. In Massachusetts, cities and towns may establish independent agricultural schools and the State pays half the cost of maintenance.

Agricultural colleges train experts for other agricultural colleges and schools; rural high schools train farmers' boys and daughters for actual farm work.

A Question of Honor

It is a great lesson which President Wilson has just given to the American people. He has impressed upon them the fact that a nation must keep its word. The lesson is not for Americans alone, nor for that matter for nations alone. It is for all classes and parties within a nation. We need the lesson in Canada at the present time. We need it in our politics. If as a nation we have so far been able to keep our word, no one will pretend that either party in provincial or federal politics has even pretended to live up to its professions. The use of the word platform usually creates a smile of derision. Indeed the nature of the legislation that is enacted is considered as of secondary importance. It is administration that counts. There are now many excellent laws that are inoperative because of the apathy or wilful disregard of the parties responsible for their enforcement. It is comparatively unimportant what the statutes say with regard to the sale of liquor, bribery at elections, employment of children. It is of the greatest importance that the officials of a government enforce the provisions of the various acts with sincerity and goodwill. After all it is moral character that tells.