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The Ontario Agricultural College Course.

To the Editor "Farmer's Advocate":

Sir,—I received my copy of your valuable paper for April 15th, and scanned its pages with more than ordinary expectancy. With the variety and usefulness of its contents, relating practically to every department of farming operations, I have no fault to find. Whether engaged in agriculture on a large scale or on a modest 50 or 75 acre farm, it must be conceded that so far as practical information goes, its contents are ample. But I do confess myself regretting that the letter of "Ex-Student," in the April 1st number, wherein he aired his views on the Ontario Agricultural College course of study, has thus far been allowed to pass without comment. A large and costly institution, projected and carried on in the interests of agriculture, towards the support of which farmers themselves contribute, it is a fair and proper subject for review in your columns. "Ex-Student" has evidently given the subject a deal of study, and he is entitled to our thanks for the vigor and fulness with which he has written. Whether we agree with him or not, it will be productive of good. In this enlightened age all public institutions, especially those of an educational character, are amenable to the X-ray of public discussion. If their procedure be sound, turning on the searchlight will only bring out the fact in bolder relief. If there be a tendency to dry-rot, or misdirection of policy, it will be disclosed, and the needed remedy may be applied. Results must tell the story sooner or later; wisdom is justified of her children. If changes be needed, they must come, or the institution will suffer. I am one of those who believe that the needs of the community in an age of publicity like ours must eventually shape the policy of public institutions to suit. Whether "Ex-Student" is one of those far-seeing discerners of the signs of the times, who in every era lead the way to improvement, remains to be seen. His letter is a welcome variation to the uniform chorus of praise of the Ontario Agricultural College, and calls the attention of farmers generally afresh to its purposes and management. It will start people thinking, and that itself is a gain. Now, I prefer to leave to some abler pen than mine to set forth to what extent or in what manner the length of course might, with advantage be modified, but what I do contend for is a reasonable amount of flexibility in the curriculum, keeping clearly and always in sight the greatest good to the greatest number. A limited percentage of our young men will be ambitious for a sufficiently advanced course to fit

themselves for professorships in similar institutions, which will continue to spring up for years to come on this continent, and the O. A. C. can surely continue to furnish that class of instruction and not allow them to drift to American institutions. Now, sir, permit me an aside just here to say that a few of our people—and "Ex-Student" has evidently caught the infection—are too prone to trot "across the lines" for their ideas and ideals. The distant fields of Uncle Sam's agricultural colleges and schools are not as verdant as they seem. In buildings and equipment some of them are simply immense, but they won't stand close scrutiny—for example, like the College farm at Guelph; as carried on under William Rennie and by his worthy successor in that department, Prof. G. E. Day. If any of your readers have had a glimpse at the wilderness of weeds and straggling grains designated experimental plots at some of these American institutions, they would come to appreciate, at a higher value, what we have at home; and if they traveled up and down a few States, they would get their eyes open to the fact that the general run of American farmers, notoriously in respect to live-stock rearing and general farm management, are so far behind the average Canadian that there is no prospect of their ever catching up. It will be a help if they continue to get a few more of their institutions well manned by Canadian graduates. "Ex-Student" is right in his contention that still greater scope and prominence should be given live-stock husbandry at the Guelph College. If a hobby is permissible at the institution, let it be in that department. The successful farmers of the country (the leaders) are those whose forte is live-stock rearing, and as your readers very well know, the permanent success of agriculture depends upon it.

The present popularity of the short (two weeks) courses by no means demonstrates their permanent value. As a sort of college advertisement or appetizer for something more substantial and thorough, they serve a purpose, but what is imparted cannot in the very nature of things be more than a smattering, and should be followed up by wider and closer study. Want of thoroughness is the bane of American education. Newspapers are already assuring us that the problem of expert judges for the fall fairs will be solved by the graduates of the two-weeks' course. Think of it!

With regard to the student labor on the College farm, I am not prepared to offer an opinion further than this, that it has afforded many a worthy young man, possibly not as well circumstanced as "Ex-Student," the means of helping to work his way through the course, and I have an idea that they were none the worse for it either, and if the excellent condition in which the Guelph farm is found is in any measure due to student labor, the authorities might do well to think twice before deciding on its abolition at the ipse dixit of "Ex-Student." One of the fundamental principles of true education is that we learn to do by doing, and just why that is not applicable in relation to the work of an agricultural college passes my comprehension.

Again, this writer says the students "gag" at being obliged to "grind biology." I quite agree with him that certain literary and other subjects may be unduly magnified, but let us not take fright at the bugbear of a big word, B-I-O-L-O-G-Y, which, as I understand it, simply means the study of plant and animal life. If study and experience have taught me anything, it is that a knowledge of weeds and their habits, fungous diseases and insect pests and how to combat them, are of vital importance. As the country grows older and farming becomes more specialized, a more thorough knowledge of these subjects will become absolutely imperative, as those engaged in fruit-growing already know, in very many cases to their sorrow and cost. "Ex-Student" possibly did not intend to brand these as subjects that were not "practical," and calculated to make an agricultural degree, the laughingstock of the farmer. In his zeal for reform, "Ex-Student" has not, it seems to me, given some of the points which I have mentioned the careful consideration which they deserve. There is a fair increase in the attendance of students at the O. A. C., but when we stop to consider the vast number of farmers in this Province whose sons should naturally be drawn there, and deduct those attending from other Provinces and countries, it is a matter for grave concern why an institution possessing so many general excellencies has not a very much larger attendance. Is it because of undue length of term and expense, lingering prejudices regarding the utility of that sort of schooling, or because the curriculum does not appeal to the father as calculated to help the son succeed on the farm?

In conclusion, I would therefore suggest the propriety of opening your columns to a fair discussion of this question, with suggestions as to what modifications or new features might be adopted that would lead to the College being more generally taken advantage of by the farmers' sons of Ontario, and to give it the same popular hold as a professional school for farmers that it seems to possess as an institution for experiment and research.

TRUTH SEEKER.

The Cost of the Manitoba Dairy Department.

(From our Manitoba and Western Edition.)

A letter from Prof. H. H. Dean, in another column, descriptive of the work, attendance and cost of the dairy department of the Ontario Agricultural College, will furnish food for thought to our readers, especially those who are taxpayers, when they compare the cost of the dairy department of Manitoba with the one of which Prof. Dean has control.

The "Advocate," in taking this matter up, knows no party, but claims the right to criticize the expenditures, both amounts and methods, in the department of our Provincial Government, whose aim should be to benefit, educationally and otherwise, that great constituency to which an agricultural paper must cater, namely, the farming community.

When taking up the question of the reorganization of Farmers' Institutes, the "Advocate" suggested the sending out of travelling dairies, and the abolition of the Dairy School, until such time as an agricultural college was started, when a properly-equipped dairy department should be established. That our contention is correct, no one who will look into the matter impartially and thoroughly will deny. The amount of money devoted to dairying in this Province is out of all proportion to the importance of that industry when compared with the lack of attention given to other more important branches of agriculture.

It may be urged that the Dairy Association has endorsed the school. Such endorsement is valueless, as it is prompted, if not made entirely, by interested parties. To illustrate more clearly the exorbitant cost of the Manitoba Dairy Department, we submit the figures below; in one column the amounts in the grants by the Provincial Department of Agriculture for dairying; the other the cost of the dairy school at the Ontario Agricultural College each year:

Year.	Estimates Dairying Manitoba.	Guelph Dairy School.
1898.	\$6,000.00	\$3,126.54
1899.	5,000.00	3,352.23
1900.	6,652.00	2,858.24
1901.	8,500.00	3,903.03
1902.	8,500.00

Prof. Dean states further that the average yearly net cost of running the experimental dairy department is an additional \$1,500 to \$2,500.

The Ontario people get value for their money, as is at once seen from the work done, the influence of which is worldwide. In marked contrast is that of the Manitoba dairy department, which runs a dairy school for three months, turning out about half a dozen certificated students each year, inspecting the factories and creameries, and in addition doing some judging at local fairs, besides lecturing at Farmers' Institutes.

The work of other dairy schools might be cited; that of Wisconsin, at Madison, will serve, however, as the work done there is the admiration of the dairy world. The dairy department of the Wisconsin school costs on an average \$12,000 a year, has 130 students in the regular dairy course, 20 pupils in the summer dairy school, 182 students from the short-course class in agriculture (who get instruction in farm dairying), conducts a creamery all the year around, employs 15 instructors, carries on experiments, and has given to the world those great achievements—the Babcock test, the Farrington alkaline test, the Wisconsin curd test, bacteriological content of milk, and the curing of cheese at low temperatures. What a vast difference in the returns for the money expended in dairying in Manitoba and Wisconsin!

As the gathered-cream system is more generally in vogue in this Province than elsewhere on the continent, familiarity with the oil test becomes essential to the creamery operator. The superintendent and butter instructor at the Manitoba school claim to be better posted on the oil test than are teachers at other dairy schools. That the outside dairy world is in such utter darkness is awful to contemplate. What are such men as Dean, Farrington, McKay, Decker, and the great Babcock, doing, when such ignorance (!) is rife in their dairy schools.

One of the strongest reasons advanced for a travelling dairy is that instruction could be given closer to the farmer's home on the care of milk from the time it is drawn until creamed, and the care of the cream, in which lack of knowledge or neglect is said by creamerymen to be their constant and greatest trouble. If travelling dairies are sent out, only qualified men should be in charge, graduates of a first-class dairy school.

A significant fact that may be mentioned in comparing the dairy statistics of Manitoba and the Territories, where Prof. Robertson employs only graduates of up-to-date dairy schools, is that the butter from the latter Province brought for the season, on the average, a little over a cent a pound higher than did the Manitoba product.