

# THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE

## AND HOME MAGAZINE

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### Editorial.

#### Borrowing Wealth.

The many substantial, commodious farm-houses and barns to be seen throughout the country are, perhaps, the most convincing testimonials to the productivity of Western soils. They speak of wealth taken from the land and converted into homes of brick, stone and wood. They are properly the first fruits of the virgin plain, and they stand as monuments to her prolificacy. They also stand as interrogation marks, if one reads their meaning aright. They ask the question, "What has been returned to the land in compensation for this production of wealth?" The unspread manure piles answer nothing, the bare fallows answer nothing, the small fields of grass answer a little, the few head of stock on the small pastures answer a little, and the growing fields of grain plainly say that the capital account of the farmer—the fertility of the soil—is not on the increase, and the remaining amount is being held tighter and tighter, awaiting some evidence that interest is to be paid on amounts already borrowed. The history of farming in America is replete with examples of exhausted lands through overcropping and under-feeding. Fifty to seventy-five years has sufficed in some sections to so deplete the soil of fertility and infest it with weeds that it has had to be abandoned. The question is not are our methods sufficiently improved to guard us against such a contingency, but are they such that our soils will continue to increase in productivity? Assuredly not, when the bare fallow is the only method employed to stimulate plant growth, for that is but a laxative to liberate plant food, not a means of adding to its supply.

The success of any business depends largely on the care taken of the capital invested in it. In farming, the soil represents capital, and it requires just as diligent care as though it were actual cash. Just as a business man increases his capital that his returns may be larger, so should the farmer increase his capital stock in order that his income may not be lessened. The business man usually increases his capital in size; the farmer may increase his in size and in kind. There are limitations to the extent of acres a man may own, but the limit of their production is constantly extending, and to make it extend is the duty and privilege of the farmer. How to increase the productivity of the farm is the problem in the education of a farmer. It is vastly more important than being able to calculate the number of acres in a certain area, although that is important. The latter can be learned at school; the other must be acquired by observation, by exchanging experiences, by reading agricultural literature, and the intelligent application of the knowledge so obtained means successful agricultural enterprises.

To let the capital account of the farm become reduced through lack of intelligent methods is not simply an unfortunate condition for the owner, it is worse—it is a crime against one's best self, it is an injury to one's family, and a reproach upon society. In these days of abounding opportunity there is little excuse for ignorance; one has no right to continue in wrong practices with regard to his soil. There are opportunities to become better equipped, and everyone is responsible for the use he makes of his opportunities. Grow grass! Plow down sod! Keep soil.

#### Short Orders.

The Tribune (Winnipeg), after investigation, thinks that there is a meat trust in Western Canada. Sirloin cut 18c. per lb., and 12c. for round steak, are some of the local prices; whole-sale dressed beef is 6½c. to 7c. in Winnipeg, according to the Commercial. What do farmers think when offered 2½c. to 3c. live weight for their beef cattle.

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The increases of salary (indemnity) to the fellows at Ottawa might be approved by the public if their representative earned it. A statesman so 'tis said, "does something for his country; a politician gets something"; and the wholesale increase of sessional indemnity all round places the members in the latter class. Many members are sent by farming constituencies, but few of those representatives take an intelligent interest in the work of the Department of Agriculture.

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A slight kick is being made that live stock did not have to spend more than a week at Winnipeg Fair. To the losers in the competition one week is long enough; it costs money to show live stock, an outlay from which the returns are uncertain. One week is ample for the fair; there is nothing to be gained by spreading it over a longer period. About one minute is a minute too long for some side-shows.

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It is easier to raise the members' sessional indemnity a thousand dollars than to give Alberta an experimental farm.

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Judging by the new issuance of certificates by the National Record Association, the printers must have been supplied with grocery-store wrapping-paper; butter parchment paper would have been more suitable. Certainly the coupons evidence much puerile effort, and resemble the trading stamp which the Government is asked to suppress.

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A Serious Omission.—We did not see the Department of Agriculture distributing little bags of No. 1 hard at the fair. The tea-biscuit and soap men did their best to supply the deficiency.

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If you partake of the directors' luncheon you are expected to wink at the side-show indecencies. Only a cad would criticise his hosts' other guests (the side show men.)

#### The Gambling Dives.

The summer-fair season in Alberta has closed with the most disgraceful gambling episode that has ever occurred in our Western towns. Wheels of fortune—or, more properly speaking, wheels of misfortune—loaded dice, and every gambling device that the inventive mind of man can devise, ran wide open on our fair grounds, while the police could not or would not see the infringement of the law, while officials in high places winked and kept silent, and while the exhibition managers profited from the ill-gotten gains of the gambling thieves.

Now we have an emphatic protest from an outraged public and an effort made to fix the blame where it belongs. To us there appears no ground for dispute. With those who sell the privileges for the exhibition must rest the responsibility. In their hands lies the power to regulate this matter; on their heads must rest the measure of the public censure.

The statement freely made in our papers that the privileges were sold on the distinct understanding that the purchaser must look out for the

police is disgraceful. Truly, the sight of an exhibition official pandering to a man whose business will, if the law is carried out, land him in jail, is a sight to make the angels weep and bring the blush of shame to every right-thinking man. Surely we can have in our police force men of backbone; in our municipal officers we must have men who look to the enforcement of the law, and for us to tolerate in our exhibition officials men who allow such gross misconduct as took place at some of our fairs, is simply taking the broad road to the ruin of our exhibitions.

To the plea for honesty and fairness we meet the old cry, "Where will the money come from?" We can only answer that the protest of the people shows where the necessary support can be had. We venture the assertion, that in every town in which these dives have been permitted, an appeal to the people would bring a ready response. Local patriotism is not dead; the heart of the people beats true; they want to see the shows a success, but they are unanimous on one point—that success shall not be bought by the toleration of vices that rob the people of their money, inculcate in the minds of our youth wrong ideas and ideals of life, and bring into our midst a band of men whose proper abiding spot is that place prepared for violators of our Canadian laws.

#### Experimental Farms and Seed Distribution

It might be assumed by some people that all had been said that might be said re the free-seed activities of the Dominion Department of Agriculture, and that as that branch of the work of spending the taxpayers' moneys is wedded to this sort of game, why bother about it?

One of the features of this scheme for burdening the mails with franked packages is that the bulk of the grain raised on the experimental farms at Brandon and Indian Head is shipped east to Ottawa in bulk, there divided into small lots, and sent out—to the farmers of Manitoba and the N.-W. T. Oh, no, they don't apply for small lots. A great deal of it goes to Ontario and to the Maritime Provinces and Quebec. So that seed more or less acclimated to the West is sent to be planted where it is not so acclimated. Extraordinary! What colossal brain ever devised such a perfect scheme to promote intermarriage between the grain tribes? The secret, reader, is that the farmers of Canada might forget that Ottawa is the official center of Canadian agriculture, and the small sample gift is a happy reminder, and keeps the recipient in touch with official agriculture.

Grains, like people and live stock, need to become acclimated before they do their best or yield their heaviest. Such being the case, what a waste of effort, then, is annually taking place by shipping grain grown for seed purposes away from the section to which it is best suited.

Unfortunately, there is a tendency in the Department, from the Minister down, to concentrate the work of the officials of the Department of Agriculture and the money to be spent in experimenting on the Provinces east of the Dominion capital. Undoubtedly, more votes are to be obtained East and West right now, but it is not too much to hope that the head of a Department—an educated man—would take a broader view of the needs of Canadian agriculture. Alberta wants an experimental farm, the Upper country of British Columbia needs a sub-station for experimental work with fruits, the Brandon Farm needs buildings, and the prairie experimental farms experiments with growing corn and clover for seed purposes and other experiments of practical benefit to farmers. These necessary projects wait, while the Dominion as a whole gets the benefit of land sales and homestead settlement. In another