(March 23, 1914.)

Some Rural Problems.

By George C. Creelman, Esq., LL.D.*

At a regular meeting of the Club, held on the 23rd March, Dr. Creelman said:

Mr. President and Hon. Mr. Duff, and Members of the Canadian Club of the City of Toronto,—Surely the farmer is coming into his own, when I am permitted to appear before you as a guest of the Canadian Club in this great cosmopolitan city, at what we call a banquet, and at a time when things are quiet on the farm and there is nothing much to do but the chores. On behalf of the farmers of Ontario, I thank you for inviting me to your party. (Laughter.)

If I have got to decide right off whether the city of Toronto is to have a million people or not in the immediate future, I have a bigger problem before me than I anticipated when I came; because the President said nothing of that when he gave me the invitation; and like Hon. Mr. Duff and those who are keeping the seals of the Province, I will ask you to let me take it into my consideration. (Laughter.)

Farming in Ontario.

Perhaps there never was a time in the history of Ontario when there was as much need for instruction in agriculture as at the present day. Farming and farm operations have changed so materially that the father can not now give the best and most up-to-date instruction, even to his own boys.

Wheat is now but one of our minor crops. You remember the common saying, "What as good as wheat?" That is all changed; corn, and sugar beets, and alfalfa, and peaches and apples, and onions and tomatoes, and tobacco, are coming to be counted among our staple crops. The climate of Ontario seems to be adapted to the growing of so many varieties of crops that there is no reason why the farmer's daily life need any longer become monotonous. Ontario has changed her methods with the new order of things—I say that advisedly

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—and owing to the superior intelligence of her people she has established herself as one of the best farming Provinces of the whole world. Perhaps you don't just appreciate that, but if any of you have had the opportunity of looking at the state of farming in other countries, you would observe that they specialize in one crop, and do it to perfection; but the splendid intermingling of English, Scotch and Irish blood has produced a race of farmers here who are no longer called "mossbacks" and "hayseeds," but are indeed responsible for the real prosperity of this great Province of ours.

Notwithstanding the great development in our Western Provinces the field crops of Ontario yet exceed in value all the field crops produced in Canada west of Winnipeg, in spite of the fact that a large percentage of the Western farmers have been drawn from Ontario farm homes.

As one goes through this Province, from county to county, and township to township, he is forced to the conclusion that as an agricultural district it is very highly favored indeed. Good land, well watered, and excellent climate with plenty of sunshine, always insures fair crops, and while our bank managers in their annual statements often forecast good or bad times, according to the conditions of the crops in the West, yet because they have never been disappointed in Ontario crops they never speak of what might happen if we had a failure here.

Farming Not Popular.

In this favored Province, then, one would expect to find farming the most popular business of all, and the people from cities and towns would only live in such places until they could make money enough to own and operate a farm of their own. (Laughter.) As a matter of fact, the situation is exactly reversed. Farmers' boys and farmers' girls are leaving, in large numbers, for the cities and towns, and most of the farmers themselves hope to remain on the farm only so long as will enable them to make enough money which at 3% will give them sufficient income to retire to the neighboring town or city. Here they hope to pass their days in peace and idleness, to sleep late in the mornings and sit up late at nights, in fact to "eat, drink and be merry" all the rest of their lives. (Laughter.)

Now you know as well as I do how differently it works out. (Laughter.) The farmer has as much right to retire, after a life of hard work, as anyone else, perhaps more so, as he is one man who has earned every dollar that he has

made. (Laughter.) The difficulty is that he does not know the difference between the life of the producer and the consumer, nor can he appreciate the circumstances with which he will find himself surrounded when he gets out of his own element.

Retired Farmers.

Speaking of retired farmers,—and I do it kindly and reverently—(Laughter)—this may be a new view to you, but it seems to me that the great pity lies, not so much in the fact that he does not fit into his new conditions, but that his long experience, his habits of thrift, his knowledge of the community, and his leisure time, are now all lost to the neighborhood in which he has done all of his work, and in which position he should be able, in his declining years, to do a great deal of good. (Hear, hear, "That's true," and applause.)

You know, perhaps, better than I do, how much clear-headed, conscientious, broad-minded help is needed among the School Boards in our rural communities, and our urban communities sometimes as well. (Laughter.) You know what one man of the right sort could do with a little leisure in improving the appearance of the school and the conditions of the school grounds. You know what can be accomplished by such a man coming forward, in the support of the teacher, in the introduction of modern methods, and you know how such a man should stand as a strength in the community, and could very easily secure additional funds each year for the purchase of those little things, in the way of school equipment, that make the difference between the mere humdrum of teaching by text books and teaching by demonstration. (Applause.)

The Boy and Girl.

If then the coming generation of farmers are to be kept in the country, are to be expected to settle on a corner of the old farm after they have turned their larger property over to the son or the son-in-law, then we must start very early to interest the boy and the girl in the ethics of rural living. You can't teach old dogs new tricks; and if the old dog is living on the old concession, the young dog doesn't see many new tricks there. (Laughter.) The farmer's boy must be encouraged to play in a systematic way; he must be taught to co-operate with his neighbors in everything; he must be instructed in the first principles of scientific farming; he must be encouraged to read widely and persistently. He must be

taught to draw as well as to read and write, and he must be encouraged along the line of his talents, to do everything systematically, that his latter days on the farm may lead to neatness about the buildings and fences, orderliness in the barns, stables, harness rooms, and implement sheds; shorter hours for men and teams; the desire to adopt new methods which have been proven to be the best at the Colleges and Experiment Stations; and the readiness to change from one method to another, on the advice of the best farmers in the community.

All such ideas must be inculcated in youth, and as the parents are now asking for more help from the Agricultural College, the boy will get more encouragement at home than would have been the case a few years ago.

The College and the Farmer.

The Agricultural College during its existence of nearly forty years has proven by experiment, surely and definitely, that by farming certain fields, in a certain way, that breeding and feeding certain classes of live stock, that introducing certain crops on certain soils, that handling the orchard by certain methods, and draining the land in a certain way, absolute success in farming is assured.

From that point, however, we have not done all that we should in getting this information to the individual farmer on his own farm. We have at the present time over five thousand farmers conducting experiments on their own farms, and reporting to us, but there are over two hundred thousand heads of families on farms in this Province whom we reach but indirectly. As a matter of fact, the difference between the average and the possible yield on the ordinary farm is at least 300%. What do you think of that, you hard-headed business men, who if you can cut down your costs to a very narrow margin say, "If I could cut down my expenses to 10% I'd scrap the old machinery?" Yet when we point out to a man how he can save 300%, he very often does not take it down, or thinks it applies to someone else.

I think it would be quite within the mark were I to say that our Agricultural Colleges and Experiment Stations had already proven, by experiment, enough facts to double the output on the ordinary farm, if put into actual practice. The whole trouble has been that we have not been able to get the farmers to adapt these facts to their every day work on the farm.

What Science Has Done.

Take for example that the crop of wheat is 22 bushels on the average in this Province. We are rather behind other countries in that. In England the average is 32 bushels, in Germany 36, after a thousand years of cropping! Where shall we be a thousand years from now at the present rate of increase? In Germany and in Sweden, in old inhospitable Sweden, they far outstrip us,—in the latter country they produce 75 bushels to the acre in fields, and 90 in plots! But they never sow wheat unless it is pedigreed. A newspaper might be spread in the field anywhere, and it would touch evenly the heads grown from pedigreed seed—we are a long way from that yet!

Alfalfa is worth pound for pound as much as bran for feeding live stock. We can and do produce 5 tons of alfalfa hay per acre in the ordinary season in Ontario. Bran is worth to-day—and I made special inquiry—$24 a ton, which would make the alfalfa crop actually worth to the farmer $120 per acre; and yet it is the hardest kind of work at times to persuade farmers, who have suitable land, to risk ploughing up even an old pasture to put into alfalfa.

The average cow in Ontario produces less than 3,500 lbs. of milk per year, and yet we had a cow in the College herd that produced 20,788 lbs. by actual weight in twelve months. This is a difference of nearly 600%. The average hen in Ontario lays less than 100 eggs in a year, while last year we had whole pens of hens that produced 180 eggs each, while the six hens in one coop, pedigreed stock, produced 256 eggs each.

And so I might go on, but the very telling of these things does not help you to produce this kind of hen, or cow, or crop.

We were a long time finding this out, but now we have come finally to the conclusion that the best and quickest way to improve the farming in this Province is to actually send trained men into the country and leave them there long enough to get the confidence of the people. (Hear, hear.)

You know the farmer has been a long time coming into his own, and he has not got very far yet; but we would have been much less advanced if Sir James Whitney had not himself taken an interest in the matter and said we should take the College to the people.

Carrying the Gospel of Agriculture to Every Farmer.

No sane man would think of asking a young doctor, or lawyer, or preacher, if you will allow me to say so, to go back to a community and work for the people and pay his own board; yet people have been expecting a young man to spend just as much money at an Agricultural College, and go back and work as hard as before; he is expected to keep his fences all straight, his barns painted, his trees in exact rows, to have no weeds in his crops,—it is to be a model farm, because he has had a course at College; then he is expected to attend meetings of Farmers' Clubs and Institutes, meetings in the school house and the church, and when he is not too tired making a model farm for himself to teach others! That is what the Agricultural College was up against, till we put men at this work and pay them. We find that one man visiting farmers can teach a thousand people. These men are being employed, and paid for it, enabling them to get in touch with the farmers.

Such men we have termed Agricultural Representatives, and we have now one in each of forty districts in this Province, and they are all doing excellent work. They have already accomplished a good deal through holding short courses for farmers, longer courses in High Schools for farmers' sons; introducing pure seed; starting Farmers' Clubs; giving plans for farms for drainage; starting school fairs—we distributed 17,500 eggs last spring to school children, they took them, put them under hens, raised them and fed them, and more than half of them were brought to exhibitions last fall; judging at local exhibitions—boys thought they could judge Shropshires because their fathers raised them, but those boys got around where a man could give reasons for judging, and those boys watched with their mouths open, and now they say, "The best is none too good for me"; taking old orchards and regenerating them and making them produce good fruit; helping in the selection of improved tools and machinery; helping to conduct experiments on different farms; and a thousand and one other activities, according to climate, soil and altitude. I want you to watch the operations of these men, and note the progress they are making, because I believe they are going to wield a greater influence on the future prosperity of Ontario than anything else that has ever been attempted up to this time. (Applause.)

Then the educationists of the Province have fallen right in with this, and are working with them, because we believe

that the teaching of this thing in spots is not going to accomplish very much except to give some of us a chance to talk; so we have opened our doors to the teaching profession, and from the letters being received from day to day, it would look as though this has been a move in the right direction.

The Agricultural Representatives will work among the young men and the older men in active co-operation with the schools at the same time, so that there may be no conflict in the subject matter, or in the methods taught. Am I going too far, when I say, that I am not sure but that rural teachers and rural preachers may have to take Agricultural College courses yet, that they may learn to teach morals and religion to farmers in terms of their daily life? (Hear, hear, and applause.)

Some Problems.

There are of course very many problems. I am not going to worry with them to-day, but will just touch on some of them. First, the killing of weeds. Weeds share our crops to-day to the extent of one-third. The variety of weeds is so great—you knew of the Canada thistle, but that is mere child's play to get rid of, compared with the sow thistle, the bindweed, the cockle, and others we have now.

The second problem is the planting of varieties of crops best suited to the farm and the neighborhood. You remember that Hon. John Dryden was an extensive breeder of Shorthorns; he said he wished that twenty or thirty Short-horn breeders would come and settle near him. The average man thinks competition is going to hurt his business. But he did not; he said, "No, it would do good." The real competitor, he considered, was the man who came to buy a carload of cattle but could get only five or six or seven head of cattle in that neighborhood, and would have to go to Wellington or Middlesex for the rest of his carload; if that man could get a whole carload at one place, the entire car would cost less. That is good business.

Our extreme southwest, from Essex to Elgin and perhaps Norfolk, should devote most of its energies to growing corn and beans and tobacco and poultry and early fruit and vegetables; the Niagara peninsula to fruit growing and truck farming; the shores of Lake Ontario, Lake Huron, and the Georgian Bay to apples; Eastern Ontario, generally speaking, to dairying; and Western and Northern Ontario to general farming and live stock.

A third problem is the securing of better and more permanent hired help. A great many men could put up a cottage and let it on terms to make that hired man a human being. (Laughter and applause.) We forget that the hired man is the farmer of to-morrow. Sometimes the hired man will take over the farm, and after he has worked it for ten years then turn it back to the farmer and work for him again. So I tell a great many English immigrants that say: "Jack is as good as his master." "Yes, if as good, but not unless." (Laughter and applause.) On the farm you need to keep a man busy all the year around, to give him a house, so his children can attend school and get a chance to become bright, young, intelligent Canadian citizens.

I do not know how the Minister of Agriculture would look at it, but I would send good men, good farmers, of both political stripes, such as Farmers' Institute workers, and judges of live stock, to the Old Country in to the lanes and byways of Great Britain, where the people are talking of emigration, to hold meetings and show pictures of our orchards and our farms, our cattle and sheep and homesteads. We need all the farm help we can get, and perhaps we could do with fewer so-called mechanics—Jacks of all trades.

Co-operation.

We have to come to marketing our crops by co-operation with our neighbors, that we may get the most possible for our labor.

This is a question which has occupied the attention of political and social economists for many centuries. It has gained little ground among farmers in this country, but has dominated the whole system of farming in some of the countries of Europe. In Denmark and parts of Germany co-operative methods have given the farmers charge of the banks, the telephones, the railroads, and even the Governments. Money may be had at from two to three per cent., and the poorest citizen,—if he be but honest—I don't go farther than that, that is important and necessary, if he be but poor and honest —has the same chance to promote his business and sell his goods in the best market as has the largest farmer in the land.

In America it looks as though our farmers will be forced almost to the wall, our farms worn out, and our land desolate, before we give up our small jealousies and our petty suspicions of one another. It is remarkable, that farmers, when they hire a man to manage a co-operative society, as soon as

he realizes $50 a month they think he is getting more than he is worth, and break up the society. The reason is that most farmers wait until the end of the year and sell their produce in bulk; but they are feeding their families and educating their families all the way through, and never see $50 in cash, or very seldom; the result is that they are not accustomed to doing a cash business. And so apples that we could have bought last year for $2 a barrel easily, we pay now $4, $5 and $6 for, and many farmers sent their apples to the canning factories, where they got 30 cents a hundred pounds!

With so many people rushing from the country to the city, and so many people coming into our cities from foreign lands, it is not surprising that prices of all foodstuffs are dearer. Fewer people producing and more people consuming, easily accounts for the present conditions of high prices.

The question then arises, How may we, with more mouths to fill, and inefficient as well as insufficient help, meet the increased demands? The Colleges and the Experiment Stations have done their part, and done it well. They have, by experiment, proven absolutely many things that if put into general practice would easily double our present output. They have taken a certain number of students from towns and cities and country places, and have taught them the best known methods of farming.

I think it is lack of organic union among ourselves, whereby every farmer on his own farm may obtain information at first hand, not only as to raising a crop, but as to the marketing and transporting and delivering of it to the customer, that is the great fault. And the farmer will not get into his real stride till we have that.

Road Improvement.

The next point is the improvement of roads. This is absolutely essential, and I am now of the opinion that some School of Practical Science must put on a course of instruction in road making which must teach draining, draining, draining, before metal or cement are thought of at all, to make roads in country places. (Hear, hear.) These principles need to be instilled into the average pathmaster and roadmaster. I have seen hundreds of tons of gravel put on roads that did no good at all, because the road was not first drained. We need draining first, draining second, draining all the time, of the middle of the road and the sides, and when it gets hard the water will not permeate.

Electric Power.

The securing of electric power on the farm is another problem. This is coming very fast. Besides the actual saving in animal power, what an uplift it will give the home life, to have electric light in every room of the house and barn and stable. At present farmers work so hard that they have a poor chance to enjoy the light of day, and at night a poor light to enjoy the chance of reading or anything else. (Laughter.)

Think also what it will mean to have running water in the house.

More Play Is Needed.

We want more shrubs and perennial flower beds and tennis courts and time for play, that the farm life may be the envy of the young people of the city and town. I am convinced—I ask you to listen carefully—I am convinced that it is not the glare and glitter of the city streets that attracts boys and girls to the city, but rather the lack of social organization in the country where every healthy young man and young woman may have some exercise and entertainment and amusement, in the furthering of which both sexes may take an active part. This is most important. Plowing and sowing and reaping and mowing and doing chores may be exercise enough, but it is not the highest kind of entertainment,—(Laughter)—and youth must be served.

Education.

In the Old Country I find that the aim of education is to make a "well dressed man who reads books and speaks correct English." In Canada he must also work for a living, therefore he must have special training. In country places our young people are practically all intelligent—is not that so?—temperate, frugal and industrious—is not that so? That accounts for our young men adapting themselves to any walk of life when they go to our cities or to the United States, and our girls who practically control and manage the large hospitals of this continent.

But what about the country boy and girl who remain at home? We have made a start. Five hundred young men took instruction in agriculture from our Agricultural Representatives this winter. Nearly one thousand more attended short courses at the College. Some school teachers have taken

courses at the Agricultural College. When all rural school teachers have a good working knowledge of agriculture, I predict a great awakening in rural affairs.

What About Our Girls?

What about the girls? Do you realize that 90 per cent. of the women of this country do their own work, or with the help of their mothers or sisters or mothers-in-law? I believe as many men go to perdition each year from bad cooking as from strong drink? (Laughter, and applause.) I believe also that strong drink tastes better after poor cooking. (Laughter.) If you can't get the real thing, you have to get some substitute. I say seriously now, and never so seriously, if at least 90 per cent. of the women of this country do their own work, every girl should be taught how to cook and to sew while her time is not worth much, that she may economize time when it is valuable. Flour and sugar and salt are three of our most necessary foods, and yet they are cheaper than twenty years ago. If it takes 1¼ cents to make your five cent loaf of bread in Toronto, and 1¼ cents to deliver it, then half the cost of the staff of life was saved you by your mother's baking. Why don't your wives bake now? They don't know how. (Laughter.) You have sent your girls to some ladies' college, because you have had some sort of crazy idea that you must have your young people "finished," and so you have sent them to schools which have undertaken to finish your girls for you,—and many of them they did! (Laughter)—that is, so far as usefulness is concerned. Of course we are going through the same old mill: if our girl can play a few chords, she has the making of a great musician; if she can draw a few strokes, she is likely to become a great artist! If she is writing essays—and doesn't get them published—we are quite excited, and spend a lot of money to have her "finished." Many musicians and artists and essayists have in this way been *not* made, but good cooks lost. You say you don't want your girls to learn housework. Why not? We have got to come to it. There has got to come to this country, among our homes, a feeling of the dignity of labor. (Applause.) What greater credit than for a young girl, in her own kitchen or her mother's properly clothed for her work, with knowledge, making up something for the people she loves in her own home! (Applause.)

You can get whatever permission you want from the Education Department for its introduction of this subject. I

have talked with the Minister of Education, and with his Deputy, who is here to-day, asking if they would give us teachers. They have said to me, "Certainly, you can get them; we will give you teachers for this work." They will instruct your girl, and she will get to the Entrance or Matriculation just as quickly, if one-third or one-quarter of her time is devoted to the things she has got to come to. (Applause.)

What We Need.

You say, "Why bother us city people with your rural problems?" Because you are specialists in organization, and we are not. We are willing to do the work, but we don't know how. We also need public money, and we don't know how to get it. (Laughter.) We could use an extra million dollars right now to demonstrate and put into practice what we already know.

We want rural architects to show us how to lay out and plan our homesteads, and to get running water into our houses.

We want a model mile of good road in every township. (Hear, hear.) Right now.

We want traveling teachers of agriculture, and traveling teachers of cooking and sewing, in every district.

We want a weed killing and good seed campaign in every county.

We want more orchards sprayed, and lessons in apple-packing, and pre-cooling fruit houses, and egg circles, not here and there, but everywhere—and we want them now! What's the use of proving these things in the Agricultural College and the Experiment Stations, if we go back and do no better?

Please excuse my impetuosity, but my heart is in the work, and we need the help and sympathy of every thoughtful Toronto citizen. (Hear, hear.)

We want as many instructors and experimenters and demonstrators in each county, to look after the better breeding and feeding and nourishing and improving of crops and animals, as we now have doctors of medicine, and that is not too many. Then our farmers, who are already intelligent and temperate and industrious, will produce for you more and better food, and put it on the market where the consumer can get it, in such attractive condition that canned vegetables and dried fruit and blank sausages and last year's eggs will all be forced out of competition—(Laughter)—and your wife

will with confidence, bred of knowledge, take the greatest pride in personally manufacturing or personally superintending the manufacturing of your bread and your biscuits, and your cakes and your cookies, and your sauces and your salads, and your jams and your jellies, and your preserves and your pancakes, all because you have come to your senses and insist that vocational training is sensible and necessary training for boys and girls.

The training of country children must be different from that of city children, but the proper training of each is essential to the best success and happiness of the Canadian man and woman of to-morrow, and perhaps in the end country people will lose their jealousy of their neighbors in the cities and towns, and the town people will come to appreciate more and more the economic as well as the social value of the farmers, to the credit and benefit of both. (Hear, hear, and very long and hearty applause.)