

A New Rural Community.

Speech Delivered in Massey Hall.

By R. E. BRGG, '19.

WE have had many discussions during the last few years, both on the platform and in the press, on the Rural Problem. Have we a Rural Problem? As we travel up and down our concession roads in Older Ontario and see all the vacant farm houses, and compare the rural population with that of thirty years ago, we plainly see that we really have a Rural Problem.

What is the reason for this decrease in population? Why do rural people leave the farm? I believe that our system of rural education is largely to blame. Has not the farm boy and girl as much right to a good education as the city boy and girl? Parents are leaving the farm and moving to the city to give their children a good education. Under the present system of rural education it is only a privileged few who can obtain a high school education.

The education of our rural children is a question of national and world importance. The food of future generations must come from the same soil that grows our food. The maintenance of soil fertility is a question of paramount importance, therefore our rural population must have access to the best system of education. To this end we must have a new rural community.

We will select as our site for this new community a rural district in old Ontario of about 35 square miles. We would purchase a 200 acre farm in the centre of this community and build on it a large consolidated

school, to accommodate all the children of that community. This building would be modern in every respect, with well ventilated classrooms, a proper heating system, a water supply for wash and bathrooms, and a large assembly hall to serve for all public and social meetings. The school grounds would be made the most beautiful spot in the community. A large part of the ground around the school would be laid out in lawns, drives and flower-beds; suitable planting would increase its beauty—such environment would result in great improvement of our farm homes.

During the war organized games kept the men fit for life's most strenuous work. Organized athletics and games will be a great factor in making a healthy, happy rural population. Thus ample room would be provided on the grounds for various games. To stimulate interest an athletic meet would be held and records kept from year to year.

An agricultural college graduate would act as manager of the farm in connection with the school, and also as instructor of agriculture in the school.

A four-year high school course would be conducted in addition to the public school training. This would permit every boy and girl to obtain a high school education. The high school curriculum would include domestic science, household practice, agriculture and manual training. A competent staff of teach-