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Taking the College to the Farm

1917

OUR GUARANTEE

No advertisement is allowed in our Columns until we are satisfied that the advertiser is absolutely reliable and that any subscriber can safely do business with him. If any subscriber is defrauded E. H. Heath Co., Ltd., will make good the loss resulting therefrom. If the event takes place within 30 days of date advertisement appeared, and complaint be made to us in writing with proof, not later than ten days after its occurring, and provided, also, the subscriber in writing to the advertiser, stated that his advertisement was seen in "The Canadian Thresherman and Farmer." Be careful when writing an advertiser to say that you saw the advertisement in "The Canadian Thresherman and Farmer."

NOT many of our well-informed citizens are aware of the extent to which Western Canada's "improved conditions" is directly due to the extension department of the various agricultural schools and colleges. Even in normal times, the remarkable story of this extension work has barely received its due credit from the press, and since the fall of 1914 it has been all but completely silenced in the noise of high explosives and the finer window dressing of international politics. But if it has been unproductive, and if the fields could speak and the walls of ten thousand farm homes become articulate, there would be heard a chorus of testimony that the agricultural press could never begin to handle.

A state of war at any time will wreck the finest ideals in a nation's housekeeping, and this world welter at one time and for various reasons did lead to the belief that Canada would be hit in a way that was too horrible to contemplate. In the end,

Canada has experienced a state of prosperity more real and more evenly distributed than anything the past has recorded. A mere "flea-bite" of her arable lands has been used to this end, but those lands were splendidly managed for the greater part and therefore the country's extraordinary revenue for 1916 has been derived, not from borrowings or boosted land values, but from practically no other source than the actual products of the soil, plus the intelligent labor employed in the cultivation of these products.

The part that the Agricultural Colleges in their extension work has had in all this can scarcely be realized till one gets afield and has had the privilege of spending a little while in and around a few of the farm homes in the Prairie Provinces. No matter at what point one gets off, the evidences of this work, particularly among the young people, crops up everywhere. Talk about "National Service!" The young recruits of the boys' and girls' clubs will never have to be corralled by the use of "registration cards." Hundreds of thousands of those little workers have been rendering the very highest service to the Empire without saying a word about it, and were it possible to present a trust-worthy statement of the cumulative effort of those busy bees in one working season, the figures would come out little short of astounding.

In February issue of this magazine will appear a special article dealing with the achievements of the boys and

girls' clubs in Manitoba, but the work of the boys and girls is only one of a many-sided programme of extension work which has been carried out and is being continued with the definite purpose of "reaching the people on their farms and in their homes with at least part of the instruction and inspiration secured by the resident students." This work has been in progress for some time, and now and again we hear of certain of its more spectacular details, particularly during the summer months when the college is sent on wheels to the farming centres in the shape of specially equipped rolling stock provided by the railway companies. All this is seen and fairly well emblazoned in the pages of the daily or weekly papers as the itinerary moves along; what is not seen and is not even guessed at by the average reader is the wonderful spirit, the intensified and permanent interest this propaganda has created—not in isolated spots, but positively throughout the entire area of every township reached.

It is this fact we would seek to bring home to those who ought to know of it and who either have not the means to know or will not bestir themselves to check up the results as we have been at some pains to do, personally, as well as through the testimony of leading agriculturists at selected points whose observations are entitled to unlimited credit. The quality of the instructional staff and lecturers, so far has been of a very high order, and in one or two outstanding instances the men were teachers of more than usual ability. The programme of the "College on Wheels," as well as of the short courses established at several important centres, runs the whole gamut of intensive agriculture and nothing short of "criminal negligence" would characterize the attitude of anyone deliberately failing to take advantage of or seeking to belittle this splendid effort in real statesmanship.

While Canada holds the interest of the "reserve forces" that are represented in the young folks of the farms, she can count on a supply for all future contingencies that would never be raised by forced loans or conscripted service. The power to interest is the magic wand that those men and women of our Colleges and teaching staffs are wielding with a success that is amazing. Without that inborn teaching instinct, all the organization and equipment in the world would be as weak and worthless as gossamer. On paper the college programme is splendid. What we desire to add to this is the unqualified testimony that the rank and file we have seen at work are enthusiasts in the art of kindling the souls of the youngsters.

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