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The Ontario Agricultural College

THE LETTER from Mr. D. M. MacPherson in our correspondence column this week serves to direct attention to the Ontario Agricultural College at a time when it stands higher in the estimation of the farmers of this country than at any previous period in its history. The esteem in which the College is held by agriculturists today is shown most forcibly perhaps in the attendance of the past year or two. Last winter upwards of five hundred students, nearly all of them from the farm, were in attendance at the College lectures. The regular courses have been filled to overflowing, it having been found difficult to provide sufficient accommodation for those who desired to reside at the College. The influence of the College has extended beyond the confines of the province and no institution of a similar nature on this continent is doing as much sound, practical work for the farming community as is the College at Guelph. There are one or two colleges in the United States that stand out more prominently in one or two special features, but for all round work along practical agricultural lines, we believe we are well within the mark when we state that the Ontario Agricultural College has no equal on this continent if indeed in the old land. Aside from its practical features, which are telling so much in its favor amongst the farmers of the province at the present time, the splendid gifts of the Massey estate and of Sir Wm. C. McDonald have directed the attention of the general public to the good work the College is doing in a most striking way and placed it in a position to render much better service than heretofore, both to the country and to the farming community.

But while the College stands out thus prominently to-day as a practical institution of learning existing solely for the farmer's benefit, its greatest friend will not for a moment contend that it has reached perfection either as regards its teaching or practice. When it has reached a condition where no further changes are possible, the progressive spirit which has characterized its management in recent years will have vanished. Therefore, though many may not agree with the changes which he suggests, Mr. MacPherson's letter opens up a theme in connection with the business side of agriculture that may be well worth looking into.

While we believe that a county model farm, or an illustration station if you will, such as Prof. Rob-

ertson advocated a few years ago, would render good service in bringing direct to the farmers of each district the applied teachings of the College, the Experimental Farm, etc., we have very grave doubts as to the feasibility of Mr. MacPherson's changes as applied to the College itself. To change the College curriculum, the arrangement of the College farm and to appoint two new business professors as he suggests, might so disarrange matters as to make the good work the College is now doing for higher agriculture non-effective. However, we may be wrong in this and are quite willing to advocate any plan that can be shown to be of advantage to the College and to the important interests to which it caters. In the meantime Mr. MacPherson's scheme is before our readers and we shall be pleased to have their views as to the advisability or feasibility of carrying it out.

The Farm Help Problem

Periodically the farm help question looms up with more or less prominence. As harvest approaches and the demand for labor increases, the question is more intensified. Out in Kansas a few days ago the farmers were so put to it for the lack of sufficient help to take off the wheat harvest that they held up the numerous tramps wandering through the country and compelled them to work at the loaded end of a shotgun. They dealt honorably with them, however, and allowed each one who so worked \$2.00 a day for his labor. This arbitrary action on the part of the Kansas farmers probably brought more ready cash to these tramp-rovers than they had seen for many a day. A week of that kind of labor should have some effect in weaning the average tramp back to civilization and inspiring a spirit of independence within him that should induce him to cease his sponging on society forever after.

But it is not likely our farmers will be so hard pushed that they will have to resort to such warlike methods to secure help. Nevertheless, the matter is of some importance with them. The few years of good times have not helped the farmer any in so far as his help is concerned. It has very likely had the opposite effect, and opened up avenues in other walks of life for a great deal of the help the farmer formerly depended on. The conditions under which the average farm helper exists are not such as would retain his labor for the farm, when opportunities offer elsewhere. The tendency of the age is toward any easier and a more congenial way of earning a

livelihood. Many are so situated that they have to submit to uncongenial surroundings and employment whether they like them or not. There is no one, however, who if the opportunity is offered to earn his living amid more congenial surroundings, but would make the change. The average farm helper is no different from other individuals in this particular. And if he can better his position, socially, or in any other way, in any other walks of life, who can blame him.

This is to some extent the position in which we find the help question at the present time. If so, what should be the attitude of the farmer towards it? Should it not be to so adjust the farm help question as to make people in other walks of life seek it as an employment that will be more congenial to their tastes than that which they are at present engaged in. To do this perhaps will be the hardest problem of any for the farmer to solve. Many a farmer to-day, and perhaps, justly so, thinks when he has paid his help a good wage and given him all he can eat or drink, he has done all that should be expected of him, in order to retain his help on the farm. So far as the strict letter of a bargain between man and man is concerned, this is quite true, but it does not help solve this difficulty—that farm help is scarce and that there is a strong antipathy on the part of many young men, and older ones, too, to working on the farm, under present conditions. It, therefore, becomes necessary, in some way or other to counteract this tendency. How can this be done? If, as we have over and over again pointed out, the day's work on the farm, excepting, perhaps, in the busy harvesting season, were shortened to say ten hours, giving the help a few hours at the close of the day to himself, similar to the mechanic and other workmen in the city, a great deal of the opposition to working on the farm would cease. Then there are little things that do not mean much in themselves, but which, if performed in the right spirit, that would do much to brighten the farm helper's life and to increase his attachment for the farm and for the farmers' calling. We have not the space to deal with these in detail, but throw out the suggestion as one that, if properly applied, would do something to lessen the difficulty in connection with securing and retaining competent help on the farm.

As we have frequently pointed out, a married man in a separate home will, everything else being equal, render better service than a single man boarding in the farmer's home. Therefore, wherever it can