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EDITORIAL

Finding Values for Land.

The United States Secretary of Agriculture, James Wilson, recently addressed the people of Syracuse, N.Y., on the unproductive farm. This is quite a large problem with the republic. There are many farms that were cleared by pioneers and which furnished an upbringing and education to large and small families who in turn were induced to go into commercial life by the apparent advantages such a career offered. It was simply a case of the protected industries offering advantages over life on the farm.

In their turn again, the people engaged in the industrial and commercial works are demanding the products of the land to carry forward their enterprises. The demand for paper and alcohol for instance is creating a new use for farms. The pulp wood of the future will have to be produced on the farm in the shape of corn stalks, and fuel for heat, light and power, will be extensively extracted from vegetable matter as alcohol. Such changing conditions are making the unproductive and discarded farms valuable again.

The Scotch-American astuteness of Secretary Wilson creeps to the surface when he turns his thoughts to practical things on the farm. He has observed that the high price of labor tends to turn more land to pasture, and to increase the numbers of sheep and cattle grazing and also notes that the average farmer is caught napping more frequently in respect to his pasture than in any other feature of his farm work. A lack of variety of grasses in the pasture, the Secretary says, decreases its value. A mixture of "grasses and legumes are nature's perfect ration for domestic animals." "Meat and milk and work are more cheaply produced from the pasture than from other sources." But high priced land we would suggest would alter the truth of the last statement, in fact, it is generally the increased value of land that makes it unprofitable to pasture. Fortunately, conditions work automatically; when labor is scarce and high priced increased pasture tends to make meat raising cheaper and decreased grain areas insure a larger return for cultivated lands, this in turn invites labor to cultivate the soil. "As long as the pioneer on virgin soils grows wheat at current prices the progressive farmer grows little or none." Speaking of the "progressive farmer," Mr. Wilson says:

"With the help of improved machinery, the progressive individual farmer is producing much more than the average farmer did a generation ago, and the men of this class are keeping up the productive qualities of their farms. They observe certain principles of farm management; they do not sell foddors or roughage; they keep livestock and grow feed for them; they sell animals and their products, fruits, vegetables, etc. He keeps improved stock that respond to their keeping and that put on the greatest per cent. of meat on the prime parts. He puts all manure promptly on the fields.

"He rotates his crops.
"He tile-drains his lands.
"He keeps up good fences.
"He has good pastures.
"He has a good garden.
"He breeds draft horses and does farm work with brood mares and growing colts.
"He has a library with periodicals and standard works, and a musical instrument.
"He helps his wife in the house when she needs it, has a spring vehicle for her to visit in, and drives her to church himself.
"He keeps dairy cows or mutton sheep, or both.

Unnecessary Troubles.

As usual, delegations from different parts of the country are waiting upon the managers of the freight departments of our railways to endeavor to secure better service and a larger supply of empty cars. In other instances agents of coal companies have importuned their head offices for larger supplies and have waited impatient days and weary nights for only meagre quantities. Such conditions are exasperating. The railway companies sometimes appear surprised to learn of car shortages at certain places and promise prompt relief; cannot understand why cars should not be more plentiful. These interviews seem to be evils essential to the movement of the crop. Surely it cannot be that the railway companies depend upon deputation to go up to their officials and tell them where cars are wanted, yet there are instances where they hasten to accommodate complaining delegations, though if the railways do not depend upon deputations from local points for their information upon the need of cars why should they wait until they have been interviewed before they supply the rolling stock. One would think that the securing of all possible freight would be the first object of a railway company and the contention that they hold back in order to distribute the traffic over the year is less likely because of the large amount of other commodities offering.

The coal companies who fail to fill orders are probably more reprehensible than the railways. Cases are on record of large consignments having been ordered last summer when cars were available, coal professed plentiful and cash offered at the mines. Yet delivery had not been made by the 10th of November. Our large corporations remind one very much of a satiated animal nauseated with its food.

Our Holiday Number Announcement.

The December 11th number of the **ADVOCATE** will be a very much enlarged issue with specially designed, two-colored cover, and containing reproductions of some of the best photographs ever taken in Western Canada, or for that matter, the best of outdoor incidents and scenes anywhere. We have frequently been complimented upon the excellence of the photographs we secure for our illustration, and we believe they are one of the most valuable features of the paper, but for the holiday number this year we think we have some that have never been equalled.

The special articles prepared for the Christmas number are also valuable and instructive, and should be perused with much interest. They treat of many different phases of farm work and country life in a manner that is attempted by no other western paper but the **FARMER'S ADVOCATE**.

Usually after these special numbers are published we receive many orders for extra copies from our regular subscribers who wish to make Christmas presents to friends, and in order to fill such orders promptly and completely, we would like those who want extra copies to order early. We have every confidence in the Christmas number to please. In fact, we are certain it will delight every person who sees it, hence we advise ordering it and that early. Regular subscribers, of course, will receive a copy, but the price for extras and to non subscribers is twenty-five cents. As a Christmas token there is nothing more appropriate, and we mail it to any address upon receipt of the price.

Why Ten?

A few weeks ago the announcement was made that the Manitoba Department of Agriculture had determined to lend its ability, machinery, and prestige to the work of creating an interest in and an appreciation of clean vital seed. The work is commendable and comes properly into the sphere of the Provincial Department. Complications arise, however, in conducting the work, for the reason that there is a Liberal administration at Ottawa which already has the work in hand and the Conservative administration in Manitoba must, like the Jew of old, have no dealings with the Samaritans. To ordinary mortals, who are deprived an insight into the motives of party government, is not given the secret of the plans adopted but the action of the Provincial Department seems to indicate that the wedge has been inserted and that eventually the administration work of seed fairs will be conducted by the Provincial Department of Agriculture. This, if we remember rightly, was the hope of the Dominion Department when it undertook the organization of seed fairs in the different provinces. There is evidence, however, that the manner of the taking over of this work, if indeed it can be said to have been taken over, is not harmonious. Mr. Eddy, the representative of the Dominion Department, has been working assiduously to organize seed fairs in connection with the agricultural societies and had met with considerable success when the announcement was made by the Provincial Department that the first ten agricultural societies that made application for it would receive a grant of fifty dollars each to assist in conducting seed fairs. The announcement stamped a number of societies and created some little excitement until it was determined which society was most active in getting its directorate together or which was nearest the administration. Upon this being determined the official announcement of the Department enumerated the "lucky" societies.

But why only ten? Did the Department expect that just exactly ten societies would apply, or was it expected that less than ten would apply, in which case there would be left unused a portion of an appropriation, or was it intended to conduct a sort of lottery? Evidently the latter, since the idea of luck was in the minds of the officials judging by the announcement. This we submit is not a proper method of taking over the work of administering seed fairs.

In analysing the advantages or disadvantages which accrue to an agricultural society in Manitoba in taking the conduct of their seed fairs out of Mr. Eddy's hands (the Dominion Department) and putting it in Principal Black's hands, (the Provincial Department) the conclusion is something as follows: The Dominion Government organizes the fair, furnishes printed prize lists, provides judges and lecturers, and catalogues the amounts of seed available according to samples at the fair, which catalogues are sent broadcast throughout the country. The Provincial Government allows the agricultural society to consider a seed fair one of a fixed number of meetings that must be held throughout the year in order to obtain a grant, contributes fifty dollars towards the prize list, and sends judges and speakers, but whether their expenses will be borne by each society or not is not yet clear, previous experiences would lead one to think that they would be.

Here then we have in Manitoba the spectacle of two great political parties refusing or neglecting to co-operate in the interests of the whole community. By contrast we noted in our October 16th number that in Saskatchewan the Federal and Provincial Governments worked together, the Federal Government contributing, as in the case of Manitoba, of its officials and printed matter and the Provincial Department making cash contributions to the prize lists generally of one hundred dollars.