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EDITORIAL.

In the public Agricultural Departments of Canada the more consistent observance of the principle of merited promotion will make for stability and higher standards of service.

Disease, like weeds, demands thoroughness as the price of success in eradication. Through lack of hearty public co-operation with Departmental efforts to eradicate rabies in Western Ontario, the troublesome dog-muzzling precautions fell short of their purpose, and sporadic outbreaks are still being reported. How many human deaths, enforced Pasteur treatments and property losses will it take to convince the public that rabies is a genuine and very serious disease?

Fashions change even in matters of sanitation. After a vigorous campaign of "swatting" flies, the Americans have concluded it would be better to starve them by cleaning up the manure and garbage which breeds and feeds them. This looks like getting down to common sense. It is a question whether the fly has been given fair credit for his scavenger service. The assertion is now made that all the flies swatted in a whole city campaign would not equal the output from one good fly hatchery, such as a pile of stable manure affords. "Clean up, and starve the fly," would be a good city slogan. On the farm starvation is not so easy, but even there much can be done by prompt removal of stable manure from yards to fields.

Our literary farmer, Mr. McArthur, voiced quite a general experience, we fancy, in the opening paragraphs of last week's letter, especially when he said he had been expecting to get the summer's work rounded up "in a few days" for the past couple of months and was still a few days behind. It was our experience, anyway, for the big program of building and improvement work would have made a large order for an ordinary season, and this year, when there were so few fine days, so many interruptions and so much work to be done twice or performed at a disadvantage, it was simply a case of feeling one's way through from day to day. However, all's well that ends well, and the fine weather of mid-November gave workers a most welcome opportunity to overtake Jack Frost.

That by taking over as county roads fifteen per cent. of the total road mileage the County Councils of Ontario can, with Government aid to the extent of one-third, take care of more than eighty per cent. of the vehicular traffic within their confines, is the rather startling assertion of the Provincial Engineer of Highways, W. A. McLean. He figures it this way. Assuming eight miles as the average haul to market, he claims that a properly laid out system of county roads would be so located that for six and one-half miles out of the eight, the driver could follow a county road. In other words, the average ratepayer would have only one and a half miles or so to reach the county road, less than twenty per cent. of the distance. That makes a county good-roads system seem worth while.

An Appeal for Rational Education.

As depicted by the cartoonist in "The Farmer's Advocate" of last week, one result of our systems of public school education has been rural depopulation through inculcating a disinclination to manual labor, particularly that of the farm. The conviction finding vigorous expression from time to time in different provinces, is most certainly gathering strength that neither are the best interests individually of those taught, nor of the State, well served by academic and bookish courses that utterly fail to call into service the activities of the scholar and develop the faculties of observation in relation to nature. Supplemental or sporadic measures are failing to cover the needs of the situation which can only be effectually met by radical and comprehensive measures that will rejuvenate the whole system.

Having especially in view the rural school conditions obtaining largely in Quebec Province, Dr. S. B. Sinclair, a keen-visioned educationist in Macdonald College, before an assemblage of teachers at Montreal some time ago, delivered an awakening address on the subject. A powerful deliverance on the failure of educational systems in the Maritime Provinces was that of Dr. David Solon, LL. D., before the Educational Association of Prince Edward Island, which in merciless cogency of arraignment has seldom been surpassed. This address derives double significance from the fact that the speaker, Dr. Solon, is himself Principal of the Nova Scotia Normal College, and so might possibly be expected, in accordance with usage, to express the traditional attitude of inertia and conservatism, but he does not.

Dr. Solon took his stand on the ground that popular education has, in a very large measure, proven a disappointment in the development, mentally and economically, of the nation. "We have depleted our soil," he declares, "partly ruined our fisheries, destroyed our forests, pawned our mines to monopolists, who take heavy toll, left our producing classes as incapable as ever of skillfully carrying on the staple industries; and, finally, we have watched and still continue to watch the steady emigration of our young people to lands less fair and less favored than our own. Is education—the education of the people—to blame for the evil days on which we have fallen?"

He proceeds to show that this is true for many reasons, but primarily because "Our popular system of education has failed in its mission to the masses,"—failed in its great mission "of training the masses to their work as productive laborers, and to an intelligent conception of civic duty." In his own words: "There are, you know, those of the older generation who profess an almost total lack of faith in the idea that the masses are capable of education. Their ideal is of a ruling class, politically and commercially capable, and of a working class inevitably and hopelessly committed to unintelligent labor, civic nonentity, and social degradation." This ideal he denounces, pointing out that all classes would be better served by an educational system that schooled its workers to intelligent methods of industry.

To bring about such methods he would eliminate much of the old curricula, making Latin and Greek, etc., give way to such subjects as nature-study, elementary agriculture, constructive geom-

etry, manual training, and domestic science,—such subjects as may bear directly upon the industrial and social life of the people as a whole. He scores the meaningless abstractions of algebra and euclid, text-book geography and history, the parroting of dates and names and the memorizing of natural science from text books. "With our zeal for higher education," he says, "the education of our own people who are to stay at home to extract a living from the soil or sea remains unchanged—the same disappointing, barren process that it has been ever since it began." Our system, he contends, has fitted people admirably for the learned callings, but that is all.

Dr. Solon punctures the superficial notion that such an agency as an Agricultural College, however excellent, can accomplish what is needed in the improvement of agricultural processes over widely scattered agricultural areas without the extensive and well-directed co-operation of the people's schools. Such an institution touches a few points, but only indirectly, if at all, many in the mass. And because of the defective elementary education imparted in the rural public schools, many of the students who come up are ill-prepared to enter upon the study of agriculture as a science. The trouble is that the common school looks for direction to the high school, and the latter in turn to the College matriculation standards, which put little value on training other than literary and mathematical, treating as unavailable for their purposes, habits of thought, such as natural sciences develop and giving no recognition to precision in the use of senses and hand. In short, the public is dominated by the scholastic ideals of the College.

The efforts that Nova Scotia has made to equip and encourage by special subsidy certificated teachers are reviewed at length, but Dr. Solon regrets that nature study can hardly yet be said to have made itself known in the public schools, and their best efforts result largely in failure. On this point it may be stated that the whole body of teachers should so be trained in order to insure to every school a teacher competent to teach the phenomena of nature and direct the minds of the scholars in the habits of observation.

Dr. Solon attributes the want of success in Nova Scotia mainly to the inadequately supported rural schools, and on this he bases the concluding portion of his address for a large augmentation from federal sources of funds available for this improvement in the different provinces of the common and high schools, and for the benefit of technical education in agriculture and the mechanic arts. He does not propose violent interference with the present efforts of the high schools, which he would leave to their idol of pure culture and industrial do-nothingness, but it is difficult to discern the logic of his further conclusion that these out-worn and fatuous courses should be paralleled with others convincing and effectual for the training of the children to vocation. Such a policy of dualism, it seems to us, would tend to the promotion of class distinctions, would involve a needless waste of money and leave the great body of those from whom would be drawn the teachers of the future, largely untouched by the New Education and still influential in manipulating the public mind and continuing the existing educational order substantially unchanged.