

HOW ONTARIO MANAGES FARMERS' INSTITUTES.

SUPT. G. C. CREELMAN, of Toronto.

Ontario with a population about equal to that of Wisconsin has an area in square miles greater than Wisconsin, Michigan, Indiana and Missouri combined. That portion of the Province which is almost surrounded by the Great Lakes, and a strip along the St. Lawrence river is well settled, but the great Northern part, or New Ontario, as it is now called, remains yet to be cleared.

The whole Dominion of Canada is essentially agricultural and the farm property of the Province of Ontario is valued at about one billion dollars. By being agricultural we do not mean that we produce any one article to the exclusive of others, but we are all around farmers and in the aggregate we raise enough good food for ourselves and have some left over to sell. In 1898, which is the last year of which we have complete statistics, our live stock in Ontario was valued at \$140,744,223; our cheese factories paid their patrons \$8,417,535; our apple crop was worth about \$2,500,000; we exported bacon to the extent of \$8,500,000; and we produced 32,000,000 bushels of wheat and 17,000,000 bushels of oats.

We hold an Annual Industrial Exhibition in the city of Toronto, at which last year there were about half a million in attendance. We also hold an Annual Fat Stock, Dairy and Poultry Show, for we pride ourselves on our live stock and our annual products. It is in this department that we are closest to you good people of the United States and particularly to the stock breeders of Wisconsin. You buy our thoroughbred sheep and cattle and give us good prices for them. You know good stock when you see it and you encourage our farmers to raise

the best, for it is only the best you will buy. You like our stockmen, too, for you got Prof. J. A. Craig from us and when he went to Iowa you went back to Ontario for Prof. Carlyle. The truth is, too many of our bright young men have been leaving Canada for the United States. I mean too many for the good of Canada. They seem to get good positions over here, and they being willing to work and you willing to let them do so, they succeed and here they stay.

Times, however, are changing in Ontario. Better methods of agriculture are being practiced; diversified crops have given every farm a chance to develop its best resources; brains are being added to brawn in the cultivation of soil; and the farmer's life is showing attractive sides that were not evident before. The Farmers' Institutes perhaps have been the greatest factor in bringing about this state of things and this brings me to the subject proper of this address.

The Province of Ontario is divided into 100 electoral districts, and in each of these we have an organized Farmers' Institute. This consists of a president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer and a board of directors, one or more being elected from each township. There is thus at least one man in every municipality of the Province, officially connected with the work. Every institute gets a grant of \$25.00 a year from the Department of Agriculture, provided an equal sum be appropriated by the county council or municipality in which the institute is organized. The annual membership fee is 25 cents and every member is supplied each year with a copy of each of the following publications of the Department of Agriculture: Report of

Ontario Agricultural College, Report of Agricultural and Experimental Union, Report of Butter and Cheese Association of Eastern Ontario, Report of Butter and Cheese Association of Western Ontario, Report of Superintendent of Farmers' Institutes, Report of the Dominion Live Stock Associations, Report of Poultry Associations, East and West; Report of Good Roads Instructor, and Bulletins of the Agricultural College and Experimental Union.

Two series of meetings are held in every institute district each year. The first, or regular meetings, two in number, are held in the more thickly settled parts of the constituency and the salary and all of the expenses of the two speakers are paid by the department. If any institute wants more than two meetings at this time they may have them by paying all the expenses incurred and the regular per diem allowed to speakers. Later in the season the second series of Supplementary meetings come on. These are held in the smaller places back from the railroads and as a rule they are very largely attended. To these Supplementary meetings the department pays the salaries of the speakers for four meetings in each institute district and the institute itself pays all local expenses and the expenses of the delegates from the time they leave home until they return thereto. We hold only one day institutes and from the returns which are now coming in, we estimate that about 700 meetings will be held in Ontario this season with an attendance of about 130,000 persons. As a rule we believe the one day meetings are best for Ontario for the following reasons: (1) With the money at our disposal we can hold more meetings. (2) We secure a larger attendance in the aggregate. (3) We go to the smaller places and reach a class of farmers who would not go ten or even five miles to a meeting. (4) We get a longer member-

ship and incidentally a larger list of names to whom to send the agricultural publications of the department.

The local secretary of the institute gets out bills advertising his meetings and posts them in conspicuous places. Programmes of the meetings are also printed and sent to each member of the institute, to farmers, journalists, public men and others who reside in the district within ten miles of the meeting. School teachers are also supplied with a number of programmes and asked to distribute them among the scholars. Between June 1st and 20th each institute holds its annual meeting at which time the directors and officers are elected and the places selected at which meeting will be held during the coming winter. Thus each institute is complete in itself, doing its own work and spending its own money. We hold three institute sessions, one in December, one in January and one in February. The 100 institutes we group into 12 divisions and send two men over each division. Thus with two speakers to a delegation it means that we have 24 men out lecturing during the three months. At the end of each division the men return home and are rearranged and sent out with a new companion into a fresh territory for the next month. In the fall the delegates are all called together for a round-up, usually at the same time and place as the Provincial Fat Stock and Dairy Show. Here we discuss matters pertaining to the institute work and the superintendent gives his instructions as to what trend the work will take the coming season. Besides the general subjects discussed at the different meetings we always lay special stress on one particular subject. This year it has been the "Bacon Hog." We cannot compete with you Americans in your own market in fat hogs and we have no market for this class of pork at home. We have, therefore, this year at the request of the Minister of

Agriculture introduced the subject of the "Bacon Hog" and the desirability of raising such for the British market at every one of 700 meetings. Next year we will take up poultry and in the meantime I shall collect every bit of literature available on the subject and send it to each of my delegates. Then when we meet in the fall I will have a poultry expert present at the meeting to introduce and lead discussions on the subject. In this way when a market is open for a certain kind of produce we try to lay the subject before the farmers of every section of the Province at once so that they may get the benefit of the good prices while the demand is strong.

I do not know how it is in Wisconsin but in Ontario we find the farmers slower than any other class of professional men in adopting new methods or in seizing present opportunities. For instance let a new disease make its appearance in any section of the country and in six months or less, through medical journals or medical councils or some other way, every physician in the country has made himself familiar with the symptoms and is ready to combat the disease if it makes its appearance in his vicinity. The farmers, however, from lack of co-operation will allow a pernicious weed or a noxious insect to enter their Province, then their county and township and finally take up their abode on their own place before they awaken to the necessity of doing something.

Our institute system is endeavoring to bring to their notice such things before they go too far. The Farmers' Institutes, if properly conducted, can be of incalculable value to any agricultural country. The agricultural colleges and universities are doing a grand work but they are only reaching the immature minds. Then of those a large number will, in the course of events, die or leave the country before they have a chance to put into practice the ideas gained during their college course. On the other hand the institutes are doing a university extension work and have for a student body the matured, wage earning, thinking men of the country, a class who are anxious to better their condition and who are always open to argument where their own interests are concerned.

In conclusion I would say that the three things we try to keep constantly before the eyes of all our farmers at our meetings, are: (1) The necessity of a higher education for each individual so that he may take his proper place among other professional men as befits one who produces the raw material to feed the world. (2) The necessity for a closer study of the soil and better methods of its cultivation so that he may get the very best returns for his labor. (3) A better knowledge of fertilizers and fertilizing constituents that he may retain and improve the fertility of his farm.

COOKING SCHOOLS AT FARMERS' INSTITUTES.

MRS. HELEN ARMSTRONG, Chicago.

We are often told that home-making is the only profession into which one may enter without any previous training; and it has been, and unfortunately is still only too true.

Every other business or profession requires both training and study on the part of those who wish to assume

its duties, but the average young house-keeper starts into her new realm with an astonishing amount of blissful ignorance, trusting with blind faith that she will learn by experience. She generally does, but it is a little hard on those upon whom she experiments.