

FARMER'S ADVOCATE

AND HOME MAGAZINE

* AGRICULTURE, STOCK, DAIRY, POULTRY, HORTICULTURE, VETERINARY, HOME CIRCLE. *

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EDITORIAL.

The Question of the Hour.

Until the railway facilities of this country have been improved, it is needless to say that the question of the hour among farmers will continue to be transportation. Of the difficulties, annoyance and loss which hundreds of grain-growers have experienced during the past season, everyone in Manitoba and the West has some idea. To say that the situation is in certain respects distressing, is placing it mildly indeed. Although Manitoba has less reason to complain than the Territories, the difficulty has been almost universal. In this respect it has, therefore, become a question of national importance, and hence demands adjustment at the hands of the Government, and whether it is to be by means of the Hudson's Bay route or a higher development of the present system of railways, it is certain that something must be done.

It is claimed by some, presumably knowing ones, that the present congested condition of the traffic, with its shortage of cars, dead engines and incomplete and unsystematic passenger service, is not altogether the fault of the companies operating, but excuses of bad water and unfilled orders for new engines, however true, are little satisfaction to those who are compelled to suffer. Railway officials have been most energetic in their efforts to induce settlers to locate in this country, and in so doing their action was to be commended, but when they show inability to move the products of the soil brought forth by those whom they encouraged to take up homes, it is no wonder that widespread condemnation should result. Villages in the Territories are known from which, to this day, but little wheat has been moved, and many farmers have been unable to dispose of sufficient to pay for the necessities of life.

Inasmuch, therefore, as Boards of Trade may debate upon the extent to which the Government should subsidize the Grand Trunk Pacific, or grant public money in the interest of any other railway, it is also the duty of the farmers to let themselves be heard. Discouragement, we know, has been already written upon the face of many a grain-grower, but let it be remembered that a "faint heart never won fair lady." As was pointed out in a previous issue of the "Farmer's Advocate," the agitation should be continued earnestly and wisely. Farmers no more than any other class desire the reckless expenditure of public funds but more railways are necessary if our great West is to become in earnest the "Granary of the Empire."

If the Hudson's Bay route be feasible, it should be opened up without delay; the Grand Trunk should be welcomed; the Canadian Northern, with a network of branches, urged forward, and through competition the C.P.R. induced to provide the accommodation which the country demands. There undoubtedly will be work for all to do.

Give Them a Trial.

During the winter you may be called upon by salesmen for nursery stock. If you have a sheltered nook near a bluff or stream, give some of the most hardy fruits, as raspberries, plums, crab apples, etc., a trial. In different parts of Manitoba and Assiniboia these fruits are grown with considerable success. Why not have some in your own garden?

Institute Meetings.

One of the most encouraging signs of the times is the increased interest which farmers are taking in the discussion, both in the press and on the platform, of subjects dealing with the every-day work of the farm. "Experience is a dear teacher," as many who in the early days broke the virgin prairie and endeavored to rear homes for themselves can testify. A wise man can always benefit by hearing the experience of others, and so the farmers' institute becomes a source through which those who will may learn.

The meetings which are being held by the various agricultural societies and farmers' institutes throughout this country are doing an incalculable amount of good, but the attendance is generally far short of what it should be. Farming, we know, is a busy occupation, and farmers are busy men, but the one who in the winter months cannot find time to attend a meeting within a reasonable distance of his home, where agricultural topics are being discussed, is making a great mistake. Nothing can be more helpful than for persons having interests in common to discuss subjects for the mutual benefit of one another. An exchange of ideas may not bring out anything really new, but it may so enliven an interest in any particular subject that better and more intelligent work is the outcome.

Farmers' Institutes, calculated as they are to increase the prosperity of those engaged in agriculture, can do a great work if properly managed, in fostering a friendly relationship among the farmers themselves. It has been well said that those who enjoy life most are those who bear the least selfishness toward their fellow-men. By associating together and learning more of the disposition and peculiarities of a neighbor, good farmers, like all other successful men, learn to increase their respect for those around them, and no place affords a better opportunity for this than the institute meeting.

To be of the greatest value in any district, an agricultural society or institute holding meetings for the discussion of agricultural topics should have an efficient staff of officers; men who are not afraid to make sacrifices, if necessary, for the success of their organization. They should exercise every opportunity to interest farmers whom they meet with the importance of attending the meetings. The subjects for addresses or discussions should be carefully selected, and should deal with some phase of farming or live-stock raising calculated to interest the greatest number. Where speakers are brought from a distance, or, in fact, in any case, they should be men known to be practical. It is easy enough for some to publicly tell what ought to be done, but when their own premises are examined a different story can be told.

Another very important point is the advertising of the meetings. This should be done without stint. Whether they are to be held quarterly, monthly, or oftener, public notice should be given in some printed form. For this the local papers can be conveniently utilized, but it will generally pay also to get out an attractive poster. The season for good live meetings is now well on, and we trust that every reader of the "Farmer's Advocate" will take advantage of this opportunity to obtain new ideas from the experience of others, so that they may be enabled to run the race more successfully and assist in proving that agriculture may be carried on profitably and yet be one of the noblest and most elevating of callings.

Siftings.

It is only through labor, painful effort, by grim energy and resolute courage, that we move to better things.—Theodore Roosevelt.

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To give assistance at times costs but little more than advice; try it with your neighbor.

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Farmers fully realize the principle of reaping what is sown. Make a right start early, and all the years of your life will have added usefulness through that sowing.

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The man with a strong will, steadfast purpose and temperate habits is the one who forces the world to listen to him. Cultivate these; fall in love with your work and all will go well.

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Find your niche, then fairly fling your whole life into it. Be somebody with all the might you now possess, and ere long you will be somebody with ten times more power than is now your portion.

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In many districts literary societies could be organized, which would be found exceedingly helpful to the young people during the winter months. Taking part in debates and other platform duties is a splendid training, and should be cultivated as widely as circumstances will permit by the young people on the farm. Learn to hold your own in the public meetings with your brother of the so-called higher professions.

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"Better Work" was the watchword given by Rev. C. W. Gordon (Ralph Connor) to his congregation in Winnipeg for the year 1903. How nicely that might apply to the progressive farmer. It is not merely, or in fact always judicious, that we should aim to do more work, but it should at least be better than that performed in the past.

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"In time of peace prepare for war," is a good motto to be considered at this season by farmers who intend to get there next year. It is not when the sunny days have come and the fields ready for the harrow that that implement should be on its way to the shop for repairs. Look over all the machines now and have everything in perfect order when the important day arrives. Time is valuable now; it will be worth more then.

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As a reader of the "Farmer's Advocate," let us hear from you occasionally on any topic of interest to yourself or your neighbors. Our columns are always open for the discussion of subjects pertaining to agriculture. Beautifully written articles are not necessary; send along the ideas and we will do the rest.

A Good Motto.

One of the late Governors of Nebraska had for a motto "Plant Trees." He talked this doctrine everywhere he went; he had it inscribed on all his stationery, and invariably enjoined it upon his friends when bidding them farewell. As a result of his persistent efforts, it is said much of the bare, bleak prairie of his State was converted into splendid groves, and the streets of the towns became lined with beautiful trees.