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EDITORIAL.

The Normal Training of the Rural Teacher.

The visit of the Ontario Educational Association, the other day, to the Agricultural College at Guelph, should do something towards focussing the attention of those who give direction and vitality to the Provincial school system, upon the institution which Dr. James Mills gave the best years of his life to promote, and which must ever be the greatest monument to his achievements. That institution, now under the enthusiastic guidance of President Creelman, has reached a status where it plays a large part, necessarily, in the educational scheme of the Province. It is not to be classed as a farmer's technical school only, or solely an institution where the ever-pressing problems of agriculture are grappled with and solved, for, let it be understood once and for all, that there is no agricultural millennium at hand. History but repeats itself, and every period will furnish its quota of agricultural difficulties. The O. A. C. was once not inaptly described, by the Hon. James Young, under the ideal of a great agricultural university, in order to express his conception of the extent and importance of its plans, privileges and purposes.

The new Education Act, recently introduced in the Ontario Legislature, makes provision for an Advisory Council, on which "all branches of education are to be represented." By all means, the Province should see to it that the President of the Agricultural College has a seat upon that Board, and a direct voice in the educational councils of Ontario.

The Act referred to also involves the abolition of the present city and county model schools, and the establishment, by September, 1907, of additional normal schools to keep up the supply of public-school teachers for the Province. The existing normal schools at Ottawa, Toronto and London turn out probably 250 teachers annually, and the School of Pedagogy at Hamilton something over 100 more. According to Provincial statistics, we have some 6,000 public rural school teachers in Ontario, and 3,500 in cities, towns and incorporated villages. The rolls of the latter will no doubt also include a good number of pupils from farm homes. Now, with these significant facts in mind, and without going into any analysis of the objects and methods of education, are we not justified in asking, in an agricultural Province like Ontario, suffering as it is, from want of agricultural population, that in the professional training of those 6,000 rural-school teachers, they should, by every possible and legitimate means, receive an equipment which will make their work touch real things and conditions, and set up and maintain a relation of sympathy with the people with whom they are to live, and whose children they are to train. The rural public school should develop an intelligent appreciation of the farm, outdoor life, and the things of nature. One of the most effective ways in which these things can be done is by promoting a closer touch of the teacher-training business with the great institution at Guelph, which now happily includes the Macdonald Institute. This Institute has already been an educational Mecca for large numbers of Canadian teachers, who have enjoyed and profited by its advantages. The Government can confer a real boon upon the farm life of Ontario and the teaching profession by boldly deciding that as large a share of the normal-school work of the Province should be done in a training school in close touch with the Agricultural College. We do not lack for precedents, if precedents be needed. Nova Scotia, ever to the

forefront in educational matters, has established an affiliation between the agricultural college and the normal school. The idea of their scheme was probably derived from France, where the system is in large development, and is credited with the remarkable improvement in the agricultural productivity of that country. But it is not that the normal teachers-in-training should take actual courses in agriculture, but rather from the indirect contact with the splendid institution and its student body of rising agriculturists, whose aims and efforts center about the farm and farm life, which, every June, is visited by 30,000 or 40,000 farm visitors, and a smaller host in December, with an intermittent contingent of visiting experts in agricultural education from all over the world. There is here, too, the opportunity to observe the ideal of rural education, as realized in the consolidated school alongside the College grounds. It is under such circumstances and conditions that teachers for rural schools should be privileged to get their pedagogical training. Unbound by tradition, and unhampered, let us hope, by any local contingencies, we trust the Ministers of Education and of Agriculture will be able to give effect to an educational consummation devoutly to be wished.

Grow More Corn.

Ensilage corn annually grows in favor with Ontario farmers. It is our heaviest yielding forage crop, and the silo enables us to preserve it with little waste, and in first-class condition for early or late winter feeding. A silo of corn would increase the stock-carrying capacity of most farms by from 15 per cent., upwards. To put it in another light, the man who erects a silo may keep as much stock as before, and yet sell enough hay each year to pay for the cost of building it. Indirectly, the growing of corn increases the fertility of the farm. Its ideal preparation is a winter-manured sod, and the summer cultivation given it puts the inverted sod in first-class condition for a grain crop to be reseeded to clover.

It is sometimes argued that corn must be hard on the land. This is hardly correct. Corn derives from the atmosphere the carbon and hydrogen which go to make up its fattening constituents, and, while it also draws upon the soil, the bulk of the elements of fertility which it obtains therefrom is returned to the land in the form of manure made by the silage-fed stock, thus increasing, rather than diminishing the available soil fertility. Corn is not a legume, and therefore not a nitrogen-gathering soil-restorer like clover and alfalfa, but it works well in a short rotation, making the conditions favorable for succeeding crops of clover, combined with which it also makes a number one balanced ration in feeding. Corn and clover should go together both on the farm and in the feed-lot. Wherever we find an old sod torn up and planted to corn for the silo, we expect better-fed stock, increased fertility, progress and profit.

While corn requires considerable labor, this fits in nicely with the remainder of the farm work. Planting comes after the rush of seeding, the summer cultivation keeps man and horses employed to good purpose during June, and harvesting is accomplished with despatch by means of corn binder and steam-driven cutting-box with blower attachment. No crop is more promptly and satisfactorily disposed of.

The corn belt is extending. Early varieties, careful preparation of seed-bed, and shallow summer cultivation, enable us to mature it in northern sections and on heavy soils formerly thought hopelessly unsuitable. In fall-plowed sod, corn will thrive on quite hard clay if given frequent summer tillage, to prevent the formation of a

crust. Freezing before being cut does silage corn no great harm, so long as a satisfactory degree of maturity has been attained. Maturity, however, is most important. Feeders emphasize it more every year. Better fifteen tons per acre of strong, heavily-eared, well-matured corn than eighteen or twenty tons of swill. At the same time, quantity should not be disregarded. In general, the late kinds, having a longer growing period, yield the best. One should, therefore, endeavor to plant a variety, the grain of which, ordinarily, at least, comes to a tough-dough stage before frost in his locality. Home-grown seed is to be preferred, if obtainable. Before planting, test the seed for germination. Directions have been given in our Farm Department, and readers are referred to them. If the germination is defective, get other seed. In samples which show a poor germinating percentage, the kernels which do sprout will almost certainly lack vigor, to a certain degree, while the worthless seeds will cause misses, and fallow spots are expensive in a crop which receives so much manure and work as corn.

The seed-bed should be mellow, warm and deep. This condition is best obtained by early and repeated tillage with spike harrow, disk, Acme and spring-tooth. A stroke of the harrow as soon as the ground becomes dry enough to pulverize, will prevent clod formation. An occasional stroke afterwards will conserve moisture and keep the ground in such condition that a deep, fine seed-bed can be prepared at any time. It is much easier to prevent the formation of clods than to reduce them after they are formed. If the land is to be spring-plowed, follow each day's plowing with roller and harrow, to compress the soil and form a dust mulch, thus conserving moisture and hastening the fermentation of manure and sod underneath.

Planting is done rather earlier, perhaps, than in the old days, but as corn is a heat-loving plant, and is stunted by a cold, wet spell, it is well, we believe, to wait until prospects of good corn weather. In Central and Southern Ontario this may be any time after May 15th.

How to sow—whether in hills or drills—is a matter on which opinion is divided. It is believed that, with an equal amount of seed in each case, hills will give a slightly larger percentage of ears. Planting in hills requires more time to get the crop in, but this is almost made up by the greater facility in harvesting, if hoe or sickle is used. Hill-planted corn may be cultivated both ways, weeds kept down better, and a more complete dust mulch may be maintained. Drilling the corn saves time in planting, enables one to sow a strip at a time, as may be prepared, and does not necessitate a lot of extra work in re-marking the field, in case a heavy rain comes before the field is all done. If the land is in first-class condition, and a man is prepared to attend well to the summer cultivation, planting in drills will prove satisfactory. On a weedy field plant in hills. In drilling, use an ordinary ten-hoe grain drill, and close all spouts but the third ones from each end. Regulate the thickness on a smooth roadway, so that a kernel is dropped every 9 or 10 inches. Much corn is still sown too thickly. Thin sowing means strong, rich stalks, and numerous large ears. Thick sowing means sappy growth and inferior silage. Better grow a little less stalks per acre, and save next winter's feed bill. Hills 42 inches apart should have, on an average, about three stalks, if intended for husking, and four or five if intended for the silo.

Perhaps the most important factor in successful corn culture is summer cultivation. Every judicious stroke with weeder, scuffer, or two-horse cultivator, means increased yield. The amount