

## DO YOU KNOW YOUR COMMUNITY?

In pursuing the study and practice of democracy it has often been insisted that first hand knowledge of existing conditions must be a necessary preliminary to successful endeavor in the direction of improving these conditions. Yet, how little is commonly known about actual conditions in the community—social, economic, municipal, pathological? Subjoined are 25 questions with which you may do two things. First, test yourself as to your present knowledge of conditions about you. Second, failing to take 100 per cent. in your self examination—go after the information till you can pass with honors, and you will find that the acquired knowledge will be a stimulus to complete service as a member of the community.

- 1.—What proportion of the people in your municipality speak a language other than English?
- 2.—Who is responsible in your district in case of a person being discovered in destitution?
- 3.—What proportion of the municipal electorate usually vote at the annual elections?
- 4.—What proportion receive and examine copies of the municipality's annual financial statement?
- 5.—How much money did it take to run the municipality last year?
- 6.—Was any delegate sent to the Union of Municipalities' convention?
- 7.—What work does your local medical health officer do and what salary is he paid?
- 8.—What proportion of municipal expenditure is for education?
- 9.—Does your council deliberately and in detail plan its work and expenditure for the year?
- 10.—Is there general heart confidence in the integrity and honesty of your council in regard to finance?
- 11.—Is the annual financial report made out with satisfying frankness and detail?
- 12.—Is there any civic improvement organization or any association which concerns itself with local public questions?
- 13.—Is there reason to believe that money is systematically wasted in your local road work?
- 14.—Has a night school or other direct means for assisting adult education ever been tried in your district? Is there need?
- 15.—Who has been affected in your neighborhood by the Workmen's Compensation Act recently brought into operation? What is the effect?
- 16.—Has there been definite effort to impress higher ideals of citizenship in the past five years? With what success?
- 17.—Do the young people of the churches about you really study together? What use do they make of their study?
- 18.—How many people have received public charity in your municipality in the past year?
- 19.—Are adequate means taken to secure purity in sale and handling of food? Who is responsible? What is done?
- 20.—What amount does the average family expend weekly for tobacco? For candy? For picture shows?
- 21.—Is the average farm vegetable garden reasonably complete?
- 22.—How many cases of tuberculosis have resulted fatally in your municipality in the past year?
- 23.—How do your boys and girls learn to buy and sell? Do they learn at all?
- 24.—Is infantile mortality higher than normal in your district? If so, why and what means may be taken to reduce it?
- 25.—Would the answers to these questions interest your association branch? Can you get them for it?

## THE LOCAL LEADER

The old politics had local "bosses" who did things in the interests of party. The new democracy will have leaders who are the co-operative activity of others in the interests of the community. One of the inspiring things about the rural movement in Western Canada is that it is producing and preparing these leaders in many localities at the present time.

Some of these are young and filled with the buoyancy and optimism and expectancy of youth. Some of them are grey with years, but are still young in heart and have never given up the faith that "the best is yet to be." All of them have caught something of what in these days we are coming to call the vision. To one it has come as the farmers' cause, to another as the co-operative spirit, to another as political independence, to another as the organized community and to another as complete democracy. But

to all of them it has come as a clarion call to personal activity in the cause of human betterment.

By their less enthusiastic neighbors they are frequently regarded as hobbyists who have become foolishly enamored of a will-o-the-wisp or a passing fad. By the critical or censorious, sinister construction is frequently put upon their actions as if they were seeking self-advertisement or personal advantage. But to all who have recognized the epochal and fundamental nature of the things such men are setting themselves to realize, they are known as the dynamic and vitalizing element in the life of our time—as the heroic pioneers of the brighter and better day that is to be.

I am meeting these men day by day in every quarter of the province and contact with them is a genuine joy and inspiration. Here is one who read Henry George for the first time in 1890 and has been commending him ever since. Another with a patriarchal beard that might indicate 60 years has eyes that flash with the ready humor and keen mentality of 18 or 20 and is effectively serving his local branch as secretary. Another, a farmer of powerful if not ponderous build is known over a quarter of the province as a fully informed student of Marx and Kautsky and Hillquit and Macdonald. Another is a debating enthusiast and is laying plans and devising topics in July for a series of debates to be run off between his own branch and two or three neighboring branches during next winter. Another has what the neighbors call the "young democrat craze" and is giving time and energy to enlisting the boys of his own and neighboring branches in public discussions of practical economic and political questions. Another is giving his attention to interesting the branches of his district in municipal reform, especially in securing more efficient and reliable councillors. Another is out after the library problem and aims to get every branch to become an information centre for the community. Another, recognizing the necessity of making the local meeting successful, makes it a point to have at least one attraction on the program of every meeting held. Another is making the joint meeting the special feature and is seeking to arrange such co-operative gatherings with a variety of other local associations, home economics societies, reading clubs, Epworth leagues and lodge fraternities in order to mutual exchange of ideas. Another has the wider acquaintance hobby and is seeking to introduce his branch to other movements having ideals somewhat related to our own, e.g., the Single Tax League, the Non-Partisan League, the Union of Democratic Control, the Golden Club, the Dominion Grange. Another is inclined to be musical and has gradually won his branch to exercise itself in learning and frequently singing a number of popular choruses. Another, a public school teacher, also with musical ability, has a group of little girls who have a little song prepared fresh for each monthly meeting of the branch association. Another teacher whose specialty is in physical drill frequently entertains the association with a small class at dumbbells or club swinging.

And so leaders are being made. The example of the few having its effect on the many. The spirit is catching and as the years pass and our young people and children find themselves more and more in an atmosphere of mutual regard and helpfulness they will of necessity become imbued with the spirit, they will more and more naturally enter the service and take up the tasks and in the good time to come democracy will come to its own.—W. R. W.

## BARN AND HOUSEHOLD EQUIPMENT

One of the problems of rural life is that of the heavy toil necessitated by present conditions in the average country home and farm standing. The heavy physical labor of carrying supplies, food, fodder, water, etc., is one of the things that tend to drive many from the rural sphere. In recent years many labor-saving devices and general conveniences are being introduced. Water supply in the stables and the house,

electric lighting plants, dumb waiters, fodder and grain carriers are becoming much commoner than formerly. John McDougall, in his book "Rural Life in Canada," has the following paragraph on this subject:

"The conditions of toil are often unnecessarily hard. Labor-saving devices in the home are sometimes scantily provided, while those for barn and field are ample. 'Evil is wrought by want of thought, as well as want of heart.' Let us glance at a single illustration—the supply of water in the house. The agricultural survey of 1910 found that in Prince Edward Island 97 per cent. of the farm houses obtain water from wells outside of the house. All carry the water by hand. In Nova Scotia only two per cent. of the farm houses have water piped to the house. In New Brunswick 95 per cent. obtain water from wells and springs. In English-speaking Quebec 92 per cent. carry water by hand. These conditions are general. This lack is due perhaps chiefly to the fact that the equipment introduced so liberally out-of-doors is not regarded as labor-saving by the man who has no dread of toil, but rather as a means of adding to the efficiency of his labor and thus multiplying his output. But the wife suffers nevertheless and the daughters leave. The household science courses offered by the agricultural colleges point the way to a solution. With wider knowledge of the possibilities of achievement through fuller equipment the daughters of the farm will vie with their brothers in advance."

## THE WIDENING VISION

A farmer dropped in the other day—one who came as a boy to Manitoba back in the eighties and who in spite of 30 years hard work still has youth in his heart—and in conversation referred to some men he knew who look at the Grain Growers' Association only from the business point of view; asking only the question, "What do I get out of it?" "What value does the dollar I pay bring back to me as an individual?" In his view there are few, very few, who take this position. The great majority look on the association as a great social and educational agency which a man supports with his dollar and his personal influence, because of the good it is doing at large and because of the benefit which the community will derive from its activities. The narrowly personal and material view is just the kind of thing that has hampered and retarded the progress of agriculture and rural life in the past and it is a matter for profound congratulation that there is an increasing recognition of the value of common interests and the necessity for investing in enterprises that operate for the good of the community. The Grain Growers' Association still stands for the development of this more generous view of life and for the promotion of social and community ideals as well as the securing of more equitable economic conditions. The dollar is an investment which makes one a partner in a great epochal enterprise, the returns from which will benefit not one alone, but many, and not for a brief season, but on into the future and to children's children. It is something, association with which tends to enlarge one's life and to increase its deeper satisfactions beyond all computation in mere dollars and cents.

## SUBJECTS FOR DISCUSSION

The following questions are suggested to help out your winter program when you come to arrange it. Cut them out or keep this issue till you need them. They may be debated, or made the subject of brief addresses, or otherwise adapted to particular circumstances.

Is our patenting system the wisest way of dealing with new inventions and discoveries?

Should capital punishment be abolished? Ought the citizens be compelled to exercise the franchise?

Will the war increase the dangers of militarism?

Should limits be set to freedom of speech?

When in its history was Canada most favorably inclined to Free Trade?

Should the State save the criminal's family from suffering on account of his criminality?

How can we teach economics systematically to our young people?

Should democracy be suppressed in time of war?

Should medical service be municipalized or nationalized?

What good reasons are there for not prohibiting the use of tobacco?

Do conditions in our churches tend to exclude the poor?

What can be done towards making school teaching a frequently chosen life work?

Should we cultivate reading aloud in our home life?

Would the retention of the "meatless day" principle be a good thing to retain in time of peace?

Should insurance—life, hail, fire, etc.—be under governmental administration?

Would two seasons' management of a vegetable garden be more useful to the average Canadian youth than a two year course in algebra or geometry?

Would our public education be better under federal administration? Should our educational system furnish definite instruction in regard to banking, grain-selling, co-operative business and municipal service?

Should every rural child be given practical instruction in soil cultivation and care of domestic animals?

## FIRST THINGS FIRST

A letter came to hand this morning from a busy farmer, one of our young men who is hustling around getting his harvesting completed and his threshing done. No one in his district knows more about 4.30 a.m. starts and 9.30 to 10.30 p.m. finishes on the day's work than he. He's a worker, as our common colloquialism has it, "from the word go." But, the striking thing about his letter is its closing sentence, which is this: "It will not be long now till our fall activities will begin again."

Now, what do you suppose a busy farmer who has been on the jump especially for the past four weeks, means by saying "our activities will begin?" Well, it simply means that the most real activity of his life in his service of the community and of the nation through the organized farmers. That is the substratum and basis of his mentality and about that activity he is supremely concerned when he is on the seed drill, or the binder or the grain wagon. When we have 90 per cent. of our local members thinking in this way and planning during busy harvest days for the "beginning of our fall activities" the Grain Growers' cause will get some boost. Nil desperandum. Its comin' yet for a' that.

## QUOTABLES QUOTED

We suffer in that some have taken to themselves meadows and arable land that belong to the community. Such land we would take once more into the hands of our communities whosoever they have not been honestly purchased. But where they have been purchased then shall the case be agreed upon in price and brotherly love according to the circumstances of the case.—Winstanley.

Despotic government is almost impossible where direct taxation prevails. Every revolution in English and American history has come out of determined opposition to an unjust indirect tax. Direct taxation is almost necessary to the existence of free government.—Pierce.

The origin of the sentiment and notion of justice in human intercourse lies in the natural and divine phenomenon of division of labor and exchange of products and services.—Lambert.

One thing at least is certain—this country has made a botch of individualism, that is a competitive individualism working within the setting furnished by the traditional, ethical and legal forms.—Sellars.

We must cease worshipping Democracy with a capital D, while refusing to analyze the actual behaviour of a clumsy democracy which has little group spirit.—Sellars.

Oligarchies have never succeeded in being more than intermittently charitable.—Sellars.