

AGRICULTURE

AGRICULTURE AND THE CHURCHES

One of the signs of renewed interest in rural welfare is the greater attention given to agricultural matters by the churches. The recent publication, "Rural Life in Canada" by the Rev. John MacDougall of Spencerville, Ontario, a book reviewed in this journal some months ago, calls attention to the crying needs of the majority of the English-speaking country communities, and places the rural problem clearly before the public.

It may be of interest and profit to our readers who are mainly English-speaking and non-Catholic to know that the Catholic Church gives greater effective aid to agriculture in Quebec than the Protestant Churches. This is a fact which may readily be proven, and is not in any way controversial. Ever since 1894—twenty years ago—an association called "The Agricultural Missionaries" has been in existence and is composed of one or more parish priests selected by the Bishop of the diocese to give special attention to the interests of agriculture amongst the farmers. These missionaries preach both agriculture and the Gospel. All phases of agriculture are dealt with, and in the last Report (6th) covering the work of the Association for three years we find that 770 Agricultural Circles were visited by the missionaries or their deputies and 145,250 farmers benefited by their instruction.

Besides the work of this Association most of the rural priests take a great interest in agriculture and help along all movements originated by the provincial department of Agriculture. In fact from the time of the early settlement of the province the priests have identified themselves closely with agricultural progress.

A feeling is arising among the non-Catholic Churches that the pastors or ministers should be sufficiently acquainted with agriculture to understand the conditions under which the farmers work. It is beginning to be recognized that religion is a seven-day affair and that the ministers who take an active part in the everyday work and community life of their charges exert a more effective influence for good than those who merely meet their people on Sundays. The spirit of the Catholic agricultural missionaries is needed to solve the country problems. Allusion has been made in previous issues to the splendid work of some of our rural pastors who realized that their active interest in agriculture. A fine field of work lies open to most from our theological schools who are equipped to combine the functions of country preacher and rural missionary.

POTATO DISEASES.

There has been issued by the Department of Agriculture at Ottawa a remarkably well executed folder, Farmers Circular No. 4, entitled "Potato diseases transmitted by the use of unsound tubers," showing in natural colors, representations of specimens of diseased potatoes. Diseases and other blemishes represented are potato canker, powdery scab, hollow potato, internal brown streak, little potato disease, dry rot, wet rot, common potato scab, and stem end rot. Special reference is made to potato canker and powdery scab, the latter of which occurs already in Canada and should be carefully avoided. The folder points out that, under the destructive insect and Pest Act of Canada, any person using for seed potatoes infected by potato canker or powdery scab is liable to prosecution. Potato growers who suspect the presence of either of the latter diseases are requested to send specimens to the Dominion Botanist, Central Experimental Farm, Ottawa. This folder, prepared by Mr. H. T. Gussone, Dominion Botanist, will be sent free to those who apply for it to the Publications Branch of the Department of Agriculture at Ottawa.

Investigational work is carried on year by year in the growing of fruits, vegetables and flowers. The purpose of this work is to discover and develop not only improved varieties and strains of these crops, but to find out the most successful methods of culture for the different provinces and districts.

HORTICULTURE ON THE DOMINION EXPERIMENTAL FARMS

At the Central Experimental Farm at Ottawa and at each of the Branch Farms and Stations distributed over the Dominion a large amount of in-

vestigational work is carried on year by year in the growing of fruits, vegetables and flowers. The purpose of this work is to discover and develop not only improved varieties and strains of these crops, but to find out the most successful methods of culture for the different provinces and districts.

The result of last season's work has been brought together in a summary prepared by Mr. W. T. Macoun, Dominion Horticulturist, and the superintendents of the Branch Farms and Stations and issued in Bulletin No. 77, copies of which are available to all who apply for them to the Publications Branch of the Department of Agriculture at Ottawa.

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Referring to apples at the Brandon, Manitoba Farm, the bulletin states that a large number of hybrid trees are doing well. These are stated to be bearing fruit which makes excellent preserves and jelly.

At Lethbridge Alberta culture with and without irrigation was carried on. Sections dealing with ornamental gardening are especially interesting and instructive to those who take pride in the appearance of their home surroundings.

"Didn't Oliver Goldsmith once live here," asked the tourist. "I don't remember the name," said the janitor. "Who was the gent?" "He was a poet."

"Then it's hardly likely that he ever lived here, sir. We always demand the rent in advance."

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