

that one of the greatest blessings arising out of this convention is the meeting and greeting of old friends gathered from all parts of the Province and the mutual exchanges of friendship.

The country is spending large sums of money on its schools. Is it getting its money's worth from them? Why let the school be used only five days in the week, ten months in the year, for the purpose merely of the ordinary routine between nine and four? Surely we can use the building for more purposes than that.

We might now consider briefly how schools are being used as social centres. In my own, a consolidated rural school, the building has been used mainly for two purposes, dancing and meetings of the Grain Growers. The dances as such have been a decided success, well attended and enjoyed by the community. The Grain Growers met to transact the general business of the community, after which business a mock parliament was held, which gave

rise to much discussion. The young people were, however, very backward in taking part in the debates. A movement for a night-school was set on foot, but this did not mature. The school is very soon to be used as a place for religious worship.

I might add to this other ways in which we can use the school building. First of all the school library might be much improved and used as a community library, well stocked with good literature, to which the farmer would have easy access. The average farmer who has so much leisure in winter, does not indulge in good reading as we should like to see. The school may further be used: (1) For literary and debating societies. (2) For a musical society. (3) For parents' meetings. (4) For seed and milk-testing.

Seeing, then, the importance of social service, let us do all we can to foster and encourage any social enterprise which is for the good of the community.

## THE CHRISTMAS ENTERTAINMENT

By Beatrice McPhail

The Christmas season is a busy one for all. Very often, too, the duties outside of school are allowed too much time and thought by the teacher, thus depriving the pupils of much pleasure which marks the true Christmas time. The making of gifts, preparing for a trip home, or the packing of a trunk, should never interfere with the preparing of a real good school entertainment.

As to the method of preparation, I commence early in November to search through magazines, scrap-books and dialogues for suitable material for a programme, for after all that is what requires the most time. The programme is always "Christmassy" in general, but a great many Christmas items are not necessary, especially when the room is decorated for the occasion. During the first two weeks of November, I ask the children to also aid me in this work, and in a very short time we are stocked with the choicest of choruses, recitations and dialogues.

Then begins the arranging. Every boy or girl in the whole school or community must be considered and take part in a chorus or something else. It is only proper and right to have at least three Christmas songs in the school, and these may be easily utilized for the entertainment. If there were some who could not follow a tune, I did not leave them out, but asked them to sing softly, and told them their voice was "too strong." Four boys might sing a quartette and two girls a duet, and a child could sing a real solo. So much for the musical part of the programme.

I have had as many as fifteen recitations in the evening. Some of the older pupils gave a reading or recitation of some length, but the wee ones said a short, catchy piece. I find that a child will put twice the enthusiasm into it, when he knows that there is a joke in his recitation and that the audience is

going to be sure to laugh and give him a hearty clap.

As to dialogues, it is easy to choose a good one, but it has to be "very good" in order to be appreciated sufficiently to the amount of work put on it. A short dialogue for the smaller children is fine.

We do not do all our practising after school hours. During reading lesson hour I ask my grades to repeat their recitation, give their reading, etc. If the work of this kind has been thoroughly done the remainder of the year there is no reason why they should have great difficulty in bringing out the proper effect at this time. In music hour we devote the time to our choruses. At drawing lesson we make Christmas mottoes and placards, which help to decorate our room on the evening of the entertainment. As I am not musically inclined, I required an organist, but otherwise the teacher and pupils prepared the concert.

For decorations, I think simple decorations, made by ourselves, are better than the showy garlands purchased elsewhere, but here there is room for disagreement. Popcorn strung on threads, when looped at the boughs of the Christmas Tree, serve as pretty decorations; also mottoes on window screens covered with wallpaper the plain side out, for the beautifying of the walls. On the white paper you may paste such words as "Merry Christmas" or "Welcome." Home-made garlands of red and green tissue paper can be cut by the children during recesses.

As for the gifts on the tree, I always ask parents to bring their own children's presents and if there are any poor children in the school we put on a small one for them. One year we gave presents to an orphanage, but put them on the tree just the same. I always try to instil into the children's minds the idea