

could take advantage of the opening which farming offers to-day, and could in course of time be free and independent men.

The lure of the cities consists, probably, to the older people of the country, in their many conveniences, and to the younger in the presumed excitements and possibly higher wages. In the first case the older people soon learn that, with the exercise of a little thought, and the expenditure of not a very large amount of money, the conveniences of life in the city can be very nearly applied to life in the country. It is needless to go into details, but in how many homes in the country has any ingenuity been brought to bear upon having a supply of water brought into the house? Everyone knows, who has any experience of country life, what the chore of "getting in water" means. In this instance, as in most others, it is simply a case of the old adage, that people will use their hands, rather than their brains. Then, as to the gaieties and excitements of the cities, are they so real and enjoyable, after all? Many experienced people will tell you that, provided you do not live in too sparsely populated a district, there is even more real social fun and enjoyment to be obtained in the country, on the average during the year than there is to be had in the towns. As to the question of wages, this would appear to be a matter rather in favor of the country in this respect, that a man there should be able to save the greater portion of those he earns, so that in time he could get onto a farm of his own. It is fully recognized that there is what is wrongly called drudgery on the farms; but cannot the same term be applied to work in the cities? Go and ask the men who have to be at work at seven in the morning, till five at night, in a close, hot machine shop, and those who have to do the same monotonous task week in and week out. And ask them, too, how much they can save out of their wages, and what prospects they have of ever becoming independent. It may be thought that, to mention telephones and automobiles is going a step too far when discussing life in the country, but both of these conveniences are gradually working their way into country life, and, judging from experiences in the United States, they will bring about a marvellous change here, too, in the course of time. Neither must the beneficent work of electricity be overlooked. This is but in its infancy, so far as rural districts are concerned, but when it has grown up into its full strength its effects will be nothing short of marvellous.

But it is not necessary that people should all "go back to the farm." Why are there not in Canada, as in Great Britain, "country houses," with their own few acres of land, where all the wants of the house can be supplied from these few acres? Canadians, above all others, seem fitted to have such places. A horse, a cow, a few sheep, some poultry, and a good vegetable garden, would not only supply the larder, but would provide healthy and interesting work. Not only this, but that which seems so lacking nowadays, a little leisure, would be insured. Time to read and to think, to learn some of the pleasures of the accomplishments and refinements of life. Yet, just in the same way, these "pleasures of life" ought to be always kept in view by those who do go back to, and those who are on the farm. Everything is tending nowadays to make these possible; all that is needed is the clear perception of the possibility and the desire for them. The increased cost of living is most likely, adding to what has been known for ages as "auri sacra fames," or the accursed thirst for gold, leading to the exodus to the cities; but at the same time, it may be also answerable for men's thoughts turning to the country, where they can see that a free, an independent and a healthy life can be led, if they are content to work, to use their brains, to live moderately, and, above all, not to set the aim of "getting rich" before their eyes as the ambition of their lives.

"ONE WHO WOULD LIKE TO GO BACK."

Elementary Agricultural Education in Ontario.

Editor "The Farmer's Advocate":

I have been very much interested in the editorial article in your issue of February 8th, on "The Training of Rural School Teachers." The subject is certainly one deserving of the attention of everyone who has the welfare of our rural schools at heart. At the basis of most of our agricultural problems lies the public school, and educationists are more and more realizing this. Our educational measures in agriculture have been for too long a time in the direction of the grown-ups. Ontario, has, perhaps, as fine an organization for adult agricultural education as can be found anywhere, in its Agricultural Societies, Farmers' Institutes, Women's Institutes, Experimental Union, Fruit-growers' Association, Vegetable-growers' Association, Corn-growers' Association, Field Crop Competitions, Horticultural Societies, and District Agricultural Representatives; but all these educational factors, it must not be

forgotten, do not reach directly to the boy and girl in the public school. It is only long after that boy and girl has received his or her public-school education that he or she is taken in hand by some one or other of these organizations. There is a great educational and economic loss here. The need for many of these organizations, indeed, might be greatly lessened if the schools could be brought to undertake some new lines of work. To do this, of course, requires a special rural-school teacher. "A rural-school teacher for the rural school," should be one of our slogans.

On the question of the policy of our Education Department, regarding Normal and Model School training, I cannot speak. I wish, however, to call attention to some things that are in process of development amongst us in our educational system which are not generally known. In my opinion, the Province of Ontario has made as great advances in agricultural education as any State or Province in North America. The problem is not by any means solved; this will not be accomplished until larger conceptions prevail regarding the large worth of a teacher, and the payment of salaries proportional to this large worth. The chief factor hindering rapid progress in the solution of the problem, it appears to me, lies in lack of public sentiment for the better and newer kind of education. The people will get what they want when they want it! So far, the people have not given expression to a strong desire for a change. The old "hoo-doo" of examinations still exercises a strong influence in directing school-

school, and the proper way of educating children in a truly sound, pedagogical sense.

When one analyzes the subject matter that is generally considered under the name of Nature Study, it is found to be nothing more or less than Elementary Agriculture. It is a question of studying the common things of out-of-doors; the animals, the plants, the soil, the weather. The plants studied are not the unusual and strange things, but the common plants of the field, the garden and the roadside. The animals studied are the animals the farmer is concerned about—his farm animals, and the birds or insects that help or hinder him in his work. The soil studies concern themselves with his every-day employment.

So, since 1904, there has been growing into the Ontario schools gradually, and along proper lines, the subject of agriculture. It has not been a text-book subject at all, but a thing apart from bookishness—a natural, living, developing and revitalizing subject.

Another step forward is shown in the new schemes of teacher-training developed. This had its commencement in 1904, in the special teachers' course in nature study, carried out at Macdonald Institute and some other local centers. Of late years all this work has been done at Guelph in the month of July. Last summer, the teachers taking the work numbered over one hundred. They were instructed, so far as this could be done, in a month, in the best things that the College has to offer in Elementary Agriculture. To most of the teachers, the work is a revelation of a new

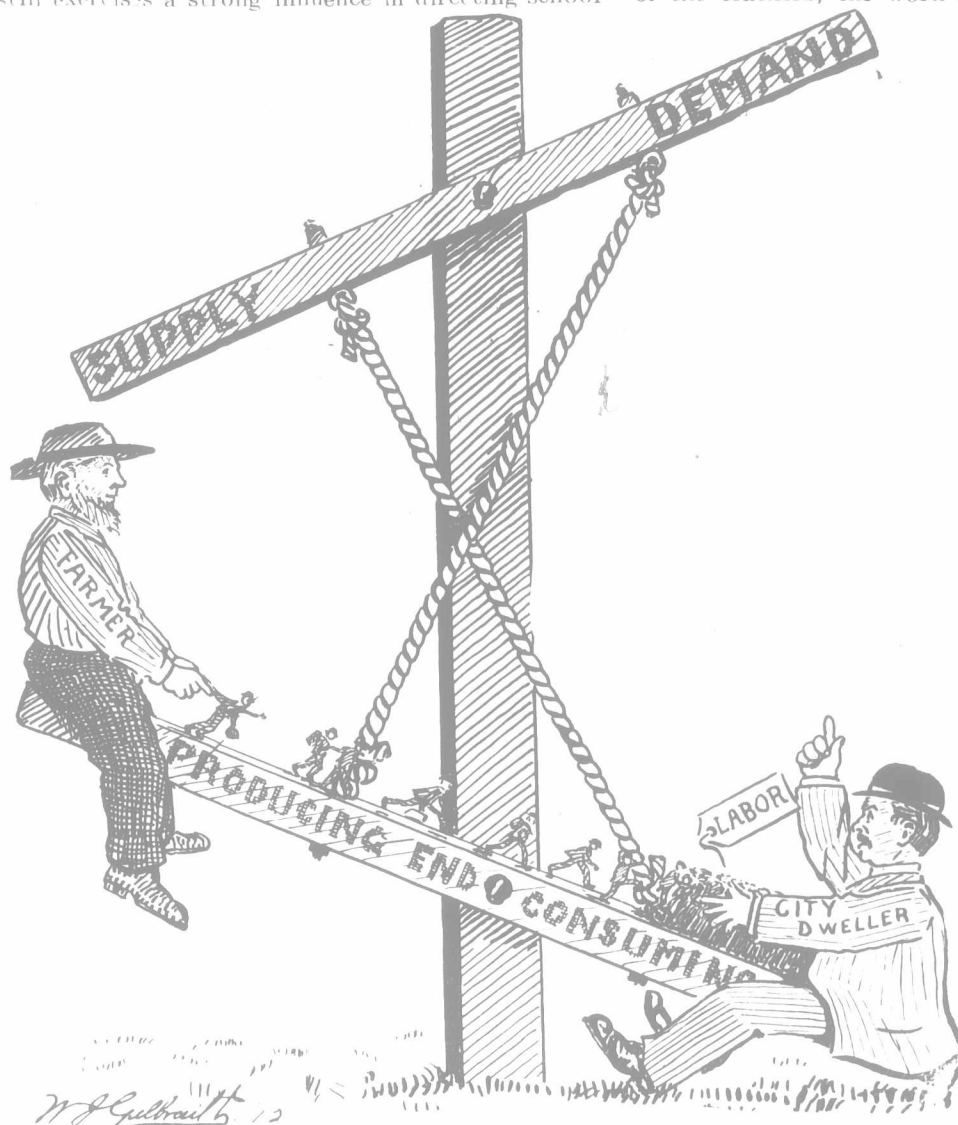
world, one, however, that has been lying at their feet, always, unnoticed, obscured perhaps to some extent by the bookish teachings of the schools. It may reasonably be expected that the hundreds of teachers who have taken this work, and who are now scattered throughout the Province, are introducing no little measure—handicapped as they are by examinations—of sound instruction in the concerns of the farm and the home.

In 1909 another phase of the teacher-training work was organized. The Grade A teachers at the Normal Schools who passed their graduation examinations at Easter were offered free ten-weeks' courses at the College in Elementary Agriculture and Horticulture. The work was continued in 1910 and 1911. In the three years, about 225 have availed themselves of the offer, and gone out certificated as teachers of this subject. In addition, through the Summer School schemes, about 25 other teachers are similarly qualified.

We have in Ontario,

then, about 250 Normal teachers very well equipped to teach the subject of agriculture in our schools.

The school boards have been encouraged, too, to take up the work and carry it on in a practical way. The school board, which gives a course of instruction in elementary agriculture in its school by means of practical work in the school garden, and one of these specially-qualified teachers receives an initial grant of \$50 to cover the expenses of the introduction of the work, and in subsequent years \$30. The teacher, too, is subsidized in the cause; for her special services in this connection, she receives \$30 a year, in addition to her regular salary. Last year there were thirty-three schools in Ontario that carried on this work, and the Departmental grants for it amounted to \$2,340. In addition, many other schools have been carrying out the work, although, on account of not having certificated teachers or not having the regulation garden, no grants have been paid. Through our Schools Division of the Experimental Union we have assisted 166 Ontario schools in the practical work, sending them seeds and other supplies. The regulations regarding this work are now under revision. They will still further encourage schools and teachers to carry on the work, and we may confidently look forward to



City Man—"Can't you keep down the cost of living a little, John?"
Farmer—"Hardly, without a little more help."