

As predicted in our last number the Ontario Government has decided to withdraw the annual grant of \$10,000 to the Provincial Exhibition, after the current year. The Provincial in its earlier days no doubt served a most useful purpose, but now that each large city and town in the province has its own annual exhibition there is no further need for the Provincial. During the debate in the Local Legislature on the motion to abolish the annual grant some of the speakers condemned the "side shows" at Fairs. We cannot see any sound objection to the introduction of "side shows," if kept within reasonable bounds. Take the Toronto exhibition as an example. During the days that something more than usually exciting or attractive is on the programme the fair grounds are packed with people, the majority of whom are from the country districts. People like to be interested and amused. Ample time and opportunity are afforded for visitors to examine the products of the soil, agricultural machinery, etc., and to witness the special attractions offered for their amusement, without the one conflicting with the other. Some people are cynical enough to object to horse-racing at country fairs, but let us ask what other exhibit ever filled a country fair ground like a half-mile track? We beg to enter a vigorous protest against the abuse heaped upon "side shows," and long may they flourish, we feel sure, is the wish of every one who has the interests of the agricultural fairs at heart.

INSTANCES are constantly cropping up which in themselves refute the statements made by chronic grumblers that farmers in Ontario are worse off than their brethren in the States. Last month we referred to the great distress existing amongst the farming population in Dakota, and now it seems that the farmers in New Jersey are in a very bad way. A dispatch to the *New York Tribune* of February 8th, says: "Many of the best and oldest say they cannot make both ends meet and that the outlook is not encouraging. Many farmers have made assignments and others are in the hands of the sheriff. To add to their discomfiture the tomato crop, which has been their main stay, has proved disastrous both as to quantity and price. For two seasons the farmers have tried to form a 'trust.' Last year they were indifferent and but few could be persuaded to enter the combination to demand a higher price from the canning factories, and now the second season's meeting for that purpose has proved a dismal failure. They say they will make their own sales for whatever they can get. The canners are consequently jubilant and are contracting with small farmers for \$6 per ton and less, this being even a lower figure than was paid last year." With a fine soil and excellent climate it is difficult to understand why New Jersey farmers should be in such a sorry plight when it is also taken into consideration that they have a market of sixty millions at their command. The condition of farmers in Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Wisconsin and other States is not much better than that of the farmers of New Jersey. In view of these facts well may we ask "What's the matter with Ontario?"

TWO MATTERS specially affecting the agricultural industry have been debated in the Dominion Parliament. One was a motion to abolish the duty on fertilizers or artificial manures, in the interest of the farmer, on the ground that the duty on these articles was a direct tax upon the whole agricultural community whose interest it is to be able to obtain whatever may enrich the soil at the lowest possible price. In opposition to the motion it was argued that there is in Canada an enormous supply of the raw materials which form the basis of agricultural manures and that we export every year large quantities of mineral phosphates, bones, leached ashes, etc., also that the duty on the manufactured article keeps out of the market a large importation of inferior stuff, competing in price with home made fertilizers of greater worth which, without duty, could not be sold at present prices, nor of as good quality. The other motion was to allow the farmers to have a rebate of the duty they pay on corn for feeding purposes. It was argued in support of the motion that the farmers

have to import the greater part of the corn they use for feeding cattle for export on which they pay a duty of seven and a half cents per bushel. The distillers also have to import the corn they require to make spirits for export, but the distillers are allowed a rebate of duty. It was therefore asked that farmers should be placed on the same footing as distillers. Against this it was argued that the free importation of Western corn has always kept down the price of our own coarse grains which under the operation of the duty, are about ten cents per bushel higher than they otherwise would be; also that the Maritime provinces have an equivalent to this duty in other ways, and further, that the National Policy must be sustained, or set aside as a whole, and not bit by bit to suit particular interests. Both motions were defeated.

THAT the Permanent Central Farmers' Institute, or as it is termed, "The Farmers' Parliament," will yet prove a leading factor in all political and economic questions affecting not only Ontario but the whole Dominion is a self-evident fact. Any one who attended the annual meeting held in Toronto last month could not fail to be struck by the intelligence, earnestness and ability displayed by the speakers while discussing the many important questions brought before the meeting. It is true, that some of them were inclined to volubility and to talk about matters irrelevant to the point under discussion, but they were the exception and will no doubt in time learn to appreciate the fact that "brevity is the soul of wit." It is not our intention to comment upon the various subjects dealt with but there was one thing that surprised us very much and we take the opportunity to touch upon it. In our January number we referred to the coming text book on agriculture for use in our rural schools and suggested that the government should appropriate a sum for the purpose of providing instruction by the professors of the Agricultural College, Guelph, to a certain number of select school teachers on the subject of agriculture, thus equipping them for teaching the young farmers not only the methods of agriculture but the principles on which success depends. Mr. L. Woolverton, of Grimsby, apparently agrees with us, as he moved a resolution to the effect that public school teachers, after teaching a certain length of time, should take a course of instruction in the Agricultural College, Guelph, in order to prepare them for teaching agriculture in schools. The motion was defeated and did not receive either the attention or support that it merited. Our suggestion is not that all public school teachers should receive this special course of instruction but only a select few, say one or two from each county, and we are convinced that the powers that be will ere long see the advantages to be derived from such a scheme and will not hesitate to adopt it. We don't believe that school teachers will ever be converted into farmers, or become qualified to instruct farmers or their sons in the actual practices of husbandry, but we do believe that they could, by building on the foundation of a good general education, become literary experts in the matter of agriculture, and be able to direct the youthful mind in proper grooves. They could encourage the development of the power of observation, for which there is so much necessity as a training for every walk in life, and so much scope and material constantly at hand in a country place. It is a notorious fact that boys are reared in our rural districts without knowing and without noticing intelligently the thousands of objects of interest that surround them. With broader education and an end of pedagogic fancy there would be less cause for the constant cry of "Why do boys leave the farm?"

#### FARMERS, ATTENTION!!!

It will be a matter of considerable surprise to farmers and others having the interests of agriculture at heart to learn that the Postmaster-General has in his wisdom decided that none but daily and weekly papers will in future go through the mails free. The bill is now before the House of Commons, but it has not yet become law, and we trust it never will. The monthly agricultural papers, we

venture to say, are far more entitled to the privilege of free postage than either dailies or weeklies. They devote their columns to the instruction and amusement of the farming community—the backbone of the country—and are just as essential to the farmer as the daily paper is to the man of business or to the politician. We have no hesitation in saying that the bill, if passed, will do a great wrong to a class who are already heavily enough taxed and have too little consideration paid to their interests. If postage is insisted upon, publishers of agricultural journals will be compelled to increase the subscription price of their papers, and the subscribers—or in other words the farmers—will have to pay the postage. Farmers and others interested should bestir themselves and by concerted and prompt action take effective steps to prevent this gross injustice from being perpetrated. Let them speak out with no uncertain sound before it is too late. They are in the majority and their voice should be heard on such a question as this. Comparatively few farmers give any special thought to existing laws, or to the law-making power of the land, their thoughts being mainly centered on their farms, and so through indifference and lack of concert among them, laws just and unjust are enacted for the government of the people. When it is too late they learn to their cost that laws have been enacted favoring certain classes or interests and inflicting great injustice upon them. If farmers would have their burdens lessened, if they would become on a level with all other classes, when seeking government aid and recognition, let them organize, and let them all pull together for the good of the class. We do not care whether they belong to either of the political parties or to none; we don't want them as party men but as farmers working for the benefit of farmers. They have now the opportunity to make their power felt, and we again urge upon them to take prompt steps by petitions to their representatives in Parliament and by other means to prevent the passage of this bill. It is preposterous to contend that a monthly paper is not as much a newspaper as a weekly. We have good reason to believe that the bill has been introduced for no other purpose than to please an organization which styles itself the Canadian Press Association. This Association is chiefly, if not wholly, composed of editors and proprietors of weekly newspapers who are jealous of the large circulation of the monthly agricultural papers. The Association is simply a laughing stock to the majority of the members of the Fourth Estate. It has degenerated into an association for no other purpose than to obtain cheap fares from railway and steamboat companies for an annual blowout in the fall of the year. There are a few weeklies which are a credit to the country, as they are ably edited and contain much interesting and instructive matter, but the majority are filled with matter sent out by an association in Toronto, and a few paragraphs of interest to nobody else but the people residing in the town or village where they are published. Take any of the monthly journals devoted to rural interests, including MASSEY'S ILLUSTRATED, and compare them with the generality of weekly newspapers, and see which is the better educator and which is entitled to any privileges from the Postal Department. Now, farmers, all we want is fair play, and we call upon you—not in our interests, mind, but in your own—to rise up in your might and kill this most iniquitous measure. Time is precious.

[Owing to a press of matter we are compelled to hold over our third article on "Simple Studies on Interesting Subjects" till our next issue.]