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EDITORIAL.

THE RURAL SCHOOL AND THE FARMER.

In pursuance of the general policy of the Department of Education, advantage is being taken of the present holiday season to carry out a number of important improvements in the grounds, building and equipment of many rural public schools in the Province of Ontario. This is commendable for the reason that some 58 per cent. of the total population of the country is reported officially as receiving its education in the rural school, and, therefore, not only decent, but attractive and comfortable quarters should be provided for so important a work. The habits of observation and ideals of youth are largely moulded by the character of the surroundings where their schooling is received. Unfortunately, in too large a proportion of cases the grounds and buildings have been in a notoriously disgraceful condition. If it further be true, and we believe it is, as the Deputy Minister of Education for Ontario (Mr. Colquhoun) lately observed that no country will rise higher than the level of its rural population, then it becomes us in every possible way to improve the character of the rural school, in its externals, its curriculum, and the nature of its teaching.

For years past the High School or Collegiate Institute has been idealized in the minds of the people, and the success of the rural teacher has been measured in the community by the number of pupils who could be crowded along to pass the Entrance Examination. Our young folk have been going in droves at the immature age of 12 and 13 years into the cities and towns, where the whole trend of education is away from the country and its pursuits. This tendency we believe to be costly for the pockets of the parents, not the best for the general up-bringing of the youth, and bad from an educational point of view for the reason that the efficient government and teaching of these schools is not likely to improve in proportion to their size and attendance, but rather the reverse. The individual scholar becomes lost in the mass, and receives less and less personal attention. Individual development disappears in a sort of general average. For this reason, many thoughtful parents, and students as well, have come to the conclusion that better results are attainable in a school of moderate size and attendance than in one where the roll ranges from 500 or 600 to 1,000. In the university, where the student may be assumed to be somewhat settled in his habits and purposes, the lectures are given for him, but whether or not he profits by them depends largely upon himself; but in public and High Schools a better system is necessary. Even in the case of Toronto University, some are beginning to question if it is not becoming too unwieldy for the best educational results, which are held to be not proportionate to the outlay involved.

We are not surprised to find in the United States a strong feeling taking root in the public mind against the schools, which have been growing bigger and bigger, with hundreds, and in some cases thousands, of little ones herded into one building. The physical and mental effects are bad, to say nothing about the questions of morality. "The huge High or Public School," observes one writer, "is not a credit to the intelligence of the community, which will soon cease to point with pride to these great masses of masonry devoted to educational purposes." Let Canada take warning in time.

It may be urged that Ontario has a system of continuation classes, given in response to the de-

mand for a more extended course of studies in the public schools, so that passing the Entrance Examination might not be regarded as the finishing point of the public-school course, thus depleting its attendance and lowering its standard. We find in the report of the Inspector of Continuation Classes (R. H. Cowley), for the past year, attention is called to the disparity in the amounts and rates per capita of Government grants to the continuation classes, compared with the more liberal assistance to the High Schools. He also points out that the curriculum of the continuation classes should be modified to encourage the pursuits of the farm and the interests of the farm home. "At present," he says, "the obligatory course of study is not even neutral in this respect. It rather inclines to draw the youth away from the farm and rural life. Not only are the examinations for matriculation into the university and for entrance to teaching distinctly provided for, but, through long force of habit and circumstances, these are made a special end in nearly all the secondary schools (High Schools and Collegiate Institutes) of the Province. To some extent, too, special attention is given to commercial subjects. While it may be claimed with some propriety that the studies tending in these directions are also of value in the education of the farmer, there is nothing in the required courses to incline the student to think definitely, or even to think at all, of farming as a desirable life-work. On the other hand, there is much in the definite aim of the school and the long usage of the school to cause him to gravitate away from the farm."

The present educational system, about which so much boasting has been done, is, therefore, convicted out of the mouths of those who are officially well qualified to testify. "Undeniably," adds Mr. Cowley, "our secondary schools have given the student a distinct bias towards the professions and mercantile pursuits. The very fact that the graduates of our rural schools have been forced to repair to towns and cities to obtain secondary education, has itself constituted a long-standing, serious and unadvisable discrimination against the progressive development of rural life." Clearly, then, the whole tendency of the public-school system has been antagonistic, rather than favorable, to the interests of agriculture, tending to depopulate the country and drive workers in a steady stream into the pursuits of the city. For these reasons, the improvement of the rural public school is indeed welcomed, but it must not stop with the building and a continuation class; the spirit and letter of the whole curriculum requires a general revision. It has been thought that the Consolidated School, such as has proved so acceptable as an object lesson or demonstration in portions of the Maritime Provinces, might solve the problem in Ontario; but since there is evidently little disposition to proceed by that method, we must take the line of least resistance, which we believe to be in the direction above indicated.

THE CLYDESDALE SITUATION.

There is perhaps little need of editorial reference to the discussion of the topic of Clydesdale registration, which, to the unsophisticated, has evidently assumed the condition of a tangled skein, requiring skillful handling in its unravelling, and will probably need to be approached in a spirit of compromise by one if not more of the parties to the settlement. The question is handled in a commendable spirit in his letter in this issue by our Scottish correspondent, who is intelligently familiar with the situation, and the only object in this paragraph is to direct the attention of

interested readers to his explanation, which will at least serve to throw some light on the condition of things in this connection as they exist, and may be helpful in working out a deliverance from what has at present the appearance of a dead-lock.

WINTER WHEAT IN ONTARIO.

While winter wheat is a somewhat less sure crop in Ontario than some of the spring grains, owing to its being exposed to the rigors of our winters, occasionally suffering from alternate freezing and thawing and other unfavorable weather conditions in the early spring, yet it is seldom that winter wheat is a general failure in this Province. The cold, drying winds of the spring of this year had a killing effect on a considerable acreage which had come through the winter successfully, a good many fields being plowed up and re-seeded to other crops, but there are many fields in some districts, now ripening for the harvest, which give promise of yields of 25 to 35 bushels an acre, which is about equal to the returns in the average of former years, when wheat was the leading crop in most parts of the Province. While Ontario may not now successfully compete with the newer Western Provinces in the quantity or quality of wheat raised, and while, owing to the less valuable bread-making qualities of our wheat, we cannot expect as high prices as the hard varieties of the West command, yet our wheat always finds a ready market, at a fair price, to be mixed with the Western product, and it may yet be profitably raised to a limited extent, and has its place in the rotation of crops on many Ontario farms. The system of summer-fallowing for wheat, formerly so generally practiced in this Province, and which was expensive, since it involved three or more plowings and harrowings in the preparation of the land, and waiting two years for returns, is now followed only in exceptional cases and for special reasons, and the more economical system of plowing down a clover or other sod after a crop of hay has been harvested, or a few months pasturage by stock has been secured, is found to make an ideal preparation, provided the plowing is done early and is followed by frequent surface cultivation to hasten decomposition of the sod and conserve the moisture in the land, conditions essential to securing strong and vigorous growth of the plants and fitting the crop to endure the stress of winter freezing and chilling spring winds, should they come. But unless the land is in good heart and the weather conditions favorable to securing a well-pulverized and compacted seed-bed, it were better not to sow fall wheat, but prepare the land for a spring crop, which will in most cases prove a more profitable course.

In so far as the probabilities can be judged at the present time, the indications point to rather a serious shortage in the wheat crop of the world.

The United States Government report, issued on June 10th, indicates a probable deficiency in the winter wheat crop of that country of 100,000,000 bushels. According to an apparently carefully-considered article on the subject, in Everybody's Magazine for July, the London authorities state that the European shortage this year will be at least 120,000,000 bushels, as compared with last year, even if Russia should raise as much as in 1906, which is considered possible. The deficiency in Western Canada, a possible result of the month-late seeding season, may be 20,000,000 bushels, with a similar loss in India—all of which means that there is now a prospect of a possible shortage in the world's crop, as compared with 1906, of 240,000,000 bushels, unless the spring-wheat harvest should largely exceed the