

Rural Church Discussed at Students' Conference

O.A.C. Receives Return Visit From Toronto Colleges—Rural Decadence the Theme

LAST November students and graduates of the Ontario Agricultural College attended a conference of students in Toronto and gave addresses on problems relating to rural life. The Toronto students in attendance at this conference were largely from the denominational colleges, which are engaged in training young men for church work. Many of these will, of course, first assume country charges, and of late are showing a gratifying interest in problems relating to country life. On Jan. 26 and 27 a return visit was paid to the college at Guelph, and many of the divinity students, together with professors of Toronto colleges, gave addresses. Naturally, the country church was uppermost in the discussion, although economic questions were also discussed by some of the speakers.

The Deserted Village.

That the deserted village is an actuality in Ontario, and that if the exodus from the farms and the country villages to the towns and cities does not cease, Ontario will soon need new settlers on the land, was the statement made by Rev. J. A. Bell, of Laurel, Ont., the only outside speaker. In his own parish there were 54 vacant homes, which, 25 years ago, were occupied by large families. Village craft was decaying; the small tradesmen passing away. The population of Dufferin county had decreased 3,047 in recent years owing to the exodus. Small returns, bad roads, the lure of the city and the West were enumerated by Mr. Bell as some of the causes of rural decadence. He regarded the consolidated gymnasium, manual training, household science and school gardening as one of the institutions necessary to transform rural life. The community hall should also be established, which farmers can use for social and intellectual enjoyment.

Archdeacon Warren stated that there were altogether too many unmarried couples with few or no children in the country. Though commending the hospitality to be found in rural districts, he deplored the lack of ideals to be found there. It has been presented to country people must be lacking in this ideal element. It is the privilege of the church to restore these lost ideals to place and power. A young rural bred student, S. J. Cole, of McMaster University, summed up the rural problem by saying: "There are too many farmers in farms. What I want to show is that a farmer limits himself when his vision stops at his vocation. When a man degenerates into a farmer he has developed only one side of his being. We want more men on the farm, real social beings who are not existing for themselves. Mr. Cole spoke from his own experience in the country as a farmer's son and a farmer's having had charge of country pastorates.

Young People the Hope of the Country. Mr. L. S. Albright, of Victoria College, stated that the young were the most hopeful factor of the rural problem. Village crafts, he declared, could never come back again; they were the remnants of individualism and mankind was moving from the individual to the social consciousness. The goal was "community salvation." The appeal of the future must be social and its watchwords must be "specialization, cooperation and unity." The churches must unite to conquer," said Mr. Albright. "If

seven different nations in Europe could combine organically in a great cause, God help the churches if they cannot see their differences and unite in the common cause of social brotherhood." He believed that the settled pastor should displace the itinerant system, and that a pastor should grow up with his people.

"The Church's Appeal to the O.A.C. Students" was the subject of an address by H. A. R. Petten, of Trinity College, who declared that many country ministers had fallen asleep and their congregations had followed suit. Country people should be able to discuss the social questions of the world and not merely sit on the back fence talking about what they will do when they make a little more money. He hoped the students would go back to their farms and try to lift rural Ontario to a higher plane socially, intellectually and spiritually.

Seed for 1917 Crops

(Continued on page 10.)

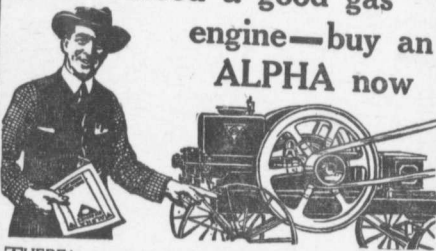
that he is introducing no new weeds on his farm. If this source fails, it is best to secure seed from the nearest source available in the country or the province. Only when these sources are exhausted should seed from outside points be used. Western oats this year, but they should be rigorously tested before being put in the above reference to, pointed to the Maritime Provinces as a source of splendid seed this year, and it is likely that before spring considerable quantities will be introduced into Ontario and Quebec from that source.

The Germination Test.

Before trusting that 500,000,000 worth of seed to the ground there is one precaution that the Canadian farmer should take, and that is to see that representative samples of it are put through the germination test. The importance of this test is well recognized at the great seed fair which is that an ounce of the grain to be exhibited must be forwarded to the college two weeks before the exhibition opens in order that a germination test may be made. It is a simple matter to make a germination test. Facilities are provided by which this work is done free for the farmer, but it is more desirable that he conduct it on his own responsibility. All that is necessary for purpose is a shallow box filled with ordinary soil. In this a definite number of seeds is planted at the ordinary depth for sowing and the soil is kept moist, but not too wet. Care should be taken that the box is placed where it will not be too warm in the day time and where it will be cooler, but will not freeze, at night; the alternation of temperature favors germination. By noticing the number of plants produced, and whether they come up quickly, or are strong or weak, one can determine the suitability for seeding purposes. The test is made still more reliable if some vitality is known to be strong in comparative purposes.

Encourage mature chickens to range by feeding them sparingly. A good summer ration for hens suggested by the College of Agriculture consists of 1 part wheat, 1 part oats, and 1 part corn, by weight. More eggs are obtained where the birds are fed a little grain than when forced to depend upon "pickings" about the farm.

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