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EDITORIAL.

The "Devil Machine."

The automobile fad is again abroad in the land. Our readers will probably agree with us in saying that he is the most unmitigated nuisance that ever struck the public highways of this country. As a general rule, he has more money than brains, and should either be put under restraint or inoculated with common sense, if only some modern pathologist would discover an effective serum of that character to inject under his cuticle. We think of offering a reward for the discovery of such a preparation, and John D. Rockefeller might do worse than set apart a few millions to endow an institute for the treatment of motorists, who would be required to produce a certificate therefrom before being granted a license by the Provincial Secretary to run one of their "devil machines." He is a pretty hopeless subject, but if caught in time and given heavy doses at frequent intervals for a considerable length of time, he might reach a condition in which it would be safe for him to be at large.

Farmers have been heavily taxed for the construction of the roads upon which they and their families are supposed to have the right to travel unmolested in the pursuit of their business, but the advent of the wealthy automobile idiot has changed all this. His ill-smelling machine rushes furiously along in a cloud of dust which would render invisible his tag number even if it were seven times as large as the law prescribes. If the hapless farmer or his wife do not wish to be run over and maimed they can get out of the road or take to the nearest side line, providing they are smart enough and the horse does not die of fright in the interval. Most horses are likely to die of old age before getting used to the sight and sound of the automobile, which more nearly resembles a Western cyclone than anything we know of. Meanwhile, about all the farmer can do is to exercise patience, and prosecute for damages whenever he has ground for so doing.

In the Province of Ontario every automobile must carry its number "securely fixed" on the back of the body of the vehicle, and the figures must be five inches in height, instead of three as formerly. Lamps must be carried in the front of the vehicle, and the number of the vehicle must be displayed on the glass of the lamps. The section requiring the motorman to be careful not to frighten horses and to stop on signal, was amended at the last session of the Legislature so as to compel the motorist to slow down within 100 yards, and to pass a horse at a speed not greater than seven miles an hour. The necessity of signalling to the motorist has been removed. The Provincial Secretary is given power to suspend or revoke licenses, and the same Minister is required to send to every municipal clerk on 1st May and 1st September a list of licenses granted. In case of accident through runaway of a horse, the onus of proof as to cause of damage is cast upon the owner or driver of the motor vehicle. This law comes into force on the 15th of this month.

Like other crazes, the automobile will have its day, and will then be thrown in the scrap-iron heap. Fortunately, in Canada, at least, there are seasons of muddy roads—fall and spring—and a good long winter, with its deep snows, when the old and well-tried friend of humanity, the horse, has the right of way, and will be found with us long after the present fad has disappeared from the King's highway, which, in their present rough condition, have one good effect, viz., dislocating the mechanism of the automobile and rapidly

wearing out its pneumatic tires. This is a small mercy, and about the only justification for maintaining bad roads we can think of at the present time.

The War with Weeds.

The complaint of a correspondent in this issue against the Ontario Statute requiring that farmers cut the weeds on the side of the public roads on which their lands front, in addition to the performance of statute labor, not always fairly apportioned or applied, calls attention once more to the urgent need of combating at every point the forward march of the weed nuisance. For statute labor laws, as commonly carried out, we confess to a wholesome lack of respect, believing a judicious commutation of the time required for cash, and its expenditure on well-directed permanent road improvement, to be a more businesslike principle, and one more capable of satisfactory results than the present system. But, "eternal vigilance is the price of liberty" from the curse of weeds, and farmers should declare a perpetual war against them. We do not think it should be considered a hardship to be required to cut down weeds by the roadside opposite one's own farm. The principles of self-preservation should lead farmers to attend to this duty apart from the feeling of personal pride accompanying an appearance of neatness. When we consider the potentialities for damage and desolation wrapped up in the seed sacs of noxious weeds, we should make it a strict rule to allow as few as possible to ripen. One plant may shed a thousand seeds and send them out on the wings of the wind on a mission of mischief that years of labor and care may not overtake. Farmers, as a rule, in the past, have not exercised sufficient care in the purchase of seed grain and grass seeds to avoid introducing noxious weeds. The danger from this source has been emphasized by the reports of official tests of clover and grass seeds placed upon the market, in which many thousands of weed seeds have been found in a single pound of the samples offered for sale, and for which farmers have been paying high prices to seed their land. The organization of a Canadian seed-growers' association for the production and dissemination of pure seed of improved quality, a report of the annual meeting of which appears in this issue, should serve a good purpose in directing attention to the importance of sowing clean seed. In the meantime, every available means should be employed to destroy weeds in their incipient stages by frequent cultivation in all hoed crops, a process which, at the same time, pays well in the increased growth and yield of the crop, as well as improving the condition of the land for the production of future crops of any kind.

The seeds of certain weeds, such as mustard and ox-eye daisy, being of an oily nature, will lie dormant in the land for years if plowed under, and when turned up to the influence of sun and air will germinate and reproduce in profusion. With these, where too numerous for pulling by hand, care should be taken to check them before ripening their seed, the mustard by spraying, and the daisy by the use of the mower, as it usually appears in meadows or pasture land. In the corn and root fields, keeping the cultivator going as regularly and as often as time and circumstances permit, is one of the most effective ways of eradicating weeds, commencing the siege when they are young, and keeping them cut down below the surface of the ground, as it is only through their leaves they can breathe, and when deprived of this privilege they must succumb.

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 River ship canal from Georgian Bay to the Ottawa River and Montreal, but the big railways intimate that they won't allow that to be done! But that is another story. In the meantime, before abandoning the Intercolonial, why not try, as a last resort, the expedient suggested of running it by a commission constituted something after the fashion of the Railway Commission?

Prof. F. H. King states that it will often happen in farm practice, after a field of corn or potatoes has been brought into perfect condition, so far as being free from weeds and in possessing a good mulch are concerned, that a rain may come, making it advisable to cultivate the field once more, in order to restore the earth mulch and to retain the matter which has been brought up within the reach of root action.