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EDITORIAL

Politics a Lesser Duty

Farmers, through the farmer's organizations, have a right to see that the election campaign now under way does not monopolize the attention of provincial departments of agriculture. If there is such a thing as a "ripe time" it is surely with us now, with respect to a campaign of education and discussion against weeds, and upon matters of soil cultivation and crop growing generally. Here and there throughout the older settled parts are to be found men who are keeping their farms clean, are increasing their average yields, are growing earlier maturing crops each year, and so are lessening the danger of frosts, are handling their land so that it is becoming richer without becoming ranker, and in many other ways are winning for themselves the reputation of first class farmers. This is a most desirable condition. It is a condition that should be extended by every possible means, public and private, by organized farmers, and by the efforts of each individual. It is too frequently the duty of this paper as well as other agencies of agricultural education, to expose incompetency in farming, to hold up horrible examples of neglect and ignorance. We want more bright and shining lights to radiate the agricultural sphere.

Without wishing to dictate to, or belittle the efforts that are already being made by the officers in charge of Farmers' Institutes, agricultural societies, and other organizations of farmers, we suggest that some special effort be made to carry on an active campaign this coming winter.

Farmers have a right, which by the way, is generally ignored, to demand of the provincial ministers of agriculture, that their first care shall be the fostering of the farming industry within each province, that each minister of agriculture shall provide himself with a deputy thoroughly familiar with the problems of the farming community, that agricultural organization work be under the care of enthusiastic and aggressive officials.

It may be important that the government at Ottawa be vested in a party of another name, or that it be maintained as at present constituted, but of infinitely more importance to the average farmer and consequently to each province, is it that every manner and means of better farming be brought to the knowledge of those who are spending their days and strength in producing the means of sustaining the race. We trust we are not in advance of public sentiment in making these suggestions, and will appreciate whatever may be done by way of endorsement, and in carrying them into effect.

The Wheat Fields of the Present and Future

The wheat growing country on this continent is extending Northward. Nobody needs to be told that. In 1890 the United States was producing eighteen bushels of wheat to Canada's one. Now the ratio is six to one. Within the next quarter of a century the available wheat growing land of the Canadian Northwest will be taken up, not occupied perhaps, but no longer a part of the public domain. We have vast wheat growing areas in this country yet, and the next twenty-five years will not witness their entire appropriation, but within that time, at the present rate of increase in acreage, as much land as can be safely put to the crop will be growing wheat. This continent is approaching the maximum so far as acreage is concerned.

In South America the wheat growing areas lie between the 30th and 40th degrees of South latitude, chiefly in the Argentine Republic, though Uruguay, and to some small extent, Brazil and Chili, are exporters of wheat. The Argentine came into world prominence in 1890, by producing a thirty million bushel wheat crop. Previous to that year flour had been imported from the States. In 1900 the crop was estimated at 105,000,000 bushels. Since that year

it has fluctuated somewhat with, however, a good increase on the whole. In 1901 the crop produced amounted to 156,000,000 bushels. Wheat growing is in a backward condition in the country. The Argentine, truly, is the one place where all the farmer has to do is tickle the earth, drop in a little seed, and watch the soil laugh wheat. Little time is spent in preparing the land, and as a result acre yields are low and decreasing. Some improvement in farming methods are being introduced, but it will take a good long time before new ideas can be worked into so indolent a people. The Argentine may increase her wheat producing acreage to some considerable extent still, and has plenty of scope for increasing the acre yield and quality of the product.

In Europe the largest wheat producer, of course, is Russia. Russia in 1907 (the last year for which statistics are available) produced a crop of four hundred and fifty-five million bushels. This was less than the average yield, the crop for several years previous standing over five hundred and fifty million bushels. France comes second with a crop for the same year of three hundred and seventy million bushels, Austria-Hungary third with one hundred and eighty-five, Italy fourth with one hundred and seventy-eight, and Germany a modest fifth with one hundred and twenty-eight million bushels. Then Spain drops in with an even hundred million, and Great Britain heads the list of smaller wheat producers with a total of about fifty-three million bushels.

Coming to Asia, the British Indian Empire with a yield running annually well over the three hundred million mark heads the list. Asiatic Russia in 1907 produced fifty-six million bushels of wheat. Turkey and Japan supply the remainder required to bring the wheat produced on the continent of Asia in 1907 up to four hundred and forty-seven million, five hundred and eighteen thousand bushels. Japan, it is interesting to note, has more than doubled her wheat output since 1903.

Algeria, Egypt and Tunis, in the order named, are the chief African wheat growing states. The Egyptian output for years has stood at twelve million bushels per annum. Algeria produces something like thirty millions. The British Colonies in the south produce a bare two millions, Natal less than is produced on an average western farm, viz. six thousand to eight thousand bushels.

The Australasian continent is a rather indifferent wheat producer. Drought sometimes cuts down the yield almost to nothing. In 1903 barely twelve million bushels were grown in the six states of Australia. The next year seventy-six million, four hundred and eighty-eight thousand bushels were grown. The yield has been fairly average ever since, running to sixty-eight million, one hundred and eighty-five thousand bushels in 1907. Including New Zealand, where the crop last year was about twenty per cent. off, Australasia produced seventy-three million, nine hundred and sixty-seven thousand bushels of wheat.

The world's total wheat yield in 1907 by continents was:

North America	740,693,000
South America	178,636,000
Europe	1,616,086,000
Asia	447,518,000
Africa	51,626,000
Australasia	73,967,000
Grand Total	3,108,526,000

This total is just three hundred and twenty-six million eight hundred and seventy-five thousand bushels less than the total of 1906, and the lowest for any number of years previously.

From the time the world began, wheat has been the food of man, and in discovering and conquering new worlds, and again in the ages past, men have made such minds that such and such a point marked

What the Scottish Commission Might Give and Take

From observations in the East, particularly Ontario, the Scottish agricultural commission now touring Canada has come to the conclusion that the Canadian farmer does not work his land as intensively as he might. This conclusion was reached before Western farming methods had been observed, and needless to say, will be unanimously confirmed by the inspection of our farms. This is the common impression carried away by observers from older lands of our methods. We, ourselves, know it is a feature of our farming that can be improved, but our excuse has been lack of time and scarcity of help. There are also other economic objections to the general adoption of more intensive methods; we are too far removed from large markets where the products of intensive farming are in demand, energy employed in extensive farming is better compensated, although the land suffers, than is labor and talent expended upon intensive farming.

The natural course of affairs is first that there shall be a large amount of land cultivated per unit of population, because land is a cheap commodity in a new country, then, as population increases, and land becomes more valuable, greater attention to it is required, and being given, the returns are proportionately larger.

In the early stages of our agriculture we did not all adopt the extensive system. Many of our early settlers began with the same ideals of farming that prevailed in their old homes, with the result that their returns were not as large as they might have been if they had gone more extensively into grain growing. But of late there has been rather too general a movement toward the large wheat farm system, with the result that other lines of farming, that will pay much better in many districts, have been neglected, and much of our most prolific soil has become impaired.

The visit of the Scottish commission will do Canadian agriculture a world of good if it arrests attention and directs thought upon this phase of our development.

But despite the fact that serious faults can be found with our methods of farming, the travelling Scotchmen will find much to recommend to their farmers at home. If our methods can teach anything at all it is on the line of saving time, and time saved is money made. Extensive farming has necessitated the use of machinery of a large type, propelled by double or treble the horse power usually seen on an old country farm. Men in Scotland are paid to drive one or two horses, and each day one man will accomplish just as much plowing as a two horse team and a walking plow will get over. In Western Canada a man will go out with from four to eight horses, and turn over from three to five times as much as the old country plowman, although, in the matter of quality of work the advantage will be altogether with the smaller outfit. Nevertheless a modified adoption of our extensive methods in Scotland would effect a vast saving of time, just as a modified adoption of old country intensive methods in Western Canada would immensely improve the condition of our soil, and increase the yields of our crops. There is yet no perfect method of farming, and Canadians should be free to profit by the experience of others. Less conservative than the Scotch, we should have more benefit from the visitors' trip to the farmers of the old land.