

# FARM AND DAIRY

AND RURAL HOME  
PUBLISHED EVERY THURSDAY



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**The Rural Publishing Company, Ltd.**  
PETERBORO, ONT.

"Read not to contradict and to confute, nor to believe and take for granted, but to weigh and consider."—Isaac.

## The Students' Conference and the Rural Problem

A YEAR ago, the first annual conference on Rural Life and Work, was held at the O. A. C. The wealth of information brought to light at that conference was most reassuring to all those who had the welfare of rural Ontario at heart. The full discussion of any phase of the country problem was allowed and encouraged. Rural leadership, the work of the Y. M. C. A. in the country, the attractions and repulsions of farm life, were dealt with by well known men, including such practical farmers as E. C. Drury and W. C. Good. The students of the college, with the experiences and impressions of the farm fresh in their minds, devoted their remarks almost exclusively to the economic conditions that prevailed there. The farm labor problem, rural depopulation, attendance at schools and many other subjects, were dealt with, facts and figures, such as can only be compiled on the spot, being cited. The results of an investigation carried out amongst the students regarding their personal attitude toward the college and toward farm life was given out. From the students of Macdonald Institute, came a splendid contribution to the conference regarding the personal experiences of girls on the farm and their attitude toward country and city life in general. Very little theorizing was indulged in, and no panaceas were advanced. The object of the conference was realized to be the investigation of conditions as they actually existed in rural districts, and it promised to be a most valuable institution through which a rather full knowledge of actual conditions of rural Ontario could be arrived at.

To those who indulged such a hope, the results of the second conference, reported elsewhere in this issue of Farm and Dairy, are disappointing. The subjects introduced for discussion were narrowed down and all questions of an economic nature rigidly excluded. Rural health and recre-

ation was made the sole theme of the conference, and it was carried on as if the solution of the rural problem consisted in killing the germs in the milk that the farmer used on his breakfast table, in supervising the teeth and the eyesight of his children, and in providing him and them with games and amusements during their leisure hours.

There is no objection to dealing with rural health and recreation as a part of the rural problem. Rural health is always a timely subject, though in these troublous times the serious discussion in a hall of learning of how best to introduce new fangled games among farmers, does seem to savor of the ridiculous. To make these subjects the sole theme for discussion at a conference called under the comprehensive title of Rural Life and Work, is getting things badly out of proportion. Last year we expressed the hope that no effort would be made to choke off the discussion of our great economic problems in our halls of learning, and that such honest investigation as characterized last year's conference would be encouraged. The careful elimination of all opportunity for the discussion of economic questions by the students, would seem to indicate that this is another case in which freedom of speech has been inhibited.

## Getting Ready for the Spring Rush

THE sun will soon be shining on both sides of the fence again. Almost before we know it the rush of spring work will be upon us.

There has always been a spring rush; but this year it will be one that will make all former rushes pale into insignificance. The demand on the farmer for a full contribution to the food supply of the Empire was never so insistent as it will be this season, and in the history of Canada he has never undertaken to produce a crop under such handicaps as circumstances have now placed upon him. From every corner of the country comes the cry that the shortage of farm help was never so acute as it is at the present time. The already inadequate supply of men on the farms has been still further depleted to such an extent by the organized efforts of the recruiting sergeants that the situation is nothing short of critical.

One way of easing the situation is to leave nothing undone that will lessen the work of putting in the crop. The best insurance of a good crop is a well prepared seed bed, and anything that can be done now to leave the farmer free to devote every minute to the cultivation of the soil when spring arrives, will facilitate that preparation. Thousands of our folks, realizing how much can be accomplished beforehand to clear the way for a big spring's work are putting forth greater efforts than ever before to have every possible odd job out of the way before seeding begins. What are you doing in this regard? Perhaps you have some ideas that will be of the greatest assistance to others in circumstances similar to your own. The subject for "Our Experience Meeting" this week is, "How to Prepare for the Spring Rush." This topic should bring some of the most helpful letters that have been contributed to that department. Any suggestion you may make will be cordially welcomed.

## Free Wheat and the Milling Interests

THE refusal of the powers that be to meet the demands of Western farmers for free wheat on the ground that the milling industry still requires protection, arouses some curiosity as to how the milling interests are faring behind the tariff wall that has been raised for their protection. In his book, Canadian National Economy, Jas. J. Harpell, editor of The Canadian Financial Post, throws some light on the subject. He says:

"The three largest milling companies have a

combined capitalization of \$5,500,000 of seven per cent. preferred stock; \$5,895,000 of common stock and \$4,578,100 bonds. The net earnings from the business in 1909 of these three companies were sufficient to pay all expenses, the dividends on the preferred stock and the bonds, and leave a balance of \$225,902, or over 15% per cent. for the common or bonus stock. The net earnings of these three companies on their actual investment must have been considerably over fifty per cent. Of course such a percentage was not paid. One of these companies paid seven per cent on its common stock, another six per cent. The third paid seven per cent, in cash, and gave a bonus of fifteen per cent. of new common stock, thereby further increasing their watered stock by this amount. The balance was carried forward. The surplus or undistributed earnings of these three companies at the end of 1909 amount to \$2,360,635."

As stated, these figures are for 1909. Since then the milling industry has continued to flourish. During the balance of the boom years, its progress was commensurate with the general progress of the country. Since the outbreak of the war it along with some other of our industries, has experienced a new burst of activity. War orders are keeping all the mills running at full capacity and we have reason to believe are quite as profitable to those engaged in the milling industry as to those engaged in some other industries on which the light of publicity has been shed. Their earnings are out of all proportion to the rewards of the producers of the grain. The farmers of the West are fully conscious of this and their resentment at having their interests sacrificed to the interests of the milling industry is fully justified.

## Direct Taxation and Government Economy

BARON SHAUGHNESSY has served notice that corporations are not going to contribute a large share of their earnings to the revenues of the country without seeing to it that all extravagant expenditures in the administration of government are duly curbed. In this he has the hearty approval not only of the corporations affected, but also of those whose capital is well below \$50,000, and whose returns in investment are safely within the limit of seven per cent. The only objectors will be the profiteers who had planned to divert some of the wild extravagant expenditures to their own coffers. Considering the generous way in which their country has treated them in times of peace, however, it is hardly likely that they will have the hardihood to press their claims in times of war.

The action of Baron Shaughnessy is an illustration of one of the great advantages of direct taxation. When the federal taxes are hidden away in the grocery bill, or the price of agricultural machinery, and are looked upon by the benevolent consumer as a part of the cost of production, but little concern is taken in the way they are expended. But as soon as the cold cash is paid directly into the treasury, a lively interest is evolved in its ultimate destination. As long as it is the government's money that is being squandered, only a casual interest is taken in the matter, and those who appropriate it to their own use and benefit are hailed as financial wizards and beacon lights of society. But as soon as the people have to tell down their dollars for taxes, and feel that it is their money that is being voted away, they demand one hundred cents in value for every dollar of it. Direct taxation would soon put a curb on governmental extravagance, and we will get the most efficient expenditure of public funds only when all indirect taxes are abolished and direct taxation substituted.