

THE IMPROVEMENT OF RURAL CONDITIONS

EVIDENCE OF JAMES W. ROBERTSON, Principal, Macdonald College, before the
SELECT STANDING COMMITTEE

On Agriculture and Colonization

1907-8

EXTRACT:- (Page 89)

Macdonald College Tripods

We are standing at Macdonald College for research work and for illustration work in three of the important matters in agriculture. The use of selected seed on suitably prepared soil; the proper rotation of crops (which is hardly understood and certainly is not practiced in the eastern part of Canada, excepting in parts of Ontario); and the protection of crops against weeds, insects and diseases. Each one of these three might increase the average yield of crops as much as 25 per cent within ten years wherever put into intelligent, careful practice. Our policy at Macdonald College is not merely to have research work along these lines, but to give illustrations along these lines wherever our students go, and we hope by and by to make every graduate of our college a leader to carry out that system of farming on his farm, under college direction. He shall have selected seed (if need be furnished by the college), grown on suitably prepared soil; he shall follow a rotation of crops properly adapted to his locality; and he shall be capable of fighting the weeds, insects and diseases. Such illustrations on his farm will be a beacon light to the whole locality, and thus the lessons will be brought home in an effective way.

In our research work because we have the means and the men we want to make the benefactions of Macdonald College for rural communities extend as widely as possible. We carry on the work of the college in three departments or schools. In connection with the School of Agriculture we have the research and illustration departments of which I have spoken. Then we have Household Science, with research, and instruction for the homes of the people. That branch treats of the three prime necessities - food, raiment and housing. It is just as important that the woman should be educated for her sphere of management as the man for his. In the School for Teachers the instruction and training are for teachers preparing for city and rural schools. It is important that the rural school and its teacher should stand in with those two other activities, viz., the occupations and the homes of the parents, and that the children should be thoroughly trained towards ability for, as well as an understanding of, what will be required of them in the fields and in the homes. The three-fold character of the college fits it to train leaders for rural communities.