

THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE AND HOME MAGAZINE.

THE LEADING AGRICULTURAL JOURNAL
IN THE DOMINION.

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Agents for "The Farmer's Advocate and Home Journal,"
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1. THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE AND HOME MAGAZINE is published every Thursday. It is impartial and independent of all cliques and parties, handsomely illustrated with original engravings, and furnishes the most practical, reliable and profitable information for farmers, dairymen, gardeners, stockmen and home-makers, of any publication in Canada.
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the fact that their roads are poor. A new law abolishes the office of Road Overseer and makes the townships responsible. Under a new permanent Highway Law, Washington is to spend \$955,000 this year on hard-surface roads. Wisconsin has a new State Aid Law and Commission, with a fat appropriation, to aid local municipalities in road and bridge building. Wyoming has initiated work on two spectacular "routes" across the State for the special benefit of automobilists. Every man from 21 years to 50 years in South Dakota is assessed \$5 a year for road and poll-tax purposes, and, upon petition of 10 per cent. of the electors, the County Commissioner may order a vote on a special tax levy of more than 5 mills for the next fiscal year, or a term not exceeding three years. To a great extent, California has abandoned the scheme of oiling the roads. In several States effective use has been made of the split-log drag on earth roads. At the Agricultural College, Kansas, the office of State Engineer was established, which furnishes free of cost plans and specifications for road and bridge work, drainage, and irrigation projects. All road taxes are paid in cash, and all roads are classified and maintained according to their importance. Good roads is the most talked of question in the State.

Who Makes Living Dear?

That considerable proportion of our population who are feeling acutely the increasing cost of living will find their questions answered in larger measure by Peter McArthur's current article, "The Innocent Investor," explaining how clever promoters load upon nearly all lines of industry enormous annual charges to make up interest or dividends on millions of dollars of watered stock pumped into reorganized industries, and sold to unsuspecting investors for hard cash, while the promoters take themselves to Europe, receiving their knighthoods, honors and all sorts of emolu-

ments. Then, any attempt to reduce profits of the respective industries to a level that would represent fair interest upon the intrinsic capital is met with howls and complaints about widows and orphans who will be deprived of returns upon the water they innocently bought from the promoters for cash.

What are you going to do about it? asks Mr. McArthur. Sure enough, what? One thing sure, we must get at the causes. We have several pretty clear ideas how this may be accomplished when the public get really awakened, really informed, and really in earnest. The security of these buccaneers of finance is a somnolent public opinion. We hope Mr. McArthur's articles will do something to wake it up.

The Importance of Promptitude.

There is a right and a wrong time for doing everything. Few people seem to realize that a day or two, sometimes even a few hours, makes a great difference in the outcome of many projects. Spring is here again, with its thousand-and-one things to be done in a rush. Every experienced farmer knows how much the success of the crop depends upon the time the seed is consigned to the ground. "The early bird catches the worm," is an adage which applies to seeding operations with all possible force; and in the case of the injudicious sower who goes on his land before the warm spring sun and the gentle breezes have dried the land sufficiently to make it crumble before the tillage implements, is a good example of the reverse, viz., "the early worm gets caught." Seeding is one of the operations in connection with crop-growing which must be done at the proper time, if the best results are to follow. There are few farms on which all the fields or portions of the farm become ready for seeding at the same time. By a little system and management, and by using wide implements, it is possible to get nearly all the seed incorporated in a good seed-bed at a most opportune season. As soon as the land is ready to work, the seed should be sown, as every day that the seeding is deferred means bushels less in the bins next fall, and the past season of feed shortage and high prices should serve to impress upon every stock-feeder and grain farmer the significance of short and full crops. A difference of a bushel or two per acre seems a small consideration on a few acres, but as the acreage increases until it takes in the millions utilized for the growing of cereal crops in our Dominion, its real import is plainly seen.

Seeding is not the only spring operation which must be done promptly. Spraying, the salvation of the fruit-grower, and the guarantee of quality in the harvest, must be attended to just at the time nature has advanced to the proper stage in the growth of foliage or in the preparation for fruiting. Buds do not always burst at the same date, neither do blossoms open or fall by the calendar. They depend upon the progress of the season, and must be kept under a watchful eye. "Shortly before the buds burst," "Just before the blossoms open," "Immediately after the blossoms have fallen and before the calyces close," are quotations which the experienced and wide-awake orchardist understands full well. It does not mean a few days or weeks before or after, but rather at a stated time to the day, almost to the minute. Under favorable conditions, blossoms may open very quickly, and, as was the case last year, they may fall almost in a twinkling. Such cases serve as illustrations of the value of doing things at the appointed time. The codling moth cannot be destroyed once the calyces have closed, and good fruit cannot be produced unless spraying is thoroughly done, and done when it should be.

Let every sower and every fruit grower make it a point to sow every field and spray every tree at the time when it is in the best condition to yield the greatest returns for the labor spent, and the groves of the country would creak under the heaviest weight of golden grain next fall that they ever carried, and the market would be supplied with the choicest class fruit, commensurate in price and appearance with that has ever been known. It has been said that the best work is done at the right time, and a farmer who is late in his work, but whose crops are good, is a fool, for the farmer who is "late" is a fool.

Tariff and Education.

"We are up against a moral feature of labor on the farm that will be hard to solve so long as wages and tastes of wage-earners remain as they are," concludes a thoughtful article in the Breeders' Gazette, headed, "Unreliable and Unprofitable Help." "Each year," we read, "the pressure for farm help increases, and wages advance, while the efficiency of the laborer declines. . . . It is a politician's threadbare argument that the increase of the number of factories in a farming district creates a market for his product and adds to the value of his land. He loses sight of the facts burned into farmers' sensibilities that, granting the increased demand for dairy products and garden truck, the factories rob him of the best laborers and increase the prices of wages demanded by the residue of cripples and aged who cannot stand the pressure of factory hours and grind. The nominal increase of values of lands on the tax duplicate increases the sum of the farmer's taxes, which he must meet out of the decreasing crops which the farm produces under the high-priced and less-efficient labor."

Young men and women flock to the factory centers, and very few return to the farm or dairy or kitchen. A few years in the whirl of machinery, dance halls, picture shows and vaudeville unfit all these laborers for the healthful, quiet, country life. They become gregarious in habits and averse to the rational, sensible living of well-ordered farm life, losing any love they may have had for reading sensible, practical books or farm journals. After hours, they seem unable to apply themselves to any rational or sensible work, study or enjoyment. They long only for the crowd they are separated from, as does a sheep shut away from its old flock.

"It is easy for university professors and settlement workers to turn out unworkable yet promising theories of attracting the country lads and lassies with interesting books, papers and plays, so charming that they will not leave the farm for the factory. But as yet facts and practice are against the best-spun theories we have. It is a problem of re-educating, teaching the lover of the vices and dissipations of the factory town to prefer the peace and quiet of the country. It is about as hard to do this as to induce the lover of strong drink to exchange that for buttermilk and water."

The man who penned those words knows what he is talking about. It is a comforting change from the superficial nonsense so often handed out in the name of advice and wisdom.

There are just two points we should like to press home in explanation of the conditions described. One is the effect of tariffs and other discriminatory uneconomic legislation in multiplying the farmer's problems and curtailing agricultural production. Politicians intent upon building up cities and impressive industries have assumed that the agricultural population was a stable community, which would go on producing, even if the cost of labor and living and implements were artificially raised to an indefinite extent. With the steadily rising cost of living, the effect, if not the nature of their mistake, is commencing to dawn upon them. Our second point is the need for a radically reformed rural education, which, by school-gardening and otherwise, will awaken and develop the child's interest in the science and vitality and wholesomeness of rural life and rural pursuits. Some such influence is needed to counteract the gregarious tendency, with its glittering but superficial appeal. The easiest way to keep weeds out of a field is to occupy the ground fully with something else. The way to fortify childish ambition against running amuck in hilarity and glitter and gloss is to direct it sanely and easily and wholesomely—but without suspicion of compulsion—towards something better worth while.

Farmer economic conditions and better-balanced rural education are, then, two cardinal suggestions towards improving farm wages and modifying the taste of wage-earners, to their own well-being and the good of the agricultural industry.

The country has built three transcontinental railroads and a network of subsidiary lines of steel, and is hardly needing just yet a national trunk highway for the motor-car people; but there is a need in nearly every county for a project of road improvement.