

The Hon. John Dryden, Minister of Agriculture for Ontario, then addressed the meeting as follows:

Mr. President and Gentlemen,—I am very grateful to you for the kind and hearty reception you have given me. It is another indication of the sympathy extended to me in the work of my department by the farmers all over the country. I cannot but express the pleasure I feel in seeing so large a number of delegates present. I notice that with one or two exceptions every locality in the province is represented, and the deliberations of a body so representative as the present must receive attention, while their conclusions must be of great weight in the country. To one who observes the progress and development of the agricultural interest of this country, it must be pleasing indeed to notice the increasing interest manifested in our Farmers' Institutes. During the past year the membership in most districts has been multiplied. The attendance at the meetings has been larger than ever before, and this applies not to a few of the institutes only,—it has been general through all. In many parts of the country an unbounded enthusiasm has been manifested in these meetings during the season just closed. This is the report from all the delegates, and to my mind it indicates the dawn of better days for the farmer. It indicates that the farmers are largely becoming dissatisfied with the present results, and to some extent with the present methods. This is the first step towards progress, and will unquestionably be followed by a desire to learn how better results may be achieved. But this increasing interest in the institutes indicates further that the farmers are beginning more than ever before to display an interest in each other's welfare, and this is being followed by a desire to help one another. Farmers of every class should realize this. The farmers are unlike the manufacturers—their business relations are more closely connected with each other. The manufacturer, when he discovers some new process or invents some new article, is able to close the doors against others—there is positively no admittance to others—but the farmer has to work in the open field and in the light of the mid-day sun. Another thing, the farmer is obliged largely to pool his receipts; for instance, the wheat which he produces is not sent across the ocean in a vessel by itself but is thrown together in the elevator with that produced by the farmers of his district, and therefore the receipts he obtains for his product must be fixed by the average quality of the whole. I notice from the reports of the meetings published in the newspapers that Professor Saunders has been present and has urged the growth of two-rowed barley for the English market. It would not be enough for Mr. Rennie, Mr. Annis and Mr. Douglas to raise on their farms barley weighing 5½ lbs. to the bushel. Their grain has to be mixed with that produced by others, and what should be aimed at is to bring the average product up to the highest standard if we are to obtain the success we desire.

Then, again, the increasing interest taken in our institutes indicates that the farmers are beginning more than ever to respect themselves, or to put it in another way, to assert themselves and demand that their rights should be respected. This interest in one another is the first step which will lead, not only to uniform methods and uniform products, but also to greater unity of action. Through this unity they will be able to claim their rights in this perverse and crooked generation.

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