

dependence of town and country was not a subject that entered into our consideration. It is not our purpose to-night to discuss the causes which have led to the present high cost of living, but I may say in passing that the blame, if blame there is, does not altogether lie with the farmer, as many suppose. He suffers with us in the high prices that prevail. All the things that he does not actually produce and which he must buy, even his concentrated cattle foods—the products of milling, etc., have gone up in price and above all the labour that he must hire to help him till his soil, put in his crops and harvest them and feed his cattle, commands to-day a wage unheard of a few years ago. The scarcity and dearness of farm labour is probably to-day the most serious problem in agriculture. If therefore the farmer to-day is getting somewhat more for his own labour and oversight and his capital invested than he did ten years ago, and I think he is, he richly deserves it; compared with other industries, agricultural labor has been but poorly paid in the past.

It has seemed to me that the question of supply and demand is very largely involved in this matter of high prices. For the facts are these, that tremendous quantities of Canadian produced food stuffs are going overseas to feed our troops and we have the distressing fact to acknowledge that our food producing population—our rural population—has decreased while our food consuming population—the population of our cities—has increased. In a word while our food consumption has increased, our food production has decreased. During the last decade there has been a steady exodus from the farm to the city—a most deplorable condition looking to the future stability and progress of our country, which is by nature undoubtedly designed to be a great food producing country.

And you may legitimately ask me why this is so? Why have the young men left the farm and sought employment in the city? Many answers have been given and the subject is worn well-nigh threadbare. Perhaps lack of love for the work has had something to do with it, for many of our farm boys have been brought up with the idea that farming is merely dirty drudgery with no outlook and no prospects. Many of our farmers, with their long experience of toil in reclaiming the forest, have encouraged rather than dissuaded their boys to remain on the farms. Anything that we can do to inculcate a love of the country, of working the soil, a love of plants and animals, will be doing our country good service. Perhaps the glamour of the city life offers opportunities for activities and amusements and mild excitement that are absent in the country. But probably the more immediate cause is the fact that the wages of the various industries and city businesses are con-