

# WESTERN PIONEER HINTS.

By W. D. ALBRIGHT.

Optimism is a predominant characteristic of homesteaders. It is a fine quality, but when over-developed it leads the pioneer to attempt more than he can well accomplish. This applies to work as well as to financing. To one whose enthusiasm is yet untempered by experience it may not seem much of a proposition to "throw up" a log house and stable, "bust" ten acres, "scoop out" a well, put up a few loads of wild hay, etc. The real thing surprises him with its various obstacles and hold-backs.

Nearly every operation takes longer than the newcomer expected, and there are unthought-of preliminaries to each one. The building logs must be first located, then cut, hauled, possibly hewed and laid up. The house is then nicely commenced. Floors, windows, doors, roof, chinking of walls and other details spoil from a week to a month, depending upon the size and the builder's help and experience. I omitted to mention that before the logs are cut a permit is supposed to have been obtained. In practice this regulation is frequently honoured in the breach rather than in the observance. Lines must be run before fencing can be done, and this often necessitates considerable "brushing." A spot must be picked for the breaking and this may involve some "grubbing"—the *bete noir* of the homesteader. Rainy days and trips to the blacksmith shop interrupt the plowing. Quite often winter finds the house unfinished, about half the first year's quota of breaking done, the stock standing tied to a fence on the lee side of the stack, or else seeking scrub shelter, and water being hauled from a creek or a neighbour's spring.

It is far from our purpose to counsel indolence. The average homesteader needs to hustle if he is to make good. But there is more profit in the hustling if one is keeping his work in hand rather than being driven by it. Be conservative in undertaking; energetic in execution. Attempt about half what you think you should be able to do.

Many a homesteader takes too much truck along with him, and it is an encumbrance for years to come. Sell or leave with a friend for a while the good furniture—all, indeed, but the barest essentials of kitchen equipment, clothing and beds. Just a word of experience here. When we came West we yielded to the temptation to bring a car-load of stuff to the nearest city, intending

to sell the surplus there. Hard times prevented sale except at heavy sacrifice. We stored most of the stuff at a cost of fifty dollars per annum plus high insurance and eventually moved it over a two-hundred-and-fifty-mile trail at a cost of three dollars per cwt. On arrival, some of it was stored for a time under a tent, then shifted to a neighbour's shack, and finally to our own home. What with storage, freight, insurance and handling it cost us the best part of its original value. It is not a unique experience. I have known men to be moving off and on for years. The homesteader has responsibilities and expenses enough without adding a single unnecessary one.

What has been said of furniture applies also to livestock. Cruelty and loss are very liable to attend the taking in of a lot of animals before one is ready for them. Being ready implies having an adequate supply of water, feed and shelter definitely assured. In the absence of that, the new comer will usually do well to limit his ark to a working team or two, a family cow, a few chickens, and perhaps a brood sow. And it is not always wise to take even that much. Circumstances govern.

### Too Many Jobs on the Go.

"The trouble with X," remarked one homesteader of another in our hearing the other day, "is that he never finishes anything. He will start to build a fence, do a little at it, then haul a few building logs, or a load of feed, and so on from one thing to another. He always has two dozen jobs on the go."

The error criticized above is a natural one for a pioneer to fall into. It leads to a chaotic condition of work where one never knows just what to tackle next. In the midst of twenty unfinished tasks he is likely as not to lie abed of a cold morning or sit by the fire of a rainy day in a nonplussed, undecided frame of mind, while the odd jobs multiply and unfinished ones remain undone.

It is not always expedient to complete every job before tackling another. Some, like seeding, breaking, haying and harvest, call imperatively for punctual attention, while certain others may well await the farmer's convenience. But beware of drifting into the habit of switching off in hesitant, whimsical fashion. I have a tendency that way myself and speak from experience, more or less. I have come to realize, however,

that unnecessary changing of jobs is baffling and wasteful of time and for the past couple of years particularly have been making a point of self-discipline on this line, with results that are beneficial. When undecided which of two jobs to go at I settle it by completing the unfinished one first, or by carrying out original intentions. "One thing at a time. Concentrate."

Every little while I pause to jot down a list of odd jobs to be attended to, often rewriting it in order of precedence. I put this list in my pocket or lay it away in the desk, and as opportunity permits we attend to those jobs one after another in turn, or as near that as weather and other conditions allow. Each one as completed is checked off the list and there is a rare satisfaction in seeing a formidable programme of duties gradually polished off the slate. Of course, new jobs keep piling up to be set down on fresh lists, but that is not bad so long as one is steadily wading through the work instead of leaving it littered helter-skelter in unfinished chaos all around him.

Pay as you go. Live within your means. Be cautious in undertaking work, energetic in doing it. Concentrate on one thing at a time. These seem to me sound maxims, the observance of which makes for thrift, happiness and success.

### POTATO FLOUR AND HEMP.

The development of the potato flour and hemp industries is receiving active consideration in Western Canada, as a result of the activities of the Western Committee of the Canadian Reconstruction Association, the Winnipeg Board of Trade and the Western Canada Development Bureau. Both industries are receiving the special consideration of the Council of Agriculture.

### NAVIGATION UNDER DIFFICULTIES.

What is considered in Canadian shipping circles as a voyage extraordinary was commenced recently from Halifax to Quebec by the Canadian Government ice-breaker *Montcalm*. This vessel convoyed another down the Gulf late in January, and early in March was on her way up the Gulf and the St. Lawrence. This was at a date on which a ship has never hitherto attempted the trip.

### HEALTH IN THE SCHOOLS.

The Saskatchewan Provincial Government's experiment in organising a health supervision branch of the Department of Education for the purpose of supervising the health of the children in the public schools of the province has proved to be so successful that it is the intention of the Government to increase the staff of school nurses from three to ten this year.

### QUEBEC'S RECORD YEAR.

According to the latest report of the Minister of Colonisation, Mines and fisheries for Quebec, the year 1918 was a record one in the history of mining operations there. During the period named the total value of the mineral production was more than \$18,500,000, an increase over the previous year's figures of nearly \$1,500,000. Asbestos headed the list with a total output worth nine million dollars, the province of Quebec being the largest producer of this mineral in the world. Copper, chrome iron, magnesite, mica, zinc and lead also featured prominently in the list of products.

Use your gifts faithfully and they shall be enlarged. Practice what you know and you shall attain to higher knowledge.—ARNOLD.

## Information Service.

OFFICIAL information on all matters of interest to returning Canadian soldiers and their dependents may be obtained through the Information Bureaux, established at the Khaki College Centres at Buxton, Bramshott, Rhyl, Ripon, Sunningdale, Seaford, Witley, and The Beaver Hut, Strand, London.

Enquiries made by letter or in person to the Central Bureau of Information, 31 Bedford Square, London, W.C. 1, will receive prompt attention.

Every question asked will be given the fullest consideration.