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EDITORIAL.

No one who shrinks from knowing the exact facts of his business need expect to master it.

Manitoba wants a population of a million, and a gathering of enthusiastic citizens have declared she must have it before the centennial census in 1921. That's ginger.

Ice twenty-four inches thick in January, much it formed under a thick protecting coat of snow, spells some January weather for the Western part of Ontario.

"I miss very much the corn silage and roots," complains an Ontario farmer now living in Manitoba, who describes in the Winnipeg "Farmer's Advocate" his present none-too-successful method of steaming cut hay, oat sheaves and chopped wheat and oats. No wonder. The pleasure of utilizing these convenient and excellent winter foods is hardly realized till one is without them.

Eight thousand two hundred and seventy-two homicides were reported in the United States in 1911, with 74 legal and 71 illegal executions. As an American weekly remarks, no wonder they have so many murders, when there is only one chance in 112 that a murderer will be executed by law. Swift and sure legal execution is necessary to deter murder on the one hand, and lynching on the other.

Appearances are well worth considering in making farm improvements. While utility should be the sine-qua-non, it is worth while remembering that a farmstead is more than a place of business; it is a home, and farm architecture, even in such respects as silo roofs and proportions of outbuildings may not be ignored without permanent affront to the aesthetic sense. Well-placed buildings of pleasing proportions often cost little or no more than eyesores. Make the whole farm a home.

The good sense, the courage and the real statesmanship of President Wm. H. Taft shines out in these sentences from an article in the Century Magazine defending his arbitration treaties: "The question has been asked, in tones of horror, 'Can a nation properly submit to a joint commission or any other partly foreign body a question which affects its vital interests, or, worse still, its national honor?' I say a nation can. Indeed, I would rather take my chances of securing a just decision from a commission of honorable men than from the god of war."

The past ten months in Western Ontario have been characterized by a succession of extremes. An interrupted and, therefore, belated seeding was followed by the driest and hottest growing season in the memory of the oldest inhabitant. Autumn was so wet that there was only a short period when anything but sod could be properly plowed. An early spell of winter in November was followed by an unseasonably mild, rainy December which converted barnyards into sloughs and convinced every farmer that he must have the muddiest in the neighborhood, since he could not imagine anything much worse. January brought the coldest snap in years, thermometers in the neighborhood of London registering 24 and even 28 degrees below zero. We await the next turn with interest.

Training of Rural-school Teachers.

The quality of rural education is a matter of vital concern not only to the agricultural population, but to the nation as a whole. There are important particulars in which the interests of city and town schools differ from those of rural schools, and with which the makers and administrators of school laws and regulations must be familiar if one or other class of schools is not to suffer. For obvious reasons, the class that will suffer, if either, is likely to be the rural one.

It is a trite saying that, "As the teacher, so is the school." Expensive buildings, profuse equipments and loads of textbooks, with a poor teacher, do not begin to compare for excellence with the efficient teacher in a meagerly equipped school. The late President Garfield declared, in effect, that a student seated on a log in the woods, with Mark Hopkins for a teacher, would become more highly educated than by sitting the same time under the formal routine of lecturing in the conventional university.

We do not fully accept the statement that teachers, like poets, are born, not made. Better say, good teachers are born, and then made. A good teacher cannot be made out of one who lacks sympathy, patience, animation and certain other native qualities, but one who possesses natural aptitude must undergo a course of training before he reaches a high degree of efficiency in the teaching art. Scholarship, as ordinarily understood, may be necessary, but it is not the chief quality for successful teaching.

In town or city schools, where a number of teachers are working together, who can consult each other, and where they can turn in difficulty to a usually experienced principal, individual excellence may not count for nearly so much, but in the one-roomed rural school, where one and the same person combines in kind, if not in degree, all the activities of a whole graded school staff, it is emphatically true that, as the teacher, so is the school. The maintenance of a sufficient supply of properly-trained teachers becomes at once the most important and probably the most difficult problem connected with the administration of a system of rural education.

This problem of teacher-training is a complex one. It involves the rejection of aspirants who are intellectually, physically or temperamentally unfit; it involves supervised application of presented theories, preferably in the important interests of school management, under conditions similar to those obtaining where the actual teaching will be done; and it also involves the development of the power and habit of self-criticism which will abide with the teacher and make future experience fruitful of improvement.

The experience of Ontario is worth reviewing. Back in the fifties, and for a quarter of a century, it offered Normal School instruction, with practice in a model school, to all persons ambitious enough to make a moderate investment of time and money for this training. Others were admitted directly to the work of teaching on their passing a prescribed written examination conducted by the several county boards. For the next quarter of a century, dating from the middle seventies, it tried the combined Normal School and county Model School system. The abolition of the county Model Schools, a few years ago, introduced the third experiment.

As compared with the second or third methods, there is nothing to be said in favor of the first. So long as preliminary training remains entirely

optional, the majority of the recruits will always enter the profession untrained. But there is room for discussion of the comparative merits and possibilities of the second and third.

The second system—the combined county Model and Normal one—cost the Province much less money than the third, and distributed the cost to the young teachers in such a way that they bore it much more easily. But in a matter of such vital importance as teacher-training, the item of cost is a minor consideration. If the third system—the one at present under trial—is decidedly the best, but the cost bears too heavily to get a sufficient supply of good teachers, then the Province ought to bear such proportion of the cost as will encourage a sufficient supply of persons of the right quality to take the course. Reason and experience show that the shortage of teachers falls most heavily on the rural schools.

But, apart from consideration of cost, is the third method as good as the second one, or as the second one might have been made? It is not so very many years since Ontario was very proud of its combined county Model and Normal School method of teacher-training. At the greatest exhibition of educational systems and results that the world ever saw—the World's Fair of 1893—this method was very specially commended, and on it, more than on any other feature, Ontario's educational laurels at that time rested. The high praise bestowed on it may have rendered the authorities insensible to the shortcomings observed by those who were immediately connected with carrying on the county Model Schools. These schools—one or two of them in every county—were centers of professional stimulation in their respective districts. Every inspector had a share and an interest in the efficiency of his Model School. County boards of examiners exercised some measure of discretion in regulating the standard of certification at their respective schools to meet the needs of their territorial jurisdiction. This reasonable practice continued until the time that county-board certificates were made provincial. Ostensibly, this change was made to relieve the scarcity of teachers that existed in certain of the newer districts of the Province. In these districts salaries were lower than in the older counties, and what should have been foreseen soon happened. The supply of teachers that naturally belonged to these districts, armed with Provincial certificates, sought schools in the counties where better salaries were offered. The ill-effects followed: Competition for schools lowered salaries to a degree that failed to hold good men and women in the profession, and the standard of efficiency in the Model Schools themselves was reduced. The latter result occurred in this way: Examiners said that they might as well pass their own poor candidates as have their schools filled with as poor or worse material from other counties. It is needless to refer to the effect it would naturally have on the classes of students when they realized that there was no danger of failing at the examinations. In some counties two schools were doing the work that might equally well have been done by one. It was said, too, that some of the schools were imperfectly manned and equipped. These and some other shortcomings were clearly remediable, but some people ignorantly charged them to the system itself. It was no small thing in their favor that the prospective Normal School term tended to prevent the Modelite from settling down on his oars and stagnating at the level at which he entered the profession. A month at the Normal after a year's actual