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Editorial.

A Diminishing Commodity.

One of the unfortunate results of all-grain farming is that the commodity so necessary to farming, namely, faithful, intelligent service by hired men, is becoming harder and harder to purchase as the years go by.

Many a farmer has had the experience of hiring a man by the year, to find that, on occasions when chores are to be done, and himself or whoever regularly does such, incapacitated or otherwise prevented from doing those chores, that rather than attend to the necessary work the hired man will let it stand, allow animals to suffer, and see loss incurred thereby to the owner, rather than lift a finger. The relations between the hired man and the prairie farmer are vastly different to those existing between the farmer of the East and his hired man. Conditions are markedly different on the prairie, and it cannot be gainsaid that the hired man has, in many cases, taken advantage of the freedom accorded him, and has, in many cases, tried and contrived to give as little work for as big wages as possible.

The success of the great stock-breeders in Great Britain hinged largely on the character and quality of the service rendered by their herdsmen, grooms and shepherds, and to-day one of the great causes of dissatisfaction with agriculture there is undoubtedly due to the inferior quality of labor now to be obtained, and at enhanced cost, as compared with that of twenty years ago. The conservative old British farmer attributes the deterioration in the quality of farm labor to the rapid spread of cheap education, in which he is partially wrong and partially right.

The race of timeservers is not diminishing at all, evidences of which are not confined to the profession of agriculture.

Conditions at present in the West tend to encourage too much latitude by the employers, who, in many cases, know that if they insist on a fair day's work for a fair day's pay, the hired man will leave either on short notice or wait until an opportune time to catch his employer at a disadvantage.

This unfortunate condition of affairs is not due altogether to the freedom with which the hired man may get a start and himself become an employer of labor, but largely to the lack of discipline and training inculcated in early life, for which the present emasculated condition of the teaching profession is largely to blame. Of course, this lack of a sense of responsibility in many hired men is the result of heredity; good workers are not bred by lazy lack-brain parents.

As the quality of our agriculture improves, in which the agricultural college is destined to play quite a part, the quality of farm labor may be expected to improve, and the sense of responsibility to be increased in the hired man, although as long as land continues to be had for a comparatively small price, any permanence in the employment of farm laborers can hardly be expected.

A hired man of poor quality will never make a good farmer, and the man who is inclined to shirk the work of his employer will never be a success in doing for himself. If best labor has a dignity of its own which cannot be taken away from it, and the employee who appreciates that fact will not be satisfied to render inferior service, neither will he worry over the possibility that he may render a little more service than he is paid for.

The fellow who quibbles at certain work because, as Portia says, "It is not in the bond," is a nuisance on the farm, and an example bound to have a vicious effect on others with better intentions.

People and Crops.

Something of the mental tension experienced by an interested spectator of a horse-race or other exciting event is now felt by the great majority of Canadians. The wheat crop, upon which so much of our commercial prosperity depends, has been sown, and is growing, and every influence that hinders or helps its growth is watched with keenest interest. Nor is the solicitude for the welfare of the crop confined alone to the farmer—the direct producer. Every person whose progress depends upon Western development—and whose does not?—feels that he has something at stake in the wheat crop. All through our industrial affairs there is so close a connection between the producer, distributor and manufacturer, that the prosperity of the one means the advancement of the others' interests, and more so is this the case when it is the producer that is prospering.

So far, speaking generally, the conditions have been favorable for a good crop. The soil this spring, owing to a light snowfall through the winter, required a lot of moisture, and this has come in more than average abundance during June, so that growth from now on may be expected to be rapid and healthful. Had the rain which has fallen come later in the season it would have been considered dangerous as encouraging rust, but it is generally supposed that the spores of this fungus are not yet sufficiently advanced, nor the wheat sufficiently soft and porous, to have set up the disease, consequently the public mind is more or less free from apprehension on this score. Growing weather is now the most desired condition, but, of course, the intense interest in the crop will not abate until it is all safely in stook.

Making Homesteadings.

In earlier days the excuse for bare surroundings and unprotected buildings was that trees and vines would not grow on the prairie, and that was supposed to settle it; but the continued efforts of a large number of farmers and horticulturists completely discredit such assertions. In the Red River Valley the assortment of native and imported hardy shrubs, vines and trees compares favorably with countries whose climate is much milder than ours. Recently we had the privilege of looking over the nursery of Mr. W. D. Buchanan, about ten miles from Winnipeg, where the varieties of trees and shrubs suitable for home decorations can be numbered in scores. Cottonwoods, maples, elms, willows, pines, spruces, arbor vitae, honeysuckle (with six different shades of bloom), Spiraea (native and improved variegated), Tartarian maple, Minnesota Juneberry, lilacs galore, Caraganas, Russian olive (a very pretty shrub), buffalo berry (a splendid hedge plant, the fruit of which is equal to red currants), Russian laurel, Japanese quince, several native snowballs, roses, Virginia creeper, etc., etc.—these all growing in the richest profusion. At Nelson, Mr. Stevenson is directing his efforts more particularly toward fruit-growing, although he also has a large collection of trees and shrubs, all, in fact, of the native varieties, and many more besides. Similar work is being done farther west, at the Patmore nurseries at Brandon, and by Mr. Caldwell, at Virden. These men are pioneering the horticultural business. They, and many other workers besides, are finding out what treatment best suits the growth of trees and shrubs where conditions are different from those in which most of our people have lived. They are experimenting with trees and caring for them through the most delicate periods of their lives, thus making it easier for the average man to provide himself with a grove.

In an orchard of low-set, hardy trees, Mr.

Stevenson has produced barrels of apples. Mr. Buchanan goes in more extensively for small fruits and shrubs, and his annual crop of gooseberries, currants, strawberries and raspberries is measured by bushels, and that off a mere garden patch of land. In the Red River Valley three varieties of gooseberries are very easily grown, namely, Downing's, Smith's Improved, and Houghton. These may be covered with brush in winter to hold the snow, and if protected by some kind of a wind-break will fruit regularly. Under similar conditions, such varieties of raspberries as Turner, Loudon, Philadelphia and King come through the winter with scarcely an injury from frost. But it is to trees and shrubs we wish to direct attention, for now is the time to prepare the land for them. Select the location of the future wind-break or grove, get the land into the best possible tilth for next year's planting, then get an order for trees and shrubs in early to the Government or some of the Western nurseries, and set the trees with a determination to make the farmstead comfortable and homelike.

Government Ownership Not Profitable.

The deficit of nearly \$2,000,000, announced by Hon. Mr. Emerson, Minister of Railways, in connection with running the Government railway, the Intercolonial, is somewhat of a blow to the advocates of Government ownership of public utilities. True, the Intercolonial has not the most advantageous location for a dividend-paying road, but authorities on such matters claim that were the road managed by a private company, the deficit would not be nearly so large. Members of the Government agree that a Government-owned road cannot be or is not operated so economically as a privately-owned road, and the general tone of the discussion upon the subject in Parliament seemed to indicate that the Intercolonial would, in the near future, be turned over to some company to operate. It is something of a reflection upon the executive ability of our Governments of both parties that they cannot operate a road as profitably as do railway companies, but they are willing to admit that political considerations have a great deal to do in the matter. Of course, it is but natural for the present Government to take this view of the situation, as it vindicates their policy in connection with the construction and operation of the Grand Trunk Pacific. However, under the previous Government, proportionally great deficits had to be annually faced, so it is probable that the question of Government-ownership, at least of railways in Canada, will soon be a dead issue. If for no other reason, the enormous financial burdens that would require to be assumed by the country in taking over our great transcontinental railway systems would probably stand in the way of the adoption of such a policy. What with the heavy interest charges involved, and the hazards of politically-controlled railways, it is seriously open to question whether the people would fare any better in the long run than they will under regulation of rates, service and facilities by the Canadian Railway Commission.

If the Intercolonial had been constructed and run on business principles, rather than as political machinery, it would have stood a chance of paying, though it might not be quite as satisfactory to some of the people who use it. What is more, had the Government extended the Intercolonial to the Upper Lakes, where it could tap direct the business of the West, by acquiring the Canada Atlantic line to Depot Harbor, on Georgian Bay, it would have held the key to the transportation problem in Canada; but the Grand Trunk has scooped in the Canada Atlantic, so that chance is gone. The only other way in sight to control the situation is a 20-ft. French