

At the present time the subject of general instruction in Public Schools is being carefully worked out in France, Germany, Italy, and even in darkest Russia. Many of the most progressive of the States to the south of us are also discussing the question, and in some cases at least a promising start has been made.

In the Province of Manitoba a course of agricultural instruction has been laid down, and a text-book prepared adapted to the conditions of that province.

In Quebec more has been done in the way of editing and publishing text-books in various departments of agriculture than in any other province, and a continued effort has been made to make the instruction as general as possible.

In Ontario, however, we shall have to work out our system on the lines that are best adapted to this province, and it will not do to try to copy very closely the system of any other country or any other province. We can have our own system if we desire it, and we can have a system adapted to our own conditions of agriculture and suited to the mental capacity of our pupils.

So much for what may be called the introduction to my paper. Let me now briefly state my views under three heads:

1. Should agriculture be taught in our schools?
2. When and where should it be taught in our school programme?
3. What can be taught, and how can it be taught?

1. *Should Agriculture be Taught?*

If agriculture can be taught in our schools, that is, if there is time and place for it, and if it can be presented in a form adapted to school pupils, the more reasonable form for this question, it seems to me, is, "Should agriculture not be taught?"

The agriculture of this province is

in a critical condition. We certainly have not yet reached the most acute conditions that have come to the farmers of Great Britain, France, and Germany, but we have reached a point which, compared with these conditions of the newer farming communities of Manitoba, the North-west Territories, and other sections similarly situated, can be expressed by no better term than the one I have used, viz: *critical*.

The building up of the pure-bred live stock interests of this province and the development of our dairy industry have been the two main factors in saving us from a condition that could be described only by the term "desperate."

Just at the present time the conditions are more favorable than they have been for some time. Prices have improved for us, mainly because of the temporary misfortunes of agriculturists in other parts of the world. One consequence of this is seen in the great rush at present in progress for the cheap productive lands of Manitoba and the North-west Territories. If nothing be done to give a decided upward movement to our Ontario agriculture, however, we may soon find ourselves approaching the conditions now prevalent in the older farming lands of Europe. Let me give you a statement of that condition from the pen of one who is in authority. M. Tisserand, the late Director-General of Agriculture in France, speaks as follows in a report to the Recess Committee of the British House of Commons dealing with the question of the industries of Ireland:

"In this extraordinary century, when everything has been profoundly modified by steam, when distances have disappeared, and the Australian with his wool, the Indian with his corn, * the American with his cattle and his

*Reference is made here to the native of British India, and the word "corn" includes grain of every kind, with special reference to wheat.