

have taken place in the local and provincial conventions, have a clear and definite idea as to what they believe will be for their own benefit and for the benefit of the country generally. Like the political parties, the organized farmers of Canada have their platform, which they announced to the world when they appeared in the halls of parliament at Ottawa on December 16 last, and they are not disposed to abandon their own platform for that of any political party, though if any political party chooses to adopt the platform of the farmers, they are welcome to do so, and can be sure of having the support of the farmers in carrying it out. At present, however, the platform of neither political party is acceptable to the farmers of the West. There are some things in the platforms of both parties of which the farmers approve, and others of which they disapprove, and if the people who take an intelligent interest in the affairs of the country are wise they will, when the opportunity offers, break away from the old custom of electing tried and true party men, who will stick to their party no matter what happens, and choose as their representatives men who, if they belong to either party, will be ready to vote against it and help turn it out of power if it betrays the trust of the people.

The platforms of political parties, like those of railway trains, are often, it must be remembered, made to get in on and not to stand on, and too much reliance must not be placed on the promises of politicians, anxious to secure or to retain power. The Liberal party in 1896 got into power on a promise to entirely wipe out the protective element in the tariff and to impose customs duties only for the purpose of raising revenues. In this, the most important plank of their platform of 1893, the Liberal party has betrayed the confidence of the people. The betrayal would have been impossible if the followers of the government in the House of Commons had not meekly consented to the violation of the pledges on which they had been elected, and the only way in which the people can safeguard their interests while the law does not permit of the Initiative, Referendum and Recall, is to elect men as their representatives who will refuse to continue to support their party when that party ceases to carry out its pledges. Both parties will be making plentiful promises during the next few weeks to the people of the West, and it will be the duty of the voters, when the time comes for the selecting of candidates to nominate no one who is not willing to sign a written pledge to support the farmers' platform.

AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION

The agricultural college year is ended and the students have gone back to the farm for six months of practical work before continuing their studies again in the fall. The agricultural college is an outgrowth of a realization that agriculture is a profession, success in which can only be attained by hard work and study. The history of past centuries shows that the people who have produced the food for the world have been exploited more than any other class. They were kept in subjection politically by heavy taxation and lack of educational facilities. In those days the idle class who exploited the laborers held all power and were at the top of the social and political ladder. The dignity of idleness was supreme. In the past half-century the dignity of labor has been recognized—because of education. Today the farmer is coming into his own more rapidly than ever. The chief factor in this evolution is the spread of information. Schools are free now and open to all. Newspapers are very cheap, books on every available subject are easy of access, telephones and telegraphs bring people closer together,

postal services are vastly improved, transportation is more rapid and cheaper. Each of these advances has played a part in the general educational uplift and the consequent democratization of our institutions. Despite this wonderful progress there is still a tremendous lack due largely to the apathy of the public upon educational matters. The boys and girls on the farms today have not the facilities afforded in the cities and towns. The country schools, frequently with an inexperienced teacher, instructing pupils of several grades and with very meagre equipment, cannot hope to compete with the highly specialized city schools where the most experienced and efficient teachers are employed and every equipment known to modern thought is provided. In the big cities great libraries provide free access to the best books of all ages, all the current magazines and newspapers. The postal service is such that from two to five mails are delivered daily. There are private institutions at which various studies may be followed and recreations may be enjoyed, while the world's leading lecturers are to be heard as well as the leading people in all lines of intellectual achievement. In fact there is a surfeit of opportunity in the cities and a decided lack in the country. On the other hand the cities have drawbacks, numerous and serious. The huddling of people together in large cities is directly opposed to natural development, but this will be dealt with again. What is to be done to extend to the country boys and girls as well as to their parents, a portion of the educational advantages enjoyed in the city? True they are coming, but far, far too slowly. The parents of the present generation should give up the antiquated notion that what was good enough for them is good enough for their children. Nothing in the way of schools can possibly be too good. The rural school is the only single institution in which all the people of the community have a common interest. Possibly that may account somewhat for its drawbacks. Every parent is in duty bound to his children to see that the teacher in the school is the BEST and not the CHEAPEST that can be procured, and to see also that the schoolhouse is at least a decent building and not one that the children will despise. There must be co-operation among parents, children and teacher to make a rural school a success. The training of the agricultural colleges must be brought closer to the people. One college in a province is utterly inadequate to provide agricultural education for the farm boys and girls. Agricultural high schools such as are being built throughout rural United States and such as are planned for Alberta will reach more of the boys and girls. The mere handful that attend the agricultural college is far too small a percentage of the rural youth to be enjoying the invaluable blessings of education. Good reading matter is a most powerful factor in developing the youthful mind and in moulding character, as well as in providing practical information for practical use. No farmer of these days can hope to keep abreast of the times without reading and studying the work accomplished by others in his line. Every farmer should have a library, no matter how small, of carefully selected books, dealing directly with his own work. Even the free reports published by the various governments contain much valuable information. The improvement of the postal service and the inauguration of rural mail delivery will be a great boon to the rural dwellers. Undoubtedly there are many handicaps under which the people of the country labor, and they are very much discriminated against in legislation. But even in the face of all this, all thinking people must admit that there is much that the farmers and their families can do for themselves to improve conditions. There must be continual progress towards better

farming, better business methods and a better mode of living. Nothing can hasten the progress along these lines more rapidly than proper educational facilities.

LEND THE GUIDE A HAND

We make no apology in appealing to the friends of The Guide to assist us in securing a large number of new readers of this paper. Owing to the fearless way in which The Guide has exposed and attacked certain interests which are making huge fortunes at the expense of the farmers, a number of large concerns which otherwise would have made use of our advertising columns have withdrawn or refused their patronage, and The Guide as a result has lost a large amount of revenue. An attempt is being made by this means to crush The Guide, but we are confident that our friends will rally round us and enable us to continue the fight for the farmers' cause.

They can do this best by helping to increase the circulation of The Guide. The subscription price does not pay the cost of printing this paper, but as the circulation increases, advertising space becomes more valuable, and an addition of 10,000 to our subscription list will place us head and shoulders above any competitors, and give us a revenue which would make The Guide self-supporting, and enable us to still further increase its value to our readers. Everyone who believes in The Guide and the cause it advocates should be interested in not only ensuring its future but also in having it read by every farmer in the West. A new reader of The Guide should mean a new member for the Grain Growers' Association or the U.F.A., and a new member for the association should mean a new reader of The Guide. To encourage new subscribers we are offering The Guide from now until the end of the year for 40 cents, and we trust our friends will bring this exceptional opportunity to the notice of their neighbors and secure as many new subscribers as possible.

The Portage la Prairie Grain Growers, in the address they presented to Hon. Frank Oliver last week, said:

"We do not desire any change in our relationship with Great Britain that would have a tendency to increase the cost of food to the people of Great Britain. In other words we think the farmers of Western Canada are too prosperous to require that the poor people and laboring classes of Great Britain should be taxed higher for their food in our interests."

This expression is thoroughly consistent with the demand of the farming community for relief from the tariff exactions under which they suffer, and it is at the same time the truest kind of patriotism—a patriotism that has regard for the welfare of one's fellow citizens. The selfish manufacturing interests that desire to tax the general public in order that they may become richer, may not understand this kind of patriotism, but it nevertheless represents the sentiment of the farming community of Canada.

Certain patriots are endeavoring to prove that because King Edward and King George raised beards every loyal man in the British Empire should do the same. This is the first time that we knew that there was any close connection between loyalty and whiskers. However, we are willing to admit that there is just as much sense in this suggestion as there is in the claim that reciprocity with the United States will breed disloyalty.