

included in the programme of primary schools ought to be addressed less to the memory than to the intelligence of the children. It should be based on observation of the every-day facts of rural life, and on a system of simple experiments appropriate to the resources of the school, and calculated to bring out clearly the fundamental scientific principles underlying the most important agricultural operations. Above all, the pupils of a rural school should be taught the reasons of these operations, and the explanation of the phenomena which accompany them, but not the details of methods of execution, still less a *résumé* of maxims, definitions, or agricultural precepts. To know the essential conditions of the growth of cultivated plants, to understand the reasons for the work of ordinary cultivation, and for the rules of health for man and domestic animals—such are matters which should first be taught to every one who is to live by tilling the soil, and this can be done only by the experimental method.”

There is no doubt in the minds of your Commissioners that a reform of our system of agricultural education would be attended by very great benefit to the country and tend to diminish the cost of living.

(2.) Some considerable influence must have been exerted by the increasing demand for labour in the towns for (a) handling the primary products, and (b) official work. There is good reason to believe that the amount of labour involved in the handling of the products of the soil, with our present organization of markets, is greater for a given quantity of produce than the labour employed in growing it. Handling is understood to include, taking meat as an illustration, slaughtering and preserving, fellmongery, the preparation of manures, wool-scouring, tallow-manufacturing, bacon-curing, packing, storing, transport, and the clerical and general work in dealing in and distributing these products. The official work of inspecting and grading the primary products, as well as the expansion of the postal, railway, and other transport services, has required an increasing number of workers, many of whom have been drawn from the country.

(3.) Closely connected with this keener demand for labour in the towns is the higher rate of wages ruling there. There is no doubt that there is a steady tendency towards the equalization of town and country rates of wages, but for many years past the general impression has been that the town offers the worker a greater remuneration than the country. In balancing the advantages of town against country work, the worker takes account not only of the money wages obtained for his own labour, but of the opportunities for making subsidiary earnings, the openings for the employment of other members of the family, and the constancy of employment, all of which appear to him to be greater in the town than in the country.

(4.) Several witnesses stated that the migration of workers to the cities was partially due to the difficulty married men experience in finding accommodation sufficiently near to their work to enable them to live with their families in the country. The Commission is of opinion that this is a serious evil, and warrants the earnest attention of our Legislature. In the list of the remedies suggested we are submitting details of our views on this point. There is no doubt that the scarcity of good house-room is but one element in the lower standard of life for country workers. The opportunities for social intercourse, the variety of amusements, the manifold means of recreation, and other social advantages of town life have a strong attraction for the ordinary man. But perhaps the heaviest burden of the disadvantages of country life is borne by the women; to mention only one special disability, in the isolation of country life, women are exposed to greater danger, expense, and difficulty at the time of child-bearing than are those whose husbands' occupations enable them to live in town. “The routine work of women on the farm,” says the report of the recent Country Life Commission of the United States of America, “is to prepare three meals a day. The regularity of duty recurs regardless of season, weather, planting, harvesting, social demands, or any other factor. It follows, therefore, that whatever general hardship, such as poverty, isolation, lack of labour-saving devices, may exist on any given farm, the burden of these hardships falls more heavily on the farmer's wife than on the farmer himself.” The Commission found