

Belgium's Agricultural Position.

In Belgium, depletion of soil and emigration of rural population became so serious that the government in 1885 decided to appoint agricultural supervisors or district agricultural instructors. What has been the result? Briefly, it may be summed up thus—increased values of farm lands, remarkable improvement in crop production and a steadying of the rural population. The Belgian Minister of Agriculture reports that since 1885:—

	Bushels.
Wheat has increased per acre from	24.54 to 28.55
Rye has increased per acre from	23.86 to 36.60
Oats has increased per acre from	49.79 to 81.48
Barley has increased per acre from	38.24 to 57.57

Mr. R. B. Greig in a special report to the Board of Education in England points out that:—

‘Belgian farms produce 50,000,000 dollars more annually than they did twenty-five years ago at a cost for every kind of agricultural education of not more than 200,000 dollars a year. What is now the densest population in Europe is almost supported by the product of its own farms, which yield an average of 100 dollars per annum per acre as compared with less than half from British land.’

\$500,000,000 More in France.

France for many years has been carrying on a well planned and comprehensive scheme of agricultural instruction. I cannot sum up the results better than in the following words from a recent issue of a Canadian weekly journal, the *Weekly Sun* of the 20th of November, 1912:—

Value of Agricultural Education.

‘If any one doubts the value of agricultural education when carried directly to the home, the barn and the field of the farmer, he should consider the case of France. Since that country established a practical system of agricultural education fifteen years ago the value of the annual crops has increased by five hundred million dollars.’

\$68,000,000 for the States.

I would like to point out to the House a notable advance made recently by the United States, and especially because their problems of federal and state jurisdiction are not unlike our own.

Since 1862 Congress has passed six Acts providing for grants to the states for agricultural colleges, experiment stations and various lines of agricultural instruction. During the past fifty years no less than \$68,000,000 has been turned over to the states for agricultural investigation and instruction. These grants still continue, but they are now inadequate for the demands of carrying instruction direct to the farms and increased appropriations are required.

Last year the introduction of the Page Bill marked a new departure in their attitude to the national question of agriculture. The Page Bill, now in its final stage, provides appropriations approximating twelve million dollars per annum to be apportioned among the states largely for agricultural work but including also technical training. In dealing with this Bill the New York State authorities remarked:—

‘It is recommended that in the development of federal efforts to promote agricultural education the autonomy of the states should be preserved; that established state policies should not be reversed by federal legislation; and that a single centralized control over all states which would lead to bureaucratic regulations should be avoided.’