

the rush of population to the cities. In Manitoba with the richest soil in the world there are only 49,000 farmers in a population of more than half a million, and more than half of that population lives within the city of Winnipeg. We have witnessed an era of industrial and speculative development, accompanied by the abnormal growth of cities and rural decline. It is time to pause and consider if all this change is for the good of the nation. Personally, I should prefer to come to you with a cheery message, and an assurance that all is well. But it is only the false prophet who proclaims "Peace peace", when there is no peace. So I take this occasion of presenting what is not merely a rural problem, but is essentially a national problem, and presenting it as fairly and accurately as I can from the farmers' point of view.

"Rural Depopulation in the U. S."

(From the Philadelphia Public Ledger)

Preliminary estimates of the United States census for the year 1920 are said to indicate that the farming population of that nation has dropped to 35 per cent. of the total. Forty years ago 70 per cent. of the people of the United States lived in the country. A decade ago 55 per cent. of the population was rural, but now it is estimated that only 35 per cent. live in the country."

The story that is told in this report is a true story of all English-speaking countries. In England, Ireland and Scotland, in United States and in Canada, slightly different causes have produced the same effects of hugely overgrown towns and a declining rural population. I propose to mention some of the causes, and to trace some of the effects of these changes as they have happened here in Canada within the memory of men who are still comparatively young. It may be that nothing can be done about it. It may be that a national change, a change in the life and character of a whole people, must be allowed to carry on to its proper conclusion. But in any event we should not close our eyes to facts and consequences of such great moment, nor mistakenly pronounce a thing good which may be evil.

I shall try in this address to show:

1. That the dominance of the town is the result everywhere of the industrial development.
2. That in Canada the dominance of the town has been fostered by our political and social ideals.
3. That the abnormal growth of towns is responsible for many of the economic and social ills from which we are at the moment suffering.

Industrial Development and Revolution.

The nineteenth century is distinguished among the centuries as the era of industrial development. Science and inventive genius in the nineteenth century accomplished more in speeding up the processes of industry than had ever been accomplished in all the centuries preceding since Cain began to till the soil and Tubal-cain worked in brass and iron. At the first half of the nineteenth century the sower went forth to sow just as did the sower of the parable, casting the grain with his dispensing palm aside and the harvester cut the grain with the sickle as did the harvester in the fields of Boaz. At the beginning of the twentieth century the seed was sown by clockwork in a huge drill drawn by two, three, or four horses, and with the self-binder one man could reap and bind as much grain in a day as ten men could do a half century earlier. Machinery has replaced hand labor in every industry. That is the industrial revolution.

The invention of machinery has been accompanied by an economic discovery of even greater significance, namely, the principle of the division of labor. It was discovered that a man could do more work, could become more expert and "efficient," if he were kept at one single operation requiring the same motion hour after hour. The motions both of his mind and of his body became automatic, when confined to a narrow round. Greater accuracy and greater speed resulted, and consequently greater production and a higher economy in production. Any large factory to-day furnishes endless examples of this division of labor. I have never visited a Ford factory, but I am told the assembling of the machine takes place along the length of a great track, that the parts are added and adjusted by a multitude

of men each of whom gives a tap of the hammer or a turn to a screw as the car passes by him on the track. That may be an exaggeration, and I am not particularly anxious to know whether it is or not, but it illustrates the extreme length to which this division of labor may go.

Without guidance of the vision which forges the finished whole, the skill of the individual workman will be in vain. He can make his wheel, his screw, but he can neither make the engine nor run it. He is not so unlike, as he may think, to that workman lent by special favor to one of the new munition factories in America. The man came with a record of five years service in the greatest motor works in the world. "What did you do there?" his new employer asked hopefully. "I put in bolt seventeen." "Not for nine years!" "Yes, for nine years."

It will be quite apparent that the division of labor is impossible in the system of small separate shops and factories such as existed in Canada a generation ago. Hence began the combination and amalgamation of separate industries in one big factory, and the elimination of the small village shop and factory. The craze for economy of production included transportation, and factories must be placed convenient

policy of universal education, and the educational ideal she has set up has been an escape from the necessity of labor. It was not to be thought of that the brilliant High School pupil should choose some useful, productive industry for his calling. He must go into one or other of the professions. Our technical schools have not produced artisans or mechanics. The successful students of our technical schools have become civil or electrical engineers or technical experts. The unsuccessful have drifted into some business or other. It is charged that even the agricultural colleges have failed to produce farmers. It would be a wonder if they had produced farmers with the current so strong against them. I cannot forget the reproach that was the lot of the country boy when first he went to high school in a small Ontario town. A tanned face was a thing to hide, unless the owner could proclaim it the product of a season at camping. The farmer has been classed as a laborer in Canada, and the laborer is not respected however much we may rant about the dignity of labor.

Our industrial system has defeated its own ends, and has failed. It has built up the cities at the expense of country life, and the present day Canadian city as an expression of a well-ordered, well-

conditions, added to the tale of woe. Every increase in wages to the operatives was absorbed by corresponding increases in the cost of food, clothing and shelter. This particular manufacturer was seeking to escape from it all by locating a site for his factory in a part of the country which had not been poisoned by the neighborhood of a great city.

Country Losing Individuality.

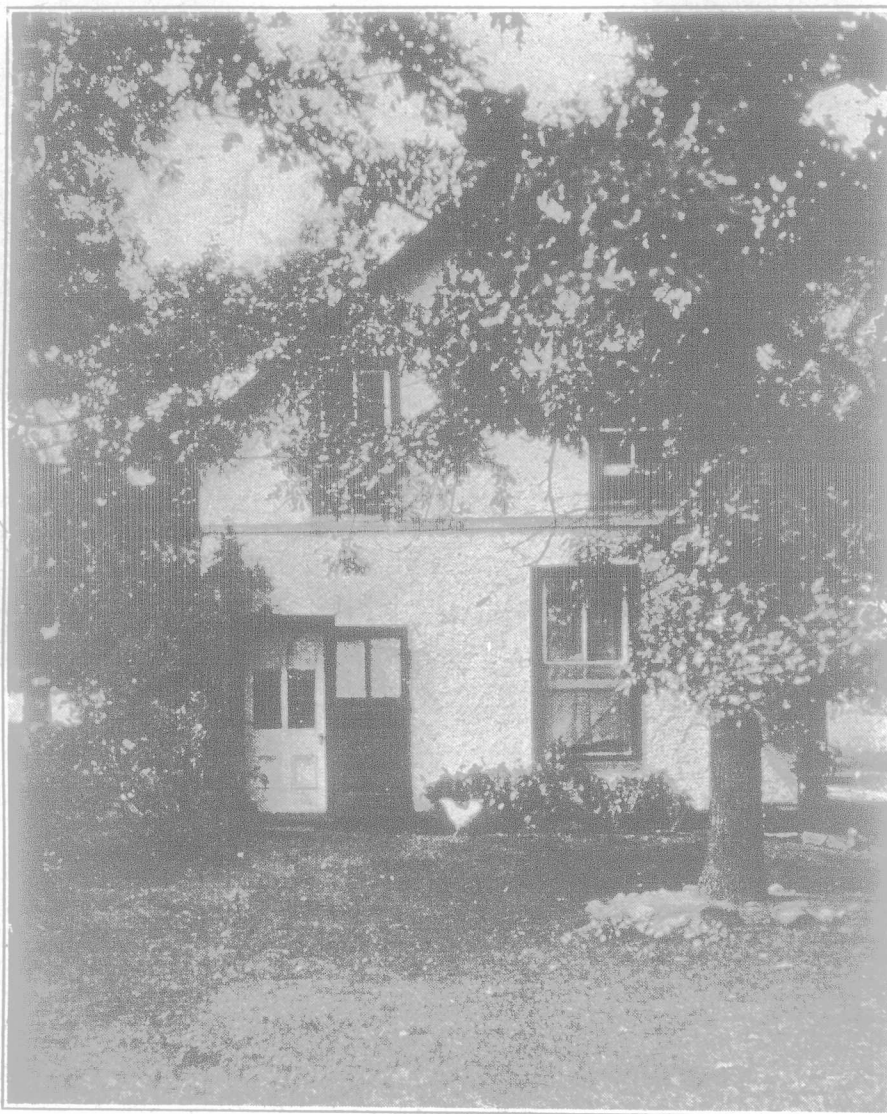
By reason of the dominance of the town the country is fast losing its distinctive appearance and character and individuality. The very trees and standing crops are no longer green in June as of yore, but bear an ignoble load of dust churned up from the road by the wheels of flying motors. The telephone has invaded the quiet of the countryside, and the rural mail delivery brings the city newspaper with the city news, its sensations and its inaccuracies and its sporting column. City fashions in dress and sport and amusement have taken hold on country tastes. Teachers for country schools, and preachers for country churches are trained in city schools and colleges and carry with them to the country city ideas and ideals and the fond hope that they may before long be called to a city charge. The city mail-order house is filching away the business that used to be done in the country store, and the village smithy no longer stands beneath the spreading chestnut tree, but has long ago fallen into ruin.

Failure in Economy.

Our industrial system has failed, and failed signally, in economy of production. The small shop of forty years ago, with its master workman, a journeyman or two, and an apprentice, was much more efficient than its present day substitute, the huge factory in the city. Then the boss and the men and the boy all knew their customers as neighbors. Night or day a farmer could get necessary work done. Hours were not counted as the measure of a workman's obligations, so much as a neighbor's need. Workmen were no more skilled than now, and I believe no better at heart. But the system was infinitely better in its social relations. The relationship between shop and customer then was personal. The relationship between master and workman was personal and with the personal relation went the possibility of give and take. Then a workman could see his work from beginning to end, a chair, a wagon, a set of whiffle-trees. He could look upon the work of his hands as a complete article, and see that it was good. To-day, factory hands are no longer persons in their factories, they are machines, or slaves to machines. Interest in their work they have little or none. All is mechanical and impersonal. The loss in efficiency is due to the loss of individuality. A man can work ten hours a day without undue weariness of body. It is the weariness of spirit which demands shorter hours, and since the workman must have a living wage, be his hours long or short, the continued demand for shorter and shorter hours has reduced labor efficiency.

The building of great cities and the massing of growing families there have created another social problem and caused further loss in national efficiency. The farm is the great opportunity for occasional employment. The boys and girls on the farm need not be overworked, need not be kept out of school, and they need not grow up without habits of industry, and a familiarity with labor. The hordes of idle youths of both sexes in the city are idle because there is nothing for them to do. City business does not lend itself to family partnership. In the city the head of the house must earn for the whole family. On the farm the boys and girls serve apprenticeships to useful labor, and society is the better off for what they do, since they usually work for nothing. If the production of the farm were charged for at so much an hour for labor expended, and charged for at the rate the mechanic in the city must have in order to support his family, the food we eat would be the dearest of our commodities, instead of as it is now, the cheapest.

The town, having found a place on the map, must justify its existence, and must grow to keep pace with the other towns. Hence we have town boosters, whose aim is to make the town bigger, to attract industries to the town, to fill it up with population and sell more and



Home of Mr. Ruthven Wilson at Clarkson, Ont.

to lines of railway. The amalgamation of factories made necessary by the division of labor and the locating of factories at railway centres have produced the great modern manufacturing centres.

Manufacturer and Farmer.

Great combinations of capital, represented in the modern manufactory, have been made the means of securing political action which has favored the city industry by protective tariffs. Under a protective tariff, the manufacturer does not need to care how much he pays for his labor, for the protection enables him to charge a profit not only on the cost of his raw material, but also on the cost of his labor. Hence for forty years the farmer selling in an open market has competed in his bid for labor with the manufacturers selling in a market protected by tariffs high enough to prohibit or to reduce outside competition.

Forty years ago Canada started out to build cities. Her economic policy could end in nothing else. To her economic policy have been added her educational and social ideals. She has adopted the

balanced British democracy, is a failure. Our industrial system has as its foundation and the justification of its existence the principle of economical production by division of labor. And to talk of economy of production in the face of present day prices is a travesty of fact and a perversion of economic truth.

A manufacturer in a New England city a short time ago informed a friend that he was on the lookout for a new factory site. The conditions of living in the New England city had become intolerable. The city had sucked the life of the surrounding country, so that the abandoned farms round about were no longer able to supply food for the city inhabitants. The boasted co-operation between the town and the country, by which the town could supply the needs of the country and the country the needs of the town had failed. The blighting shadow of the town had destroyed the country round about. Milk, meat, eggs, vegetables needed by the town were no longer produced by the surrounding country. Cost of transportation and the middleman's charges had made high food prices. Rent, taxes, congested living