

Farmer's Advocate

and Home Journal

REGISTERED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE COPYRIGHT ACT OF 1875

November 13, 1907

WINNIPEG, MANITOBA.

Vol. XLII. No. 790

EDITORIAL

Misguided Paternalism.

The theme now being largely editorialized upon by certain western exchanges reaching this office would lead the uninitiated to suppose that the farmers of this country, in intelligence and foresight, were slightly inferior to the peasantry of Russia to whom an imperial ukase has recently been issued forbidding the further exportation of wheat. Famine it would seem is staring in the face large wheat-producing districts of that country, and until the government intervened and checked the exportation of food stuffs the farmers were calmly and unthinkingly shipping out all the wheat they could scrape up unmindful of the consequences such exportation would likely induce. It is assumed that unless some steps are taken to prevent it, all wheat of the better grades will be sold out of this country this fall, and when next seeding time arrives a sufficiency of strong germinable grain will not be available for seeding purposes, and then indeed will a calamity of the first magnitude be imminent. Hence the proposal for government intervention.

No ukase, either federal or provincial, is necessary in this country to teach the farmers what is best for them to do. We doubt if there is a grain grower in the three provinces who, if his own crop is injured and unfit for seed, has not enterprise, initiative, and foresight enough to make arrangements to procure next year's seed on his own account without some paternal government stepping in to instruct him how to proceed. Government intervention in such matters is childish, intolerable and uncalled for. Official encouragement is altogether proper, but such encouragement should be given through the proper channel—in this case the seed fair—to be appreciated and to accomplish the most good.

Agricultural Education: So-Called.

The Manitoba Agricultural College is unique in some respects, and for the sake of western agriculture it is to be trusted that in some ways she may long continue so. If the vast increase in student enrolment indicates anything it would seem to show that the college has already got very close to the agricultural community of these three western provinces, as, indeed, it has. One hundred and fifty young men from the farms of Manitoba, Saskatchewan or Alberta are now registered and in attendance for the general course which opened October 29th—young men, the vast majority of whom have come to the college with a reasonable equipment of preliminary knowledge, with a sound understanding of practical agriculture, men, who, when the prescribed course is completed, purpose returning to their farms in the various districts from which they came, intent on putting into practice there the principles of a more advanced agriculture. And this is exactly what western agriculture needs. It requires more intellectualization. It needs education. Not the kind of education given by half the so-called agricultural colleges of this continent, not the kind of education given by those institutions that regard the conferring of a be-sealed sheepskin as the culmination of all their endeavors, but the kind that emphasizes the practical things; that embraces an insight into the laws governing soil, plant and animal life, giving at the same time an opportunity to study closely the economics of the farm, and, in a general and broader way, the economic principles that govern the relations of man to man and community to community. An agricultural college directed to this aim under the inspiration of enthusiastic, practical teachers can do wonders

for the willing, receptive, self-reliant young man from the farm already familiar with routine farming methods.

An agricultural college education, in an ideal sense, should embrace a perfect combination of the theoretical and practical. Theory and practice must go hand in hand in agriculture as in everything else. In a sense these two are in opposition; in fact the one is the outgrowth of the other. It is the failure to comprehend clearly this essential principle that has been the stumbling block to the true success with too many agricultural institutions; that has made them rather institutions for switching men away from the farm than for affecting improvement in the community they were created to serve. Educational training of the right sort gives a man increased power to meet the stern work of life and enhances the good that can be got and given by the individual as his contribution to the well being of his contemporaries. It is not this sort of an educational training that teaches a man to spurn as mere drudgery the work that is done by the hand. It is the kind that teaches him to respect and to rejoice in it as much as in any other form of toil. The kind that brings him into closer harmony with his environment, that so grounds him educationally that he can hold his own as a citizen in the work and public affairs of the country with any other class.

Machinery at Farmers' Meetings.

One of the largest considerations of the average farmer is his machinery. In summer he is continuously operating it and in fall and winter the meeting of maturing notes in payment for it is an ever present reminder of the drain upon farm revenues for labor performing devices. The cost of implements is so considerable and their general care so much neglected that agricultural societies would be justified in arranging for more discussion upon the subject at their winter meetings. The study of live stock, stimulated by talks and demonstrations upon the different points to be observed in judging an animal has done inestimable good in familiarizing farmers with animal form and function. Similar good might easily result from more general discussion of machinery and demonstrations in the use of tools for repair. The country is full of young men and others who have had a limited experience with implements and tools to whom such demonstrations would be a boon. We commend the idea to the superintendents of fairs and institutes in the different provinces.

Making Effective Changes.

The adaptability of Irishmen for superintending work is proverbial but it is a notorious fact that industrially, Ireland is one of the chief concerns of the Empire. The Canadian farmer has a good deal of the Irishman's traits.

In considering a more rational and safer system of farming this trait comes out. Practically everyone will admit that we must have a new system or adapt some old one to our conditions, yet only a very few take their convictions seriously. We seem to think that improvement in our systems by which we shall avoid many of the risks that are now taken; check the spread of weeds, maintain the quality of our grain and the store of soil fertility, in fact, increase the total revenue from our lands without increasing cultivated acres, may be affected by opinion or act of legislature after the method of instilling loyalty in Manitoba by a constant display of the flag. If such were the manner of agricultural salvation and redemption, our farms would be well high perfect models of the evidence of industry, intelligence, skill, care and diligence. The sorrow is that they are not. Few even will contend that our farms are being

worked to the best of the knowledge of the owners. We simply have a case of too much work for too few hands, a habit of too easy satisfaction, and unfortunately, the circumstance of our location in relation to the world's markets, has compelled methods of farming that are most conducive to the growing of weeds to the exhausting of fertility and to degeneracy in the quality of our products.

The nature of our farming operations gets us into further trouble in that we can manage to get ready for a larger crop than we can continue to take care of. When land is new and clean and requires little cultivation a man may go ahead and bring a large area under crop but as soon as weeds appear and great areas require similar treatment at exactly the same time, then we find that the farm so conducted is too large for the labor available. To see good arable land lying idle for the want of time to work it, is somewhat of a pathetic sight, yet such cases are to be found and are to be commended in place of growing a dirty, late-sown crop. The conviction has been forced home upon many farmers that they have too much land to care for and that it is better economy to cultivate upon a reasonable area than to spread work out thin over great stretches.

The doctrine of cleaner farms is one that will receive considerable preaching the next few years but it is well to remember that no amount of preaching will effect the cleaning process; it requires the exercise of brain and hand, and very probably the complete changing of the order of affairs upon some farms. Fencing, grass growing, greater variety of crops, and in many places, cows, hogs and other livestock are the agencies that will have to be introduced more extensively. Knowing how and being able to tell others how is never going to make this a successful agricultural country.

The Money Shortage Handicap.

It is hardly likely that the recommendations of the Winnipeg board of trade to the farmers, to the effect that they market their grain as early as possible in order that money might be got into circulation, have had much effect upon the movement of the crops. Grain moves out at about the rate at which the labor in the country can force it and the market prices attract it, the fact that commercial interests need money is scarcely a consideration in stimulating movements. This year weather conditions have delayed movements in spite of high prices and the demands of merchants for money and the function of the crop in carrying on the commerce of the country has been brought prominently before the public. Commerce is ordered and arranged so that its continuance is dependent entirely upon the returns from the crop. Much of the financial stringency that is being felt all over the world is due to the fact that money from the 1907 crop is about a month late in getting into circulation thus embarrassing people who had depended upon crop money being available to meet their obligations.

Since the resolution of the Winnipeg board of trade was passed, another large consideration has developed in market circles, the slump in prices, and probably if the board could have anticipated the shortage of money they would not have adopted their resolution. Few people, even those in the trade, realized what a ruinous effect upon prices the high rate of money could have. Every one was aware that it requires large substantial loans to handle wheat but it was generally felt that when security was good these loans could be obtained. Now it has transpired that the wheat handling trade, profitable and all as it is supposed to be, cannot afford to pay the price for loans that the demand for money has created, amounting quite frequently to 25% per month; consequently, little actual trade in wheat could be counted on and