

witnesses I have at present. At another session I may take opportunity to call Mr. Abraham Boaz, an agriculturist specialist; Rev. Paul Dauntless, who is working out these problems in a practical way, and others.

But, if your Lordships will permit me, I would address to you a few final words. From the evidence presented forward by the various witnesses, you will see clearly that a great field of useful service is open for cultivation in the life of the countryside. The witnesses have left no doubt in your Lordships' minds of the fact that a readjustment of forces and methods would be productive of great good. They have made it plain that the city is not the only spot upon earth where home and social joys may be known.

From what they say, my Lords, it seems beyond a doubt that if conditions of living could be changed so as to throw more sunshine into the present gray shades of country life, so as to put more laughter into melancholy, more variety into daily monotony, if, my Lords, as Dick Humdrum suggests, the men of the country would pay heed to the raising of men, rather than hogs, if they would but catch such a vision of life as it is painted for us by *Moses Zeitgeit*, if they would dream his dreams of a happy life in the agricultural communities, a new and more glorious day would dawn in the life of the countryside.

I ask, my Lords, why should a fine young woman of the type of Martha Routine lead a life of constant drudgery—why should her married sister, Mrs. Dick Humdrum, complain that her early day-dreams of a happy home among the trees and flowers, and singing birds, have all vanished into thin air? Why should not the life in the country be made so attractive and happy as the life in the city? Mr. Humdrum should be glad to have two boys grow up farmers, tillers of the soil as their father grew up before them, inasmuch as agriculture is the very foundation of our national progress?

It has been shown that the church can and ought to become the central force of the community, the leader in its development, the inspirer of new ideals—and, I trust, my Lords, that you will call in your report upon the men of the church to rise to their opportunity.

It is true difficulties are in the way, such as the great and alluring attractions of the city; but this may be overcome. Financial difficulties exist, but they are not insurmountable. The overlapping of appointments and communities can be regulated, and a transformation can be wrought in the present unfortunate conditions, where one man puts forth his own individual efforts to provide for himself and cares for his farm regardless of the welfare of the community at large.

Greater difficulties, my Lords, have been overcome than those which we must face in this investigation, and I am very confident that so soon as the men of the Christian churches are ready to put their heads and hearts together in this matter a solution will come to all the problems that may arise.

Let me conclude, my Lords, with a story of a man who lived and labored in the middle of the eighteenth century. His name was John Frederick Oberlin, a bachelor of arts and doctor of philosophy, graduated from one of the best universities on the Continent. As a young preacher he declared he was not anxious for a comfortable pastorate charge, where he might live at ease, but rather he preferred some field where he might be most useful to his fellow men. So at twenty-seven years of age he started out under forbidding circumstances to preach the Gospel to the lonely dwellers in the Blue Alsatian Mountains. Six months of the

year he endured intensest cold, visiting the sick and dying in the heart of the remote and trackless forests. The community was made up of about one hundred families such as we have spoken of in this court. The manhood of the place had been drained by bloody battles and wars. The people struggled hard for a mere existence by rudest methods of agriculture. They were slaves and drudges; no schools existed for the education of the young; their poverty was beyond description. Half a century went by and Pastor Oberlin still lived on the mountain, but what a change had come. The barren hills and valleys were now fertile. The land was well tilled. Orchards brought forth their luscious fruits and gardens their fragrant flowers. Fine roads were built and strong bridges spanned the rivers and streams, which hitherto had to be forded. A local improvement society was formed for developing beauty of home, simple, charming houses took the places of rude huts and the bond of religion bound men to one another, and to their God. The King of France presented this man with the medal of the Legion of Honor, and the National Agricultural Society gave him a gold medal for the wondrous transformation he had accomplished in the life of the Vosges mountaineers, who had formerly been almost savage.

Travelers spoke of the poor as having a charm about them—never was seen such humility and spirituality, and their manners would do honor to a court.

By what power was this wonder done? Simply by the power of preaching. Here was a seer, a prophet, a hero living in his humble mountain home, keeping in touch with the movements of the nation, seeing the visions, dreaming dreams, then going out and painting pictures for his people whom he served, which gave them new energy, new life, new hope, until the barren hillsides became fertile fields and the degraded men who lived as slaves were lifted into a lofty, noble plane of life. And I trust, my Lords, that your report will sound a clarion call to the men of the church to arise and do their duty.

C. J. Wiseman.—We are very glad to have this summary from Mr. Dare; and inasmuch as the public are deeply interested in the problem we shall try to give in a short time an interim report.

After five minutes' intermission the following report is read by the Chief Commissioner:

My brother judges and myself have been prevailed upon to make an interim report, based upon the evidence that has so far been deduced from the several witnesses that have come before us up to time. The session of the Commission held in the Metropolitan Methodist Church, Toronto, on Wednesday, March 13th, opened up questions and issues upon which we seek further evidence before giving our final judgment in the matter. Nevertheless sufficient testimony was offered on that occasion, supplemented by further information, that has come to us from other sources, to warrant our issuing an interim finding, which might be an aid to the church meanwhile in adjusting herself to the new rural conditions which are upon us.

In the judgment which follows, Justice Holdback has withheld his consent, pending further inquiry.

Sufficient evidence has been presented to justify on the part of Justice Progress and myself, four conclusions:

1. That country districts have passed through in the last quarter of a century such experiences as have tended to change and in some instances to disorganize their economic, social and moral life. The changes in the country communities have also affected greatly the

power of the church to direct and lead rural society and life.

3. Indications all tend to the fact of an "Awakening" in country life, along agricultural, social and spiritual lines.

4. In this "Awakening" is the church's opportunity to again become the inspirer and leader of the rural communities.

We are convinced that the rural church of to-day in Ontario is laboring under many difficulties, namely:—

(a) A cityward and westward movement of population;

(b) An individualism which renders difficult community life and cooperation among the people of the rural districts;

(c) A materialism which is prevalent everywhere—that makes it impossible to reach the higher levels of moral and spiritual life.

(d) A church which in methods and directing agencies has not changed with the changing conditions and the changing outlook.

(e) A pastorate which by virtue of the system under which it works lacks continuity and permanency.

(f) A leadership which for similar reasons is untrained in rural problems.

(g) An overlapping of territory and a smallness of rural parishes, which make the rural pastorate under present conditions from rendering the most effective service.

Notwithstanding these difficulties the evidence clearly sets forth that the country is the great source for the raw supply of manhood that dominates the life of Canada in all its phases at this time. And as the new country movement must be moral and religious as well as scientific and educational, and inasmuch as the church is the exponent of the Kingdom's ideals and the live wire for spiritual forces, our judgment is that the church must adjust and adapt herself to direct the revival of country life and that to this end she might have regard for the following suggestions:

1. A permanent country pastorate trained for country work, the solution of country problems, and the leadership of country life, and in sympathy and with kindred country movements.

2. A revised college curriculum, which might afford the opportunity for this essential training.

3. A reconstructed rural church, placing upon the pastor and the Quarterly Board the responsibility for such direction and organization as will encourage and develop to the full every legitimate need of the young life.

4. An educational campaign to investigate the financial resources of rural districts and to inculcate the principle of systematic giving among its members with a view to multiplying financial support of rural churches and rural church leaders.

5. An individual church plant to consist of a place for worship, a parish house, a parsonage and an athletic field, which will enable the church to become the centre for recreation, the social and moral and religious life of the community to which it ministers, and which will make it in reality a developer and trainer of the strongest leaders and the most efficient workers to meet the demands of the church and the state, and the world wide activities of to-day.

All of which is most respectfully submitted.

WISEMAN—C. J.
PROGRESS—J.

N.B.—You will find this issue arranged somewhat differently from the usual order. The pressure of several important articles made it necessary to leave out practically all illustrations, and to print the paper as you see it. Keep the paper for future use.