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# The Farm Labor Problem.

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O the Ontario farmer of to-day the all-absorbing problem is that of obtaining suitable farm labor. The great industrial activity of cities, and the inducements of free, or practically free, land in the west, have drawn from rural Ontario that section of the population which was once counted on to help the landowner with his manual labor. Moreover, the class of immigrants which nowadays come within our boundaries is either physically disinclined to farm labor or prefers the superior social advantages of city life to the monotony of agricultural pursuit. While the scarcity of farm labor is a serious problem with all branches of farming, the burden of anxiety falls most heavily on those engaged in the gardening occupation and in dairying. Machinery has done much to assist the farmer out of his difficulty, but nothing has yet been devised to successfully take the place of a pair of hands in the weeding, picking and marketing of vegetables, and in the care and milking of cattle. In fact the very existence of the profitable business of dairying is threatened in some sections of the Province.

Though there appears at present to be no means of totally relieving the situation, the problem admits of four partial solutions. The use of larger and up-to-date machinery will effect a

great saving in the number of men required to perform the necessary labor of the farm. Encouragement of immigration of skilled British farm labor and the careful allotment of such immigrants to suitable positions will do much to supply an excellent class of workmen. Better treatment of hired men by their employers will make them more content with their lot, resulting in more work being done, and encouraging others to enter that field of occupation. The retention of the boys on the farm assures a happy solution of the problem to the farmer with a growing family.

As before stated, the introduction of larger implements and the invention of new labor-saving machinery, are doing much to supplant hand labor on the farm. One man with three or four horses will do more and better work with a two or three furrow gang-plow than could formerly be done with single furrow plows, each requiring a teamster and a team. In the same way a man can manage a double width disc or two drag harrows side by side. The use of hay forks and slings has removed much of the laborious work of storing hay and grain. The hay loader, in its up-to-date styles, is rendering good service as a substitute for the hired man in the field, and if kept in good repair can be depended on never to go on strike nor leave in the midst of a busy season. The dairyman is earnestly watching the