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Ontario District Representatives in Conference at Guelph

Many Important Subjects Discussed—The Harvest Labor Supply for 1918—The Supply of Concentrated Feeds—Cooperative Organization: Work—Plans for Live Stock Improvement.

IT is now over a decade since, in fear and trembling, the Ontario Department of Agriculture decided to place six district representatives in six Ontario counties—just to try out the idea. "Doctors of Agriculture," people called them, and their appointment was as severely ridiculed in some districts as it was commended in others. But the movement has grown. To-day every county but one in Old Ontario has its representative and these representatives are the key men in all county work for agriculture. Last week the 41 representatives of Old Ontario met in conference at Guelph. Who then composed the members of the Agricultural Section of the Organization of Resources Committee, representatives of the Dominion Department of Agriculture, the Canada Food Board, the Ontario Sheep Breeders' Association, the Ontario Horse Breeders' Association, and, finally, Mr. C. B. Smith, who has the oversight of the representative of County Agent movement in the United States, gave the gathering its international flavor.

The subjects under discussion covered a wide range of work. The half day was given over to a discussion of the harvest labor situation. The feed situation was given similar thorough consideration. The discussion of organization work revealed the large part the representatives are playing in organizing the farming population for cooperative communal endeavor; this work embraces everything from the child in school to their parents on the farm. Above all, the proceedings demonstrated the influence that the representative is wielding in the present food crisis, in promoting both production and conservation of foodstuffs. The conference lasted for an entire week. Only the discussions on subjects of peculiar interest to farmers generally can be discussed in this issue of Farm and Dairy. Of these the most important was probably that on farm labor. An interesting feature of the gatherings was the presence of Hon. Nelson Montford, under whose administration the movement started, and of Hon. Geo. S. Henry, the present head of the Department.

Harvest Help for 1918.

All hope that labor might be conscripted from non-essential industries, or that these industries might be closed to provide man power for the work of the harvest, was dispelled by Dr. Riddell, of the Trades and Labor Branch, Toronto, who presided at the labor conference. "The government has no thought of conscripting labor for private industry in Canada this year," said he. "Voluntarism is to be given its very best trial. Anything we can do for this harvest must be purely on a voluntary basis."

It was generally agreed that, owing to a lighter crop, the demand for men might not be as great as last year, but that the demand in another couple of weeks would be much greater than at present. The registration cards of those who signified their willingness to do farm work have been already turned over to the district representatives and they will endeavor to make connections between the worker and the farmer who wants work. Mr. Knapp, of Waterloo county, said that he had found that most of those who had stated their willingness to do farm work, on being interviewed, explained that they were willing to go to the farms "if they were drafted or that work." Factories are busier than ever before, and in Galt, Mr. Knapp found that manufacturers were not going to let men go to the farms. Manufacturers contend that men in non-essential work should be called

first. The men, too, have strings to their pianos,—they will go if (a) they see the same wages as they get as at their present work, which in one case was \$15 a day for self and team; and (b) if the employers will let them go and insure their best positions when they return. Mr. Knapp thought a standard wage should be set for the harvest season.

"Manufacturers are not disposed to give assistance as they did last year," said Mr. Williams, of Durham county, in discussing the willingness of men to go on the farms for less than city pay. "And farmers are not disposed to pay over \$25.00 a day. Some would pay \$3 or \$4 a day, but they have no assurance that they will get good, experienced men."

Mr. Hampson in Welland county has gotten in touch with those willing to work on farms and, where assurance was needed of the old job being available on his return, he has asked their employers on their behalf. All promised reinstatement and in two weeks, by using the cards, Mr. Hampson has placed more men than in the entire previous season, and he thinks a situation is well in hand. He has established a minimum wage of \$10 a month or \$25.00 a day. The city man and the farmer got together and make their own arrangements.

Mr. Pole of Hamilton, the labor leader, thought that all men who had signified their willingness to work should be approached and that the necessary help would be forthcoming. Mr. Clemons in Wellington county is arranging meetings attended by farmers who need help and city volunteers. In small centers this plan is working well. Mr. Tipper in Ontario county just went through the factories and had the manufacturers indicate which men they could most easily release for short periods. Applicants for barn help were then sent to these men.

Several representatives expressed their conviction that it is more difficult to get farmers to send in their applications early than it is to supply the men. It was explained time and again by manufacturers to the representatives that they cannot release men on a day's notice. The Trades and Labor Branch was asked to inform the farmers, by advertising or otherwise, that if representatives are handling the registration cards and that help will be made available if applications are had in rapid time.

The value of various classes of city help was discussed by the boys who endorsed. Mr. Jackson of Carleton county told of 40 or 50 boys brought up from Montreal, practically all of whom proved satisfactory. Mr. Wolts of Hamilton found that the boys who endorsed the boys were satisfactory. And Mr. Williams of Durham told of one boy who stayed a week merely because the marsh between the farm and station was flooded. The farmwife, too, was heartily endorsed as a labor asset. Many of these young women are engaged in the territory of Mosser, Elliott of Lincoln and Neff, of Norfolk, who both told the ladies that they are giving on mixed farms as well as with fruit specialists. Mr. Sivert believes that woman labor must be used if the apple crop is to be harvested this year. His own experience with farmwives has been satisfactory. Dr. Creelman confessed his conviction to the farmwife idea and predicted that women will find an continually enlarging sphere in field work.

The Threshing Gang.

Threshing gangs were naturally included in the discussion of the labor problem. Mr. Macdonald of Lambton county told of county operation in his county where five threshers have car

(Continued on page 7.)

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Trade

VOL. X

It is a del town of traversed of Geo. Geo. What new life farm the varied shade of the spring even the sun field, are the real love to work of the poet's in the country. Harrie spoke the enthusiastic summer,—place like to. Then he ad street, and racket are and dare o back to the tent the ev ten. With rural mail what more than a hom Mr. Harrie are ready to r choice limit towns or vill cottage for pleasant cor farm. Mr. doing nethe better wa' on in the has lived for the place v sensations, I recall that be. A new mer on a ple drive from as Geo. R. E such as is able. In president of achieved a seed grower argument, in the reputation much as the heard, and Farm and This farm opposite side ing, a cond does not rich loan \$6 adapted to a days of the county. One in the farm are in bus covers five corn 4 fall wheat s or hay and The croppin