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"Persevere and
Succeed."

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EDITORIAL.

THE PROBLEMS OF ONTARIO EDUCATIONISTS.

Last week, in the buildings of Toronto University, the Provincial Educational Association held its annual convention. A survey of the addresses delivered, discussions thereon, and resolutions adopted, affords the public a view of the general direction in which educational affairs are moving in Ontario.

At the meeting a year ago a noticeably optimistic spirit prevailed. The first reading of a new school bill was distributed; its discussion was the paramount interest of the convention. The bill proposed an advisory council, and for rural school teachers in the average sections a minimum salary of \$500. Both prospects greatly pleased the teachers. Subsequently the proposals became law, but the advisory council was not given the hoped-for power of initiative, and the number of school sections subject to the \$500 minimum salary was greatly reduced. Assistants in small towns and villages, perhaps the most poorly-paid class of teachers, were not helped, but it was felt that raising the salaries of rural school teachers to \$450 or \$500 a year, would raise the standard all round. The male candidate for the advisory council who polled the highest vote made the raising of the assistants' salaries in villages and towns a strong plank in his platform.

But the legislators, in fixing a graded minimum salary, reckoned without their host. In the meantime they have received so stern a command from the rural voter to retreat, that, with the utmost possible promptitude they have announced obedience, and have promised to drop down to a \$300 minimum. The feeling of the Association, however, was apparently one of regret rather than anger, for it felt that the Legislature sincerely desired the improvement aimed at, and that it is now about to try persuasion instead of compulsion.

The teaching body is not sanguine of substantial betterment from the changed outlook—a fact that explains the favorable reception which the union idea received. Now and again for twenty years or more the formation of a teachers' union has been mooted, but it never reached the stage of consideration by the general Association. This year it was given the chief time and place at the Wednesday evening meeting, and a recommendation that unionizing be tried was carried with little or no opposition. The printed preamble contained, among others, the following statements:

"Previous to last year they (the teachers of Ontario) were the unprotected victims of vicious economic conditions.

"The recent statesmanlike legislation on behalf of education has aroused bitter opposition in many quarters, which threatens to cause a reversion to former unjust conditions.

"The teachers of Ontario would be unworthy of their citizenship and of their profession if in this educational crisis they are content to remain mere dependents upon the bounty of even a friendly political administration."

And so the Union was formed, not of and by the general Association, but with its encouragement. Members thought it unlikely that it could enforce its demands with the weapons of strikes and boycotts, but if it is wisely directed, it can conduct educational campaigns useful to both teachers and trustees.

On the side of the science of education, the dominant note continues to be that the development of the child's powers, through thinking and correlated doing, instead of stuffing the memory

with book-learning, is the kind of education that should be aimed at. Passing-the-examination aim strongly tempts to memory-stuffing and cramming. The reaction against it has set in, but the ebb is not entirely unobstructed. A resolution prevailed in one of the sections to restore the former public-school-leaving examination.

The Association does its work in about a dozen different sections or departments. On many subjects they agree, but not infrequently their interests or opinions clash. As an example, the Model School teachers unanimously approved of the restoration of Dr. Ryerson's principle of granting public-school inspectors' certificates only to the holders of the highest grade of public-school teachers' certificates, with five or ten years' successful experience in public-school work. At present, inspectors' certificates are not granted to anyone not holding High-school specialists' certificates. The Model-school masters waited on the Minister of Education, and pointed out the inapplicability of the H.-S. specialists' work to the inspection of elementary schools. The next day the inspectors' section passed a resolution advising the Minister, in effect, not to open the door in the way the Model-school teachers had requested.

One of the inspectors, who had visited a number of rural schools in Massachusetts and New York State, made a comparison of these with the rural schools of Ontario. People who believe that the rural schools of this Province have gone or are going to the "demition bow-wows," would have been astonished to hear how greatly superior they are in nearly every important respect to those of the two most advanced States in the Union.

GRASS, TREES AND VINES FOR EVERY FARM.

The prime ambition of Canadian twentieth-century agriculture should be to make the country a better place to live in. We have destroyed nature's vestments, and taken comparatively little time, as yet, to clothe the unsightly scars which we have left with the verdant blanket that Mother Earth is ever so ready to weave. So far as natural beauty is concerned, the past centuries have been chiefly destructive. It is now for us to make good the loss, and strive to produce that condition happily described by the phrase, "nature idealized." Thus far, urban communities are more fully alive to the great renaissance than are most rural districts. The City of London, Ont., with its twenty thousand trees, boulevard streets, and spacious rich-green lawns, presents a more charming blend of natural beauty than ninety-nine out of one hundred townships in the surrounding counties.

Tourists invariably contrast the finished appearance of Old Country landscapes—park-like, and restful to the eye—with the crude, raw-looking, rectangular, unfinished aspect of the new world. Our roads cut through steep hills, where naked gray clay banks offend the traveller's eye. Weeds flourish along the roadsides of Ontario and Quebec—the Maritime Provinces are a pleasing contrast in this respect—and in many cases brush obtrudes itself upon the sight. Orchards, ill-kept and innocent of spray, have to dispute the soil moisture and fertility with grass. Unpainted barns and outbuildings deface the landscape, unblushingly nude of trees. Stock trample in miry barnyards. Houses there are that look like prisons or barracks erected in the midst of commons. All these things and many others may be observed with painful frequency in many districts of the country. True, some here and there have tried to do their part by improving the home sur-

roundings, and now and then we find a man who considers there may be other arguments for maintaining a wood-lot than the mere sordid one of dollars and cents. The homesteads of these men are welcome as oases in a desert, and where we find a whole district that has been actuated by such intelligent appreciation of beauty and comfort, we have a community in which it is indeed a treat to live. Note, too, that in such districts land values are high, even higher, accordingly, than the money-making value of their farms warrant, showing that purchasers appreciate in a farm those improvements which they might not have the energy to make. The point of this argument is that it pays in dollars and cents to improve the home surroundings, besides which is the far greater advantage of enabling oneself and family to get the good out of life as they go along.

Of all classes, the farmer has the best chance to make himself an attractive home. He may not have the time to keep up many flower-beds, long rows of close-pruned hedges, or a great variety of shrubs, but these are the least desirable features of home adornment. The more important ones are gently-graded grounds, with plenty of thick, green grass, stately trees grouped or scattered naturally here and there, vines over old walls, good walks, and a general air of neatness around the homestead. These things cost little at the start, and scarcely anything to maintain; with every year they grow in beauty and comfort, becoming in time a lodestone that helps to hold the children to the farm. Of course, no matter how nice the home, the boys and girls will not all stay on it; that is impossible. But if the home inside is what it should be, and the farm so managed as to create enthusiasm in the children's minds, the chances of their becoming discontented will be very much reduced. And if they do leave, be sure they will be the better for the love that has been nurtured in them for the beautiful. Whether they go or stay, whether they seem to turn out well or ill, let their parents always be sure the few dollars' worth of time and money spent in making home attractive will repay a hundredfold better interest than ever was drawn from a bank. Be sure, too, of this, that if, in times gone by, children scorned the unattractive home, they will do so more and more from now on, because they are being universally educated to demand more.

But why dwell on reasons? The wisdom for home adornment surely needs no argument. The important point is how? For this, let us refer our readers to the series of articles prepared for "The Farmer's Advocate" by Prof. H. L. Hutt, of the Ontario Agricultural College. Prof. Hutt's recommendation as a landscape gardener is found in the admirable way in which the grounds of the Ontario Agricultural College are laid out and kept. For, while no farmer would want such extensive lawns as these, the same principles are applicable to a large extent in the embellishment of rural homes. Prof. Hutt's advice is practical. Read what he has to say, and if you cannot do all that he advises, do what you can.

And do not forget to scatter a few handfuls of clover seed along the lanes, roadsides, ditches, and any spots that were bare last year. Do not fail to plant a shelter-belt of spruce to protect the barnyard from winds, as well as one to the north and west sides of the house. Do not forget, either, to fence off the woodland this spring and keep out stock for ten or twelve years, thus making it not only a source of profit, an invaluable protection and a thing of beauty, but an ideal natural conservatory for the harboring of flowers and those invaluable friends of ours, the birds. No farm is complete without a wood-lot.