

and finally, a proper appreciation and understanding of the importance of agriculture's contribution to our provincial and national life. That contribution is not limited to the food we eat and the clothes we wear, but consists also of men and women, who having profited by these aims in

agricultural education, and are equipped not only to carry on and improve the farms and rural homes of the country, but also to bring a broader understanding of the interdependence of rural and urban centres to the business, commercial and professional life of our towns and cities.

Adult Education and Co-operative Movement in Eastern Nova Scotia

By A. B. MACDONALD*

DURING the past sixty years or so, eastern Nova Scotia, in common with all other parts of the Maritime Provinces, suffered severe losses in population. The great industrial developments in the United States during this period and the lure of Western Canada drew away many of the inhabitants of the farming and fishing villages. In addition to the migration brought about by these causes, the boom in the steel industry at Sydney and in the coal fields of Cape Breton caused a still greater depopulation of the rural and fishing communities. To such an extent did this go on in the period referred to that many communities fell below the normal minimum of man-power needed for efficient community effort. Consequently the people were found to be discouraged over the prospects of the industries in which they were engaged and in danger of becoming victims to false economic and social theories.

After a survey of such conditions in the constituency and after noting the meagre educational equipment of its 200,000 people, their limited outlook and the ruthless exploitation of them by private interests, the clergy of the Diocese of Antigonish and of its University, St. Francis Xavier, concluded that the solution of the economic and social problems of the people lay mainly in the initiation of a program of adult education that was thought would accomplish the following results:

Through the dissemination of ideas the people would be motivated to do their everyday work in a more efficient manner and thus help to solve their production problems.

The people would be spurred on to take a greater interest in economic and social affairs, and in time be conditioned to carry on many of the business activities of the communities that were previously carried on by private individuals.

Improvement in the social, cultural and religious activities of the communities would follow from wider participation on the part of the people in their economic affairs.

Through the acquiring of facts and information with regard to local conditions the people would be led to discover new ways of doing things, and to develop new local industries which would help to bring them a greater degree of economic security.

Consequently the Extension Department launched out on a program of adult education. A variety of agencies has been used to promote adult study. The most important of these and the one which is emphasized by the department more than anything else is the "study club." Such clubs are formed in the farming, fishing and mining communities and are very informal in character. Each club is composed of from five to fifteen members with a general average of about ten to a group. The groups select their own leaders and meet weekly in the homes, in community halls, school houses or any other convenient place. Little attempt has been made by the department to get them to follow a uniform method of procedure. As long as a few friends or neighbours are anxious to meet for the purpose of reading, studying and discussing in a friendly way the literature supplied by the department, it is recognized that effective work will be done. There were approximately 1,000 clubs organized during the past term, having a total enrollment of over 10,000 men and women. Once a month the several study clubs of a community meet for an associated study club rally which usually consists of reports from the various clubs, discussions, entertainment, and talks by special speakers.

To supply the clubs with reading material the department publishes the "Extension Bulletin" every two weeks during the scholastic term. The articles in this publication are read, studied and discussed by the members. In addition to the

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Extension Bulletin many of the clubs use pamphlets and articles on a variety of topics. The request for this type of literature is increasing yearly.

First Library Legislation

So great was the demand for books during the past year that the Department found it necessary to open a central library in the industrial centre of Glace Bay, with ten branch libraries serving the surrounding areas. These are partially supported by the people themselves. About 1000 books are exchanged by these libraries at regular intervals. One result of this expansion in library work was the enactment by the Provincial Government of the first piece of library legislation for Nova Scotia, enabling the towns and municipalities to levy a tax for the promotion of further library developments.

As in previous years, the department maintained an open-shelf library of about a thousand books for the use of the study clubs, and in addition kept thirty travelling libraries of thirty books each, in circulation among the clubs.

Realizing that the success of the local study club and other community activities depends in great measure on the quality of leadership developed, the department has conducted during the past five years a four-week school for community leaders at the College. Young men and women showing qualities of leadership come to the school and are given an intensive course on subjects that will fit them to be foremost in promoting worth while activities in their home communities.

To assist in maintaining interest in study club work the department has sponsored public speaking and debating contests, and featured in many places the staging of plays, pageants, inter-community sports, and other social activities. A broader recreational program is now being instituted in Cape Breton.

The Co-operative Movement

Since the study of the 10,000 club members in the constituency is economic in nature it is only natural to find these people organizing co-operative societies for the carrying on of their own business. Consequently, various types of co-operative associations have been developed during the past six years. A brief description of some typical co-operative projects will help to give an idea of the nature and scope of the movement.

From a study of money and credit the adult students of eastern Nova Scotia have learned that the type of credit that they have been using has been costly in the extreme and that the various credit institutions were not suited to their peculiar needs. With a knowledge of these facts they have proceeded to look after their own credit requirements through the organization of co-operative banks or credit unions. During the past five years

one hundred and two of these have been organized. Last year their total loans amounted to \$371,109.17. In the city of Sydney alone there are five credit unions, with a total membership of 2,330, having total assets of \$70,000.00.

The lobster fishermen are beginning to process and sell their products. Nineteen co-operative lobster factories are now operating in eastern Nova Scotia, with a turnover of \$335,000.00 during their short season. These serve the fishermen of seventy communities and are enabling them to secure a larger return for their catch. In Havre Boucher, Antigonish County, for example, one hundred fishermen received \$10,800.00 more for their catch last year than they would have received if they had had to rely upon an independent packer. Knowledge of the success of these co-operative undertakings is rapidly spreading to other fishing communities and it will not be long before all the fishermen in the constituency will own and operate their own factories.

Eleven fishing communities have organized societies for the sale of their fresh and cured fish, particularly herring, cod, and haddock. Boneless cod prepared by these co-operatives is highly praised by the trade. A number of fishermen's co-operatives are putting up special products, such as canned blueberries, foxberries, salmon, mackerel, etc. No difficulty is experienced in marketing these products. In fact, the fruit commissioner at Ottawa claimed that the Tor Bay canned blueberries were the best offered for sale in Canada.

Twenty-four co-operative stores are also owned and operated by the people themselves and are doing an annual business of approximately \$3,000,000. Before long they will be federated in a wholesale.

The people of several communities are studying the possibility of organizing small community industries for the purpose of securing part time employment and for the converting of some natural resources into saleable products. Already four communities own their own mills for the sawing of rough lumber and in the near future they propose to install extra machinery for the making of finished lumber products for their own use and for sale in nearby markets. Another community is contemplating the erection of a canmaking plant to supply cans to the organized groups of fishermen along the coast. A co-operative milk pasteurization and marketing society has been organized at Sydney, and a co-operative threshing mill in another community.

The activities of the women's group are somewhat varied. In the rural and fishing districts a certain amount of progress has been made in the study of the relation of diet to health. Here and there, groups of mothers discuss child feeding at their meetings, and write to the Extension Department for additional information. In one or two

communities the women have purchased canning equipment co-operatively. In this way they will have a supply of vegetables and fruit throughout the year.

The main interest in these districts, however, is in handicrafts. Hand-made looms used by the mothers of the past generations have been taken down from the attics and used in making blankets, suiting, material for home furnishings and decoration. Moreover, the Extension Department has sponsored handicraft exhibitions in the rural districts where the people are alive to the possibilities of improving their standards of living through supplying their own needs from the materials produced on the farm.

On the invitation of the Federal Government and the Government of New Brunswick, work similar to that done in Eastern Nova Scotia is carried on by the Extension Department in New Brunswick. Also in 1935 at the invitation of the Commission of Government of Newfoundland, one of the staff of the Extension Department, Gerald P. Richardson, was asked to take charge of this work in Newfoundland. Work of a similar nature is making marked progress in Prince Edward Island.

As already indicated, the Extension Department has unceasingly stressed the need of adult study and promoted educational activities of various kinds. The direct outcome of this program is the coming into being of a variety of co-operative undertakings through which the people are taking a firm hand in determining their economic lot. Other results of a far-reaching nature are in evidence. In a general way they may be enumerated as follows:

1. There are striking indications of a real intellectual awakening on the part of the people. Voluntarily they are organizing local libraries. They are becoming readers and students and are thinking through not only local problems but also the bigger political and economic issues that have a bearing on their standards of living. Clergymen of all denominations are studying economic problems and giving leadership.

2. On account of improved technique and the business projects carried on by the people their yearly income is increased and it will not be long before a fair measure of financial security will be the reward of their efforts.

3. The people are beginning to discover that government doles and handouts from charitable

institutions will not solve their depressing social and economical conditions. They are beginning to find that through group activity they are able to do for themselves what institutions and organizations have done for them in the past. They are much happier in learning how to save one dollar through becoming members of a credit union than in accepting a dollar from a relief organization. This has developed a great measure of reliance and self confidence in the people which will go far in building up a finer type of civilization throughout eastern Nova Scotia.

4. It is not alone in economic affairs that the people have made progress. They are becoming interested in activities that have a refining influence and are sponsoring community rallies which make for greater sociability in our rural areas. They are becoming interested in the health problems of the community, in home improvements of all kinds, and above all, they are developing a high regard for religion and a deeper respect for things spiritual.

5. The impact on political thought is quite marked. Deep-rooted, tense, partisan feelings are breaking down. The people are beginning to learn something about political racketeering and are taking a deep and genuine interest in questions of political importance. The result of this is naturally a searching for a new type of public man whose integrity, ability and good intentions will inspire confidence and help to promote true democratic legislation.

6. The informal studies pursued by members of clubs have helped to correct and supplant the deficiencies of their early training. Old prejudices are broken down, new attitudes are cultivated and many learn for the first time the very rudiments of elementary education. Through special study clubs scores of people are learning to read and write.

The extension workers in eastern Nova Scotia feel that the development of a progressive and just social order rests primarily on an enlightened and informed public. Democracy will stand or fall on this. It is recognized that reform cannot be super-imposed on a people, but that it must be brought about by starting at the bottom in the way of getting the people to read and study something about the forces that are at work shaping our civilization. It is not easy to do this. In the main, adults will not study for the sake of study. They must first be convinced that study pays.