

# THE CANADIAN THRESHERMAN AND FARMER

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Sept.

The Outlook for the Agricultural College!

1918

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**W**HAT a wonderful kaleidoscope of change has whirled around since that day when a six-gun battery of gas tractors started breaking on the farm lands for the new Agricultural College! It is only killing time to contemplate at this point what might have happened had these buildings never been erected, but starting now, from conditions as they are, it may not only be found a useful employment, but it seems to us as if it has become a first charge on the responsible citizenship of Manitoba to look things square in the face as they connect themselves with the outlook for our Agricultural College. Not many of the bright programmes of pre-war days have been hit so hard as the "best laid schemes," of the various educational institutions, and not by any means the least to suffer has been our own provincial school of agriculture.

It will avail nothing to start arguing from pre-war premises because the war has knocked the bottom out of so much of the axiomatic in our social life. Since its inception, the Agricultural College has built

up a splendid record of constructive work: what part, if any, is it now going to take in the great business of Re-Construction? That the present Department of Agriculture took over a woeful heritage is now the insistent voice of the whole province. Even the warmest partisans of the men who were responsible for that pile of buildings at St. Vital freely admit that at least a grave error was committed, and that if they are to be maintained by the province on their present footing, they offer the uncomfortable prospect of a string of mill-stones around the neck of Manitoba for many years to come.

When the move was made from the great original on the banks of the Assiniboine, we had our misgivings, but we were comparatively new to the country. The enterprise, we were assured, was in response to the "imperative demand for space" to accommodate the increasing number of pupils, and to provide the very best educational facilities and equipment which could not be housed in the original buildings. That seemed all right to our unsophisticated view of things, because we have a standing belief that any money wisely spent on education is never mis-spent. We took the statement of these old-timers on trust, there was no alternative. But giving them the fullest credit for their integrity of purpose, did they then appreciate—are we now in general agreement—as to the real functions of an Agricultural College?

One of America's celebrated farm educationalists, spent the last seven of his seventy-seven years of life in proving that the system commonly pursued of training young farmers had been all wrong. That he succeeded in demonstrating this seems to be generally accepted; so remarkable, in fact, have been the results of those crowded seven years of this man's work, that the American Ambassador in England, recently called the attention of one august body of agricultural experts to what had been achieved under his direction. Roughly the idea is that instead of the college being a rallying point for young folks who merely come to get a general shake-up on agricultural subjects, returning to the farm (or the city as it may happen) to make the best of what they have picked up and assimilated, it should be the training ground and radiating centre from which the substance of all research and experiment should go out to the farmers at first hand.

We haven't space at this writing to say what we think of the many ways in which the Department, the Province, and most of all the men and women of the college faculty are hamstrung in their work by the handicap imposed upon them, of facing such a wilderness of wasted energy and providing for the enormous unproductive outlay it must mean for a full generation at least. To avert this impending calamity, we have an idea which we modestly but seriously present for what it is worth to any "whom it may concern." Briefly it is that the Federal Government should relieve Manitoba of the St. Vital property, and the Manitoba Department of Agriculture should take the soul of the college back to its old tabernacle at Tuxedo.

The hospital's commission will finish its course long before the need will cease to exist for continuing the vocational training of our battle-scarred heroes, not to speak of what ought to be done for the "budding hope of the country," a well that will never run dry. The least difficulty would be the adapting of the buildings and the acquisition of additional land to meet the needs of the college. But it takes no seer to visualize what might be made out of what is already set up, and "eating its head off" at St. Vital, if utilized as suggested. It is only part of what is due from us to those of our sons who "under no other compulsion than the power of their own moral consciousness, went up against the enemy; who confronted anguish with a song; who courted annihilation with the name of Canada on their lips, and changed that Canada almost to the likeness of the Canada of their dreams."

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