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How they do Things in Alberta

By Prof. W. J. Elliott, School of Agriculture, Olds.

IT IS A fact that in Alberta there are many young men who came to the new land of the West with their parents at a time when there were few schools, and at a time when the family purse was not stout enough to employ hired help. Thus the boy got very little or possibly no public school training after coming to the province. These facts are to be regretted, yet they are part of the price that is paid by the "pioneer boys" who give their lives to help their parents win a home for themselves.

Alberta, like the rest of the provinces of this new Dominion, has literally thousands of boys who are to be the future farmers, and who are deficient as far as the public school standard is concerned. These boys range from 16 to 25 years of age. They will not go to the public school even though later financial success would make this possible.

We could not expect a boy of twenty years of age to stand in a class at the public school with a ten year old boy in knee pants. Then where can he go?

The boys are taught to judge draft horses, dairy and beef cattle, the various types of hogs, etc., and while these animals are being discussed, matters are taken up with regard to the various Alberta feeds that are available and suitable. Next in importance to the live stock work comes the work of grain judging, weed seed identification and a thorough discussion of Alberta's soils and how to handle them. The iron and wood repair work is another very important phase of the education. A carpentry and blacksmith shop has been provided and all kinds of farm repairing is done by the boys. They are first taught the use of both iron and wood tools, the care of a forge and fire, etc. The boys make door hooks and chains, make clevises, whiffle trees, wheel barrows and wagon boxes. This includes the cutting out and making the wood work and the making and shaping of all irons for the same.

In addition to the above the boys are given a thorough course in Business English, and work in Chemistry, Phys-



Studying soil chemistry, Olds Agricultural School, Alta.

The high school standards will not admit him; the colleges hold their standards of admission above his head. The facts are then, that the man who is to become the tiller of the soil and on whose shoulders the burden of Canada's prosperity must rest, will have to do without a training.—No, that will not be the case in Alberta.

Alberta's Schools

The Minister of Agriculture has established three schools of agriculture in the province that are primarily for the farmer's boy—for the boy who is to be the future farmer of the province. These schools belong to him. He has a right to go to them, and at them he meets others just like himself. There are no standards of admission, the only thing being a willingness and a conscientious effort to do on the part of the boy. The atmosphere of the school is an agricultural atmosphere, the instructors have the word "Practical" written high and clear above every lesson that is taught. The idea of the education is first to give the boy a clear view of the importance of his calling, so that he may grasp the idea that every business on the face of the earth comes second to that of agriculture. And, in the second place, the school seeks to give such information as will be useful to the boy as soon as he returns home. No lesson is given in the classroom that is not immediately followed by practical work in the laboratory, the stock judging room, the seed testing room or the blacksmith and carpentry shop.

The Course of Study

Prime importance is given to live stock, as the permanent success of Western agriculture is wrapped up in this.

ies, Botany and such subjects as are directly and closely related to agriculture. For instance, the boys are shown the cattle fed on the farm and learn that they receive certain proportions of oats and barley, cut oat bundles and wild hay. The boys then go to the classroom and an instructor in chemistry shows them the same oats, barley and roughage. The chemical composition of each is discussed in terms of feeding cattle. The boy learns that to put fat on animals he must feed the starchy foods like barley and wheat, and that to produce milk the oat is the grain that is used above all others. In this way, the discussion of the composition of the feeds on the farm is so interwoven with the actual work that is going on on the Demonstration Farm that he becomes familiar with the ordinary feeds on an Alberta farm, and, without knowing it, is actually studying the chemistry of cattle feeding. It is just in ways of this kind that all of the lecture work of the classroom is made of actual value to the boy in a practical way.

Are the Schools Well Attended?

The natural question to ask is, "How were the schools of agriculture received by the farmers and farmers' sons?" When the principals were appointed and the staffs were being called together last fall, the Minister of Agriculture suggested that if 15 to 20 boys were received at each school, he would be entirely satisfied. The schools have certainly been appreciated by the farmers and the attendance of the boys has proven beyond the question of a doubt that these are the schools that the farmers want for the education of their boys.