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We Welcome Practical Progressive Ideas

Trade increases the wealth and glory of a country; but its real strength and stamina are to be looked for among the cultivators of the land.—Lord Chatham

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# FARM AND DAIRY

## & RURAL HOME



The Recognized Exposure of Dairying in Canada



## Rural Schools Need Reorganizing

RICHARD LEES, M. P., INSPECTOR OF SCHOOLS

**The School Section an Antiquated Institution--  
It is an Obstacle to Progress--A Larger Unit  
is Necessary--Why the County Unit  
Would be Most Efficient.**



35 Years in Use



One Example of Progress

*"The Chief Business of a Commonwealth is Education"*

In a former article reference was made to a few of the defects in our rural school system. It was shown to have failed to keep pace either with the general progress of education, or with the improvements in rural conditions that have been going on during the past 10 or 15 years. While development has been amazingly rapid in almost every other line of rural activity, the district school is just about where our grandfathers left it. For this there must be causes and an investigation of the causes must be the only means of finding a remedy.

### A THOUGHT-COMPELLING QUESTION

A hopeful feature of the situation is that within recent years, a good deal of thought and attention have been given to this question. Remedies, many and varied, have been proposed. It has been pointed out, and truly, that the rural school does not fit rural conditions. It is only a small copy of the city school. Its course of study is the same; and its methods of instruction do not differ. It fits for the same activities if for any at all. Against the rural school it is charged that it unfits for country life, that it deprives the rural community of leadership by sending off into other spheres, the ablest and best of the young people, and that it tends to create a feeling of contempt for the life and occupations of the country. While no one would deny to the country boy or girl the training that will serve as a starting point for any kind of education he may desire, yet the fact is coming to be more and more recognized that the country school should meet the conditions of country life.

The rural school is not a problem in itself, but only a part, though a very important part, of a much larger problem. The migration from the farms to the centres of population in the towns and cities has of recent years grown to such proportions as to produce anxiety and alarm in the minds of all thoughtful people. This has given rise to a demand for the vitalizing and spiritualizing of country life. If the flow of population cityward is to cease, the life of the country must become something more than a mere complement or reflex of city life. While the country man should be just as intelligent, as alert, and as physically fit as his city cousin, that does not mean that he should be the same. The idea that country life is in any way inferior,

that it furnishes fewer opportunities for financial success, or intellectual development, must be got rid of. This is the larger problem, and in

### Write us Your Opinion

THIS is the second article on the Rural School Situation that Mr. Lees has written for Farm and Dairy. The first appeared in our issue of November 20th. In that article Mr. Lees describes the average rural school with all of its unattractiveness and lack of equipment. He showed the need for a change. In this article Mr. Lees tells, in part, how that change may be brought about. His recommendations for reorganization will be of interest to every one of our folks who has children going to school, or who is interested in education as a community asset. We will welcome criticisms or comments on Mr. Lees' suggestions, and so far as possible will publish all letters received. We make Farm and Dairy an open forum for the discussion of our educational problems.

its solution the rural school will be called on to play a much more important part than it has yet done. How is this to be accomplished?

### PRESENT REMEDIES INADEQUATE

That little has been done in this direction will be readily admitted by all. True, we have made attempts at enlarging the curriculum. Agriculture, nature study, school gardens, have all had their innings and have all had more or less influence, but they have only "scratched the surface." Vigorous and praiseworthy efforts have been made to improve the quality of the teaching. These efforts have been nullified to a great extent by the exodus of men from the teaching profession and the handing over of the schools to girls, who leave the profession before they have acquired the maturity and experience to fit them for "character building," or if they remain and prove their worth the city claims them. Their places are again taken by beginners, whose training, it must be confessed, has not been the

best possible to fit them for developing the idea of a larger rural life in the children over whom they are placed. It is an undoubted fact that as at present constituted our Normal Schools are training the type of teacher needed for the town or city graded school and not for the ungraded rural school.

But the country school is never going to come to its own by any mere superficial measures such as have so far been tried, though in isolated cases there may be a temporary improvement. The change will have to be more radical and far-reaching. The fact of the matter is that our whole system of school administration in country districts is obsolete and out of date, a relic of an age that is gone. Whatever advantages the section or district school may have possessed in the early days when settlements were isolated, means of communication difficult, and educational requirements small, it has long outlived its time, and is now an obstacle in the way of progress rather than a means thereto.

Who, that knows anything of present day conditions in the average school section, with its narrow vision, petty jealousies and conservative ideas, where both people and official are more influenced by personal, political, social, and religious envy than by all the arguments of the most advanced educational experts, can hope for



A Modern Up-to-date School Building in Ontario

The site of this new school consists of two acres of splendid land. In addition the local Young People's Improvement Society has been planning to purchase two additional acres alongside the school grounds for park purposes; for this funds have been raised by means of a bazaar and a skating rink. Out courtesy Ontario Department of Education.