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THE INFLUENCE OF GOOD BOOKS

There will appear in these columns a weekly educational series, particularly designed for the help and instruction of rural teachers, not because they need it more than city or town instructors but because of their remoteness from help; for except the quarterly visits of the inspector their help in such an important and generous task is very difficult, owing to (1) irregular attendance, (2) lack of interest on part of the pupils or parents (3) poorly equipped and poorly planned buildings (4) the presence of several grades (5) and perhaps the paramount cause, the teacher's own inexperience and youth.

Any suggestions are welcomed. Plans and devices found valuable in the school room will be gladly considered. Teachers, make this your column; do not be afraid to ask for help. Kindly cut out these columns and preserve, either in book or collection form. Address all correspondence to *Ex-Ruralist, Guardian office.*

Sir, he hath never fed of the dainties that are bred in a book; he hath not eat paper, as it were; he hath not drunk ink; his intellect is not replenished.—Shakespeare.

The guiding of the children's reading is the greatest importance because it is fundamental. When we desire a beautiful garden we prepare the soil carefully and plant a few selected seeds and pluck out the weeds; so we should prepare the child mind, rooting out the weeds and filling the imagination with the noble thoughts and high ideals of the great books which will help to develop our boys and girls into characters that they will be able to resist the evil influence which constantly menace their right development.

Constantly in his story of "The Great Stone Face" gives us a picture of a boy growing up under the influence of a high ideal. The granite profile on the mountain side, which he sees constantly from his cottage door, expresses to him what is in human character. He comes to love it, and loving it, he grows to be like it. Such is always the result of companionship with the great and the good; and the story should prove an incentive to the young to seek that which is good, but also should point a moral to those who are responsible for the training of the young, to see that right environment is provided for them.

Parents and teachers alike are concerned about the companions of our boys and girls. None of the neighbour's children seem quite good enough. The fond grandmother who cannot conceive of original sin in her grandchild will say: "Whom has he been playing with now?" One in a hundred is considered polite but untruthful, another good-natured but too rough in his manners, and another seems to have no virtues at all. Perhaps the neighbours are equally critical of our children. The ideal child does not flourish on our streets or in our districts, and modern conditions, who are all too ready to admit that our boys and girls more frequently acquire vices than virtues from their playmates.

Yet there is a world into which children may enter and find noble companionship. It is the world of books. In the words of Walter Fields: "Let your boy escape for a time from the meanness of the boy across the street and let him roam the woods with Hiawatha, sail the seas with Sinbad, build stockades with Crusoe, fight dragons with Jason, joust with Galahad; let him play at quoits with Odysseus, and at football with Tom Brown. These are play covers that will never quarrel with him or bully him, but from whom he will learn to be brave, self-reliant, manly, quick to do for others, and set with his face toward the light. 'Tell me what company thou keepst and I will tell thee what thou art,' says the old Spanish proverb. The child that lives on terms of intimacy with such heroes as these cannot fail to be strong and brave."

The child must live in the world and grow up among his fellows, for freedom gives him strength and self-reliance; but, at the age when impressions are so easily made the child needs an antidote for the poison of bad companionship, and this antidote is found within the covers of a good book. The story is very real to him. We do not realize how real it is. Did you never in your childhood stride out with your wooden sword and lay right and left the daisies or other plants, imagining yourself to be Richard the Lion-Hearted, and come back breathless and with blood streaming in your cheeks, and your brain on fire with an exultation which you would give worlds to feel again? Did you never with a clothes pole for a lance and a barrel-cover for a shield go out before breakfast to rescue an imprisoned princess? Did you not scorn all meanness—for an hour at least, until you had forgotten Richard and the Knight of the Red Cross and the Princess, and all that, and had descended to trading a jack knife with the boy next door? Ah! book heroes have done more to influence child lives than talks of fathers and entreaties of mothers. Your boys and girls cannot afford to miss the companionship of these book friends.

The child is a natural hero-worshipper, and if you do not give him a true hero, he will set up a tawdry imitation of one. The bully in the street or playground is often the one to be worshipped and imitated by the smaller boys, because the bully is strong and aggressive, but let the child once know King Arthur, and the Chevalier Bayard and he will lose admiration for every sort of bully from that time forth.

Good books influence the moral and the aesthetic lines of life, affecting the taste and character, and these are never far apart. "If we can get our eyes open to the beautiful and noble pictures which the great writers have painted for us, and our ears attuned to the music of their words we shall not only have broadened our appreciations but by a sort of spiritual induction have opened our sympathies as well."

Literary taste is not "a gift of the Gods" given to the child at his birth. Generations of culture may be expected to produce in the child an aptitude which, under favorable conditions, will develop into taste, but it does not follow that the child born without these advantages is doomed to barbarism.

Dr. Holmes' observation that one's culture begins with one's grandfather is well known, but may not be inferred that early environment of culture is so positive a factor as the child's blood inheritance.

During the first twelve, five fifteen, years of the child's life see that he has access to the best literature suited to his wide range of thought, and you need never fear that he will ever read unworthy books. The child who lacks this training finds poison in the printed page as well as in reading. The newspapers are rocking in boy-band stories and tales which act as a narcotic and glorify crime. The untrained child wants something to read and he wants something exciting. He knows no difference in books, he knows not the gulf that lies between the noble tale and the vile one. All he craves is action and excitement and here it is, often in a gaudy cover and at a price easily within his reach.

Perhaps a child is from the class of homes that banish pestilential mental influences. To the dependent child a more dangerous class of literature is that in which sensationalism is respectably clothed. The boys and girls in such romances move in good society, but they are always getting into impossible situations and having adventures; they encounter and vanquish burglars, they rescue little girls from death by fire or flood, and grow up and marry them; they are almost killed in a dozen different ways but always overcome their enemies, escape from their misfortunes, and live in peace and prosperity ever after. The girl heroines fall in love at an age when they should be playing with their dolls, and are either boyish or manly sentimental, in many names magazines with these stories, interspersed with useful items on science, history and biography, form the entire reading of the young people. Such magazines with all their pretences of wholesomeness are woven in sheep's clothing and should not be allowed in our homes and if they do stray in should be consigned to the fire. There is no library in the home worthy of the name.

Let us lead our young people to see that after all the vital and perennial literature is that preserved for them in good books. Encourage each child to own his library. He will then come to feel that friendship with books that is the greatest joy of the intellectual life.

Ruskin has said the final word about the world's great books: "Have you measured and mapped out this short life and its possibilities? Do you know, if you read this, that you cannot read that—that what you lose today you cannot gain tomorrow? Will you go and gossip with your household or stable boy when you may talk with kings and queens, poets and sages, leaders and heroes? This eternal court is open to you with its society wide as the world, multitudinous as its days, the chosen and the mighty of every place and time. Into that you may enter always; into that you may take your fellowship

CANADA PASSING THROUGH RECONSTRUCTION PERIOD

Right Hon. Arthur Meighen Tells of the Abnormal Task Before the People of Canada and the Measures Proposed for its Successful Outcome.

The House resumed on Thursday, May 12, the debate on the motion of Hon. Sir Henry Drayton, (Minister of Finance) that Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair for the House to go into Committee of Ways and Means, and the proposed amendment thereto of Hon. W. S. Fielding.

Right Hon. ARTHUR MEIGHEN (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, since the Budget speech was delivered on Monday last, sufficient time has elapsed to enable us to ascertain with what measure of approval it has been received generally throughout this country. Everyone of intelligence knows of course, that in common with every other country in the world Canada is just now passing through a period of readjustment, a process of deflation of values and of currency and consequently a process of diminishing trade and of financial difficulty; and, therefore, every one knows that the task confronting the Finance Minister was abnormal and in every sense greater than it would be in ordinary times. It therefore is surely a matter of gratification to us all as citizens of this country to know—because I submit with confidence that everyone in his heart does know—that on the whole the Budget statement of our financial conditions, of the condition of our trade, of the results of our taxation, of our proposed expenditure and taxation, has been well received throughout this country. I have been interested in public life for many years, and for some number of years now, too many perhaps, I have been a member of this House, and I do not think that in all that time I have witnessed a Budget statement received with such general approval as has been that of my hon. friend, the Minister of Finance this year. The communications, whether direct or indirect, whether through the press or by letter that have reached the Government have been almost uniformly favourable, nor has any one outside of this House, and I think I shall show in a moment any one inside of this House, seriously challenged any fundamental article of policy in the Government proposals or seriously challenged the general trend of the financial administration which the Budget speech covers and expounds.

Although we are passing through a period of the character I have described, and although such processes are necessarily painful processes for a country and its people, it is surely something we ought to reflect on with pride that in the year covered by the Budget, our trade taken in total has actually advanced over the total of the year before; that our figures represent an annual trade of \$125,000,000 odd more than they have gone up by some \$175,000,000 and our exports have gone down by some \$50,000,000. Our imports indeed are relatively too high. The figures as to the diminution of exports are relatively small considering the period we have passed through and the totals are gratifying to every man who understands even superficially trade conditions throughout the world.

Our general financial position too is reassuring. The revenue received and rank according to your wish; that, once entered into it, you can never be outcast but by your own fault."

And then what company, in situation and pleasure there is in proper reading. Once I was lodged with a family whose conversation never rose to any higher elevation than gossip, oftentimes elevatable at that, but then I had my room as a recess and my books as dear companions and friends.

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turns from taxation are better than anticipated in the Budget of a year ago, and we find ourselves at the end of the year having discharged all ordinary expenditure out of ordinary revenue, with a surplus left over of some \$69,000,000—\$69,000,000 of a surplus calculated in precisely the same way that surpluses in Budget speeches have been calculated throughout the whole history of this country.

But the best feature is the fact that our revenue has been sufficient to take care, not only of ordinary expenditure but, as well, of capital and ordinary war expenditure, and to leave above a surplus of some \$12,000,000. It is only when we take into account investments, some of an active and some of a presently inactive character, but which nevertheless are investments, in the newer responsibilities into which we had to enter—I refer to the railway—that we find we have not been able to discharge those active interest-bearing investments we have made mainly on behalf of our soldiers and to take care of railway responsibilities, which were not of our creation but were a heritage that we could not avoid—it is only when we take into account that we find there was any necessity for increasing the debt at all. That, surely, under the conditions that obtain today, is a reassuring statement, and I can safely say that compared with any other country, it is the best statement of any of the considerable nations of the world. I am aware that in the Budget speech recently delivered in Great Britain they have been able to show that there has been, this year, a diminution of the debt by a very large sum, amounting to about £230,000,000. But in that connection it must be recalled that the sum is secured, and more than secured, by the sale of war supplies, and the like by a different system of book-keeping, a different method of dealing with war supplies from that which this country adopted and that if the same method adopted by Canada had been followed here, the figures would have been entirely on the other side. If hon. gentlemen will read a book recently published in London in which a sketch appears of the war work, in connection with war supplies, of Lord Overforth—the name of the author under the charge of that distinguished man Great Britain had sold war supplies to the extent of £300,000,000 up to October last, which are credited against expenditure; and, no doubt, in a very great degree due to this is a favourable financial statement which that country is able to present now. In our country, as everyone knows, we did not provide war supplies on the same system as they did. Our soldiers were supplied on the per capita basis, supplies being furnished by Great Britain overseas, we paying so much per day. Consequently, we ended the war with much less in the way of supplies than they did; in fact, our supplies were almost negligible as compared with theirs, and, such as they were, they were placed against balances overseas. Consequently, our debt did not reach the total it would have reached if we had followed their method, and necessarily we did not have war supplies to place against expenditure, to the reduction of the debt, as did they. I mention that only to show that, in respect of the British Budget, although their appears a diminution in the debt, it is owing to the sale of supplies, and is represented, on the other hand, by an increase of debt due to the purchase of those supplies, which increase of debt we did not have, and consequently there could be no diminution here, from any corresponding sale, to set off against the debt.

I do not intend to pursue the financial phase of the Budget speech further at the present time. I want to address myself mainly, and with such brevity as is possible, to a discussion of the amendment, the challenge to the Budget, if you may call it that—although the word has a virility and masculinity that makes it wholly inapplicable to this amendment—which, is the only challenge that has come in any form to the Budget statement of this Government. Perhaps, in seeking to analyse the amendment, the most useful reflection at the commencement would be this: What is it that you do not find in this amendment I will examine later what you do find; that is a much more difficult task. It must have struck every hon. member of the House, when the amendment was presented, that what we might well have looked for in it is not there. We have been promised time and time again, directly, and we have had intimations indirectly from hon. gentlemen opposite of both camps, that when we came to discuss the Budget we should find one of their tariff platforms in the amendment they would present. Well, where in the amendment, is the tariff platform of hon. gentlemen opposite? Does this amendment represent their position in respect of fiscal matters in this country? Is this the platform of the Liberal Opposition to-day? Is it the platform upon which they are going to the country? Is it the platform upon which the Agrarian Opposition is going to the country? If either supposition is correct, has the Liberal party abandoned its convention platform of 1919 and got a new one? Why have they not presented, as an amendment to the Budget today, the platform adopted at their convention in 1919? Has no one an answer to that? Is the 1919 platform on the scrap heap?

Some hon. MEMBERS: Sure.

Mr. MEIGHEN: We have not had an explanation in this debate, although it has lasted a week, and it is not that hon. gentlemen have not thought of the matter; it is not that they have not been reminded of it. Speaking in the Budget debate a year ago on this question, I asked them then why they did not move their tariff platform by way of amendment, instead of cutting off the main body and moving merely a section. But I was told that it would come later. I questioned hon. gentlemen angularly opposite, the Farmers' party, as to why they had not moved their platform all these years in amendment to the Budget or in amendment to the motion to go into Supply. After struggling hard to get a reason I succeeded in getting a promise from the hon. member for Victoria and Carleton (Mr. Caldwell), who told me that they would move their platform all right, and asked me just to wait and be patient. Well, I have nearly at the end of another session, but no Farmers' platform has yet been moved in the House. Has the hon. member for Marquette (Mr. Crerar), abandoned the Farmers' platform of November, 1918? If he has not abandoned it, why does he not seek the judgment of the House upon it? Why does he not propose it in this Parliament by acts as well as words? Why does he not seek to put his colleagues and his semi-colleagues on record upon it? Why does he not let the people of the country know just how every member in this House stands as regards that platform? I hope I shall succeed in prodding him up to move it.

Mr. Edwards: Practical politics

(To be continued.)

BLOOD COUNTS IN HERD IMPROVEMENT

(By C. E. Mackenzie, Fieldman, Ontario Cattle Breeders' Assn.)

Success comes, in any business, only to those who have a high ideal and keep advancing. On the other hand failure waits for the man who is content to allow his business to stagnate. Breeders of livestock are facing problems today that require expert business like handling. The high cost of feed, labor and heavy overhead expenses are matters for average farmers and which they find confronting them every day.

Successful farmers have already realized the value of good breeding in livestock. Testimonies from these men are easily obtained and should convince the most skeptical that the only way to beat the labor problem, cost of feed etc. is to keep only those animals that are bred to produce either milk or beef.

The surveys conducted by Prof. Leitch in the different counties all go to prove that where farmers are using pure bred sires in either beef or dairy herds, they are making greater incomes with practically the same quantity of feed.

When we consider that these figures were obtained from actual

farmers living under actual average farm conditions, we can hardly discredit them.

Liberal feeding of inferior live stock, it was shown, was not as great a factor in increasing the labor income as was the use of pure bred sires. The pure bred sire has back of him generations of ancestors that were selected and bred with a specific purpose in view; either the production of beef or the production of milk. These characteristics are highly intensified in the blood so that he transmits them to his offspring even when only a grade female is used. The grade sire has back of him generations of ancestors that like "Topsy" just happened. The result is that you can expect nothing but are able to get anything Haphazard hit and miss breeding operations are the cause of low labor incomes and financial failures among farmers today.

The remedy lies in the farmers' hands. Buy a pure bred sire of the breed of stock you are interested in and you have made the first step toward success. However, be sure you get an individual of good type and conform

GETTING TOGETHER

C. E. MacKenzie

The greatest difficulty with rural communities is the lack of co-operation and of the education which should lead to co-operation. The average farmer has always been shy of theory; but at the present time practice and experience alone will not make a successful farmer, any more than they will make a proficient doctor, except at the expense of much time, money and many mistakes.

Notwithstanding the good work accomplished by the different Agricultural Colleges, the short courses held in the many different sections and the splendid work accomplished by our leading Farm newspapers, Agricultural education has not made the progress it should have; it should be universal, among the young people on the farms. There is also a great need of a proper business training to enable the farmer to hold his own in the commercial part of his work. Hitherto our educational system has only simply touched as it were the business end of agriculture and I am sure that this branch of our education should have its place almost at the top of the course of studies.

Again another difficulty is the way the city dweller seems to look upon the farmer. They almost all blame him for the high prices that they have had to pay for agricultural products during late years and seem to think that he is prosperous and stingy and behind the times, often speak of him as "old hay seed" and only tolerate him as a necessary evil except when selling him articles at a good profit.

They have no real idea of the farmer's difficulties and the relationship of his prosperity or, reverse on their own business and the business of the whole community of the whole country.

Now as to some of the results of the above attitude namely hindrance to the development of the country as a whole, and now that conditions are unfavorable, hard times, and the danger of even harder times to come.

Up to the present the farmer has had hard work to procure the necessary money to make the progress he would like and I am sure if banks and financial institutions would only take the proper view of things and realize the wealth of this or any country depends on the prosperity of its farms and farmers this difficulty would be a thing of the past. One result of the above fact is that the producer continues to receive a minimum price for his products while the consumer has to pay the top price.

This latter question may and can be remedied both by direct buying and selling between the producer and the consumer and by greater co-operation among our farmers.

The idea that the farmer is not fit to represent his fellow farmer in the parliaments of our country; should have died long ago; the fact that a great many of our smartest men in both federal and local houses have been rural men proves the idea all wrong. Therefore in place of letting our politicians be run by party machines let us take the interest we should in the welfare of our country and see that we have our proper representation in future parliaments. The only way to do this is to learn the co-operation lesson properly and see that it is inculcated into the minds of our children and to remember that co-operation not only means getting together but also what one would think was the opposite namely a broadening out of our ideas.

The social life of the farming districts generally speaking is not as live as it should be, no doubt, owing to the decrease since early days of the direct dependence of the farmer on his neighbor and consequently of his more intimate interest in him. But with modern conveniences comes what I would call too much independence causing us to live unto ourselves; this should not be but modern equipment should rather strengthen the ties not only between farmers themselves but between rural and urban dwellers as well. For while the two classes must always have distinction varying aims and modes of living intercourse between them should tend to increase the welfare of both in more ways than one.

The tendency of the young people to leave the farm and go to the city will not be eliminated to any great extent until they are fitted by their education to occupy at least as good a position, and to command as high a salary in the country as they are led to hope they can get in the city. And until they see agriculture taking its proper place as the most important and indispensable industry of our country.

Co-operation is the key which we as farmers can open the doors of education, legislation and social life, therefore let us use it in its proper sense and the results will be beneficial as well to the individual as the community.

BANFF HAS TOWN COUNCIL

BANFF, Alta., May 25.—For the first time in its history, the town of Banff now has a town council. However, it will not function in the ordinary ways of a town council, but will merely be an advisory board to the Parks Superintendent Harris who, as representative of the Dominion government, is dictator of the town. Being in the heart of the Rocky mountains the national party thus is governed only from Ottawa.