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# THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE

AND HOME MAGAZINE

\* AGRICULTURE, STOCK, DAIRY, POULTRY, HORTICULTURE, VETERINARY, HOME CIRCLE.\*

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## Editorial.

### Our School Question.

No person will assert that our school system is perfect, and there are many who will assert that it is far from perfection, judging by the results. The farmer and business man have an unfortunate failing; they want to see results for money and time spent. It is asserted by some people, and with considerable truth, that the spelling, composition and writing of the school pupil of to-day is inferior to that of the pupil of twenty years ago; and also that the Old Country educated youth of fifteen is more thoroughly grounded in the three R's than his Canadian cousin of the same age and social status, but is inferior in such subjects as music, botany, physiology, and modern languages. There are several reasons why such may be so; chiefly those are as follows: The teaching profession is more easily entered in Western Canada than in Great Britain; teachers here are not as well paid as there; the Canadian teacher is too young; his or her judgment immature, and the feminine element is far too predominant.

In Ontario, teachers in the common schools are not well enough paid; in Manitoba and the Territories little fault can be found in that respect—\$40 a month is very fair remuneration for the lower grade teacher—the fault in Western Canada is that there is not marked enough difference between the salaries paid the different grades of teachers. We have no sympathy with the farmer or anyone else who, because the teacher's hours are from nine until four for five days a week, for 10½ months in the year, think that therefore salaries should be low, but believe in fair remuneration for efficient work.

Recently complaints have reached us that the Western-trained teacher is inferior in education and ability to enforce discipline, and that the barring of Ontario teachers is wrong. It certainly does not speak well for an educational system which permits or encourages the barring of better trained teachers from other Provinces in order to pander to a so-called Provincial pride; neither is it fair to the farmer and his children, the latter debarred, by distance, from the training of the best teachers, that permits to teach should be issued to mere children, who, in addition, lack proper training. There is no valid excuse for the foisting of inferiority on the country school, nor for the protection sought to be given against the Ontario trained pedagogue; if our Western-trained teachers are not sufficiently equipped to hold their own in competition, the sooner a change is made the better, if we are to expect any real educational progress to be made. We submit that it would be in better taste, and an advantage to the country, if the University Council would come down from the clouds of higher education and give some attention to the common schools, and insist that the public receive what they pay for and do not get.

At this date in our civilization the teaching standard should be uniform for all Canada; in fact, there should be no interprovincial bars in any of the professions, provided all come up to the standard agreed upon. It is a miserable commentary on our boasted progress, that inferiority

is protected; in business circles such would not be tolerated at all.

Lack of discipline is a great defect in our schools, due mainly to the lack of male teachers, owing to the low salaries offered. The loss of such an essential is bound to make itself felt in our national life; lack of discipline breeds disrespect for the law and the whole moral code. An educationist of note, Principal Auden, of Upper Canada College, said recently to the Ontario Educational Association, that the tyranny of examination was a serious hindrance to efficiency, that boys (and girls also) were examined when they were too young, examined too frequently, and in too many subjects, and declared that the mental gymnastic argument was overdone. Every day is to be heard from the offices of merchants, that clerks and stenographers are poor spellers, unable to figure quickly and accurately, and that in composition the help to be had is lamentably defective. It is fashionable just now to advocate the introduction of nature study and elementary work in agriculture into the already overloaded curriculum of our public schools, and a pertinent question is, "Where shall the pruning knife be used to make room for the subjects mentioned above?"

Quality has been largely sacrificed to quantity; the assimilative capacity of the child's brain has not yet been properly studied by educational departments, and the attempt has been and is being made to turn out pupils at sixteen or thereabouts whose education will be finished, instead of furnishing those pupils with a thorough training in the essentials which once possessed will enable the pupils to add to their education as they progress in life. We should endeavor to get away from the idea that the first years after leaving high school or college should be devoted to forgetting as fast as possible what was studied at such institutions.

### Experimental Farm Must Come.

The agitation in favor of establishing an Experimental Farm in Alberta continues to become more general. Ever since the "Farmer's Advocate" last year pointed out editorially the needs of such an institution, it has been freely discussed on every hand. There is, undoubtedly, great need for practical and intelligent experimental work under conditions such as prevail in the territory stretching along the east side of the Rockies. Had there been more reliable information available regarding the best varieties of cereals to sow, the harvest of 1903 would have been worth much more money to hundreds of farmers. Indian Head Experimental Farm is a mighty useful institution for Assiniboia, but it cannot tell Alberta farmers with any degree of assurance the best grains and grasses to grow, nor can it determine whether clovers and fruit trees can be cultivated satisfactorily in the sunny territory of the West.

Some towns along the C. & E. line have got up petitions favoring the establishment of the Farm, and Agricultural Societies and Boards of Trade have joined hands in this matter for the common good. It is to be hoped that these efforts will bear fruit speedily, for at no time in the history of any country is experimental work in the determination of the best crops to grow more necessary.

As would be expected, there is some difference of opinion as to where the farm should be located, but it is to be hoped that no local opposition will retard the stream of influence that is rapidly swelling in the public interest on this important agricultural question.

### Managing Hired Men.

It may be safely said that the greatest difficulty in connection with the labor problem to-day is not merely in being able to secure laborers, but in managing them properly after they are employed. Few men are born leaders of their fellow men, it is true, but the ability to properly manage hired help on the farm may be acquired and practiced very successfully by the exercise of a little common sense.

There can be no doubt that a great many difficulties that arise between employer and employed are due to lack of intelligence on the part of the latter, and to overcome them is not, of course, altogether within the power of the manager of laborers. On the other hand, it is very true that some men will get a great deal more work and satisfaction out of an employee than will others.

To begin with, men should be taught to take an interest in their work. No matter whether it be deepening a ditch or constructing a farm building, the one who can be induced to feel that he is responsible for a work that is worthy of being well done, will do better work than another not so encouraged. In this connection, too, every farmer should adopt the habit of teaching his men how to do things. It is not necessary to wait until a certain piece of work is about to be performed, to begin an explanation of how it ought to be done. Every farm should be to the hired man a school of instruction, fitting him for better work and higher wages.

Another strong factor in teaching hired men to be interested in their work is the adoption of a system of regular work, and the time at which the day's labors should begin and end. In seed time and harvest, including threshing, there is every reason for rushing work at the highest possible rate, but if men are to work from daylight until dark they should know it at the time of their engagement, and be paid accordingly. Nature will only allow a man to do so much, and if he must be kept going for sixteen hours he can certainly not do an honest hour's work every sixty minutes.

While it is only the observance of a sound business principle that farmers be exact in insisting that their men do honest work according as they were engaged, yet occasionally difficulties arise through men being expected to do an unreasonable amount of work in a short time. The hired man should not always be treated as a mere slave. Encourage him to rise above the level of those who by choice would be all their days hewers of wood and drawers of water for others, and thus aid in developing in Canada an enlightened and homogeneous agricultural people. Our fields are broad, and our acres plentiful, and is it not best to be educating a fellow man to become capable of erecting a happy home of his own, and to cultivate more of the unbroken prairie, even if you should be at the loss of a good man? There can be no nobler ambition among men than to help another to a more useful life.

### Ideal Farm Journal.

Enclosed find \$1.50, renewal subscription to the "Farmer's Advocate." We do not hesitate to say how well pleased we all are with the "Advocate," as we consider it the ideal farm journal. Yours very truly,  
Leavings, Alta. JAS. E. WALTERS.