

Farmer's Advocate

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EDITORIAL

The Prince, ma'lawd from Lun'un! Gawd bless'im!

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Some green immigrants stand to put in a "harrowing" experience these days.

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The man who sows wheat before the ground is warmed up invites an attack of smut.

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Draw up a written contract with the hired man if you have not already done so.

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There seems to be too much wheat available to allow the price to go up enough to let those who held make any money.

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Canadian Shorthorn breeders promise to make the "greatest exhibit that has ever been" at Toronto the coming summer.

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The Manitoba Agricultural College will put on a short course in dairying, for farmers' wives and daughters, about the beginning of June.

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Chicago's vote upon the municipal ownership question resulted in a declaration for municipal ownership and control, but for private operation.

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If it be true that a British miller cannot see any difference between a Canadian No. 1 Nor. and a Duluth No. 1 Nor., what, oh what will become of our dear, cherished grades?

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Lots of people tell us the crops will be light this year because the frost did not go down very deep. Well, we can make good use of what moisture there is, if the harrows are intelligently used after seeding.

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Yes, a Duluth grade may be just as good for milling purposes as the corresponding Canadian grade "but ours is better wheat," and has the British "preference." Doesn't that compensate for the apparent discrepancies in price?

How Our Expansion Effects the East.

The center of wheat production has been moving westward and northward. This is a truism that we have all heard. We have also heard much of late years about the conversion of "corn lands in Britain into pasturage, and the consequent decrease in the production of agricultural wealth. Now comes the news of a further transformation, this time in Ontario. Students of rural economics in the old banner province have become alarmed at the extent to which land is falling into fewer hands, the depopulation of the rural districts and the laying of the land down to grass. So far has this movement gone, that in many of the richer counties the rural population is appreciably less now than it was ten years ago. Many schools have been closed up, and once thrifty looking farms are now nothing more than hay meadows and pasture fields, and the movement of the center of wheat production is responsible for this deplorable condition. The Northwest has robbed the east of her farm laborers, and many of her young farmers and is still unsated.

The situation is a novel one for Ontario but, per capita, there should be no falling off in production. The laying down of the land to grass may be a locking up of productive capital but it also has its redeeming features. Many parts of older Canada have been over cropped and over run with weeds and the change from grain production to grass growing will have a tendency to

rejuvenate the soil and to eradicate many of the weed pests that have fastened upon it. "Its an ill wind" etc.

The Farmers' Institute.

Anyone who has carefully followed the work of our farmers' institutes during the past season must have been struck by the decided lack of interest and the failure of the people to attend. The fault lies not with the speakers; we have had able men, practical workers along agricultural lines, who knew their business and could give a very interesting talk. At least, it should have been interesting, but the people failed to turn out. This trouble with our institutes is due to the fact that they are not a real part of our educational system. They are simply interjected in a vague sort of way into the scheme of our agricultural education, while at the same time, we have no real system with which they are co-ordinated and of which they form a part. The common school should be made the center from which emanates light upon the simpler questions of plant and animal life. Agricultural education must begin at the bottom. It should lead up from the common school to the high school, (the short course), the institute and the agricultural college, and unless it does that, we are building not the foundation but the superstructure of our work.

Employer and Hired Man.

Those of our readers, who followed closely our columns last year, will have noticed the all too numerous questions asked the legal adviser in connection with the legitimate course to pursue in cases of differences between employer and hired man. These differences are always more acute when labor is scarce, and the laborers consequently more independent and of a lower average of proficiency. This year we cannot predict that the relations between farmers and their men, generally, will be any more mutually satisfactory than they were last season, and hence caution more specific arrangements at the outset.

Farmers as a rule are too lax in specifying to their men just what they are expected to do. Too much confidence is reposed in the hired man's conception of the "right thing" and the lack of unanimity of opinion upon this subject is most generally a *casus belli* (an occasion of war).

Many of the misunderstandings between farmers and their men might be obviated by the use of written agreements. It is little trouble to draw one of these up, setting forth the length of the engagement, the amount of wages to be paid, time of payment, agreement as to cancelling the contract, etc. This latter clause should always be inserted, specifying definitely what proportion of the season's wage shall be paid upon the cancellation of the agreement by either parties. As a rule, when the employer sees fit to discharge a man, he pays him up for the full amount of time he worked, but if the employee wishes to be released against the employer's will he usually surrenders two weeks pay as a partial compensation for the trouble his employer will be put to in securing another man.

A written contract between employer and employee is one of the best means of arriving at an understanding of the nature of the work to be done, and of clearing up details with regard to payment of wages, holidays, etc. It should never, however, be presumed upon by either party. That is, the employer should not consider, because he has a written agreement with his man, he can practice extortion upon him, nor should the man use the agreement as a safeguard against discharge for work improperly done. No agreement can be made binding enough to insure harmony where there is a mutual determination to get the better of the other fellow. The relationship between a farmer and his men will not tolerate such conditions,

and in every case there should be an evident desire for harmonious relations.

Very often the attitude of the employer toward his men is responsible for disagreements. The most disastrous relationship is that of too great familiarity. Some men are worthy of confidence and will not abuse it, but it takes time to decide this, and at the outset perfectly business-like relations are much more satisfactory for both parties than pronounced cordiality. Or as they say in the Latin, "cito maturum, cito putridum (soon ripe, soon rotten)."

The Case for Rural Mail Delivery.

Since the inception of the idea of free rural mail delivery, and the first faltering efforts to put it into practice in various parts of the U. S., "The Farmer's Advocate," and Canadian farmers generally, have looked on with keenest interest, and, when it appeared that the plan was not only desirable, but feasible, it has received ungrudging support. As in the case of all other innovations, it was only to be expected that opposition would be encountered, and it is scarcely necessary to remark that, as yet, the opposition in Canada has been sufficient to have effectually laid a wet blanket upon every effort to push the matter. It was however, to us, as to many others, perhaps, something of a surprise to find that, by some insidious objector, the plan for rural mail delivery was being laid at the door of some political hatching machine, and that this idea in regard to it was gaining ground.

In a recent article by Mr. E. T. Bush, in the North American Review, this insinuation is most fully met. Mr. Bush dwells upon the fact that it was the rural population itself which first made the appeal for the system. His account of the origin of the movement is interesting. "In 1891," he says, "Mr. Mortimer Whitehead, a prominent Granger, of N. J., introduced the subject into the National Grange. In the winter of 1891-2, as a farmer, and in behalf of farmers, he made the first argument for Rural Free Delivery before a Committee of Congress, and succeeded in getting a small appropriation for experimental work. Here, then, was the beginning of 'this new creation in the interests of partisan power.' And it is safe to say that, unless the anatomy of the body politic has all along been wholly misunderstood, 'the womb of practical politics' is not located in the region of the Grange."

In the United States, on July 1st, 1905, there were 32,055 rural routes in operation, and 21,788 city carriers in the service. The cost of the two branches was about the same, each a trifle under \$21,000,000. The rural routes served 12,213,000 patrons, no application for a rural route being allowed to count any children under sixteen years of age. The cities covered by free delivery service aggregate, according to the last census, almost 28,000,000, counting all ages and conditions. The rural service counts nobody within half a mile of the post office, all within that distance being "too handy by" to be considered.

If those in a half-mile radius of any city post office were excluded, there would be almost 900 square miles of solid city, whose millions of people must, in all fairness, be excluded from this comparison. Mr. Bush points out, also, that the discontinuance of "star" mail routes, and the greater revenue derived by throwing cancellations into the larger offices, will greatly reduce the apparent cost of rural delivery to the extent of probably \$16,000,000. After all fair eliminations are made, he concludes that the country service will be shown to be very little more expensive, million for million, of actual patrons, than the city service.

In Canada, as in the United States, there will always be "kickers" against rural delivery, and the fact that the experiment would be an expensive one cannot be gainsaid. Nevertheless, the observant eye will not, perhaps, be slow to recognize that the kicks are likely to come from one of three sources: (1) From those who live