

HOORAYING VS. HARD WORK.

One of the easiest things to do is to get the average resident in a small town to talk of the exceptional advantages of his particular town for the location of industries, and one of the hardest things is to get the same citizen to do any real work to develop the resources or to spend any of his time trying to interest outside capital in the development. The series of "booster" meetings which are being held at various towns in Jefferson, Clearfield and Elk counties are excellent in their aim, but unless followed up by the patient and persistent work of officers of a well organized business men's association, the movement will prove abortive. Reynoldsville has had experience in many varieties of town "boosting" campaigns, from the wildly excited town meeting to the quiet and persistent work of a few, paying constant attention to opportunities that develop. She has learned to her sorrow that too much enthusiasm and eagerness to land industries may lead to lack of sane judgment and later disaster in the projects carried out. There are times when the rejection of a proposition made for establishing a factory may be of better service to a town than its acceptance under the terms proposed. It is for this reason that every town should maintain a board of trade and entrust the work of town "boosting" to its deliberate judgment rather than to the haphazard decision of a public meeting where desire to appear public spirited usually takes the place of sane consideration.

THE CHURCH THAT IS CLOSED

To those who read the review of Rev. P. P. Womer's new book in last week's issue of The Star, appealing for a "new deal" in religious matters, the following from the lips of ex-Governor Edward W. Hoch, of Kansas, will be of exceptional interest:

"Go anywhere and you will pass through dozens of small towns where the people are struggling to keep up from three to half a dozen small churches. The buildings are usually in need of paint and repairs, but that is immaterial. Most of them are closed six days in the week, and when they are opened on Sunday they are cold and cheerless. The people feel that they must go to church once or twice on Sunday, but they are glad when they are able to leave the church and get back into the cheerfulness of their own home. What ought to be done is to build union churches, or a church where ministers of different denominations could be asked to preach. There ought not to be more than one or two churches in any town of 300 to 600 or 700 population. These churches could be kept in good repair all the time. They could be kept open every day in the week. The funds would be sufficient for the organization owning the building to provide a clerk, who would have charge of a library which kept good books, where religious papers and books of all denominations could be found and read. There should be a reading room, an information bureau, a sort of free employment bureau and a nursery. A

church building often is considered as useful for only one thing, the actual church service. This ought not to be. It ought to be kept open all the time and useful and helpful institutions maintained there for the benefit of the wayfarer and the inhabitants of the town. People ought to unite in religious matters as they do in everything else. The church is not accomplishing half what it was intended for when it is kept closed six-sevenths of the time. What is the use of having half a dozen poor struggling churches in the small towns when one or two would be able to accommodate the people? And the work that could be done with the extra funds would be simply wonderful. Why do people invest their money in a big building and let it lie idle almost all the time? Instead of having desolate and deserted buildings around a town, why not make these church buildings into places of permanent and perpetual usefulness?"

AGRICULTURE IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

By bringing experts in agricultural education to the County Institute, through the instrumentality of the boys' club, by placing a book dealing with the subject of agriculture on the teachers' reading course, by advocating the introduction of the study of agriculture into the common schools at every opportunity I have sought to assist in creating a sentiment favorable to the teaching of agriculture in the public schools. Such a sentiment is desirable and necessary in order that the introduction of the new study be attended with success. If the patrons of the schools are not in favor of the teaching of agriculture, and the teacher teaches not because of interest, but because the course of study requires it, it is evident that the pupils will have no interest; failure is the only possible result of such introduction. But this subject has now been prominently before our people for several years, nearly all the rural teachers have studied some book on agriculture, a few teachers have taken a special course in the subject, and much incidental work in agriculture has already been done in the schools. To my way of thinking the pupils and patrons are sufficiently interested, and the teachers are sufficiently well informed to warrant the formal introduction of agriculture into the public schools.

It is not necessary for the teacher to be an agricultural expert in order to teach some agriculture. Any teacher who has the ability to make good in other respects, and who has the right attitude toward the subject can by the aid of a good text book and a liberal use of the free bulletins supplied by the Department of Agriculture succeed in arousing an interest in plant and animal life, and can succeed in teaching at least some of the laws that control the life and growth of plants and animals.

The object in introducing agriculture into the public schools is not primarily to make good farmers; the aim is rather to teach the great truths involved in life, growth, heredity, adaptation, selection, etc. Incidentally it will help those who till the soil to do it intelligently, to use brains as well as muscle. The practical value of an agricultural education to those who afterwards become agriculturalists is self evident; for this reason I wish at this time to emphasize the cultural value of this form of education, and dwell upon the fact that it had a practical value for all. Many good people have the idea that the study of agriculture is of value only to those who expect to be farmers. The writer recalls an instance in which several prominent educational people of a small town characterized some agricultural lectures given at an educational meeting as all right for country teachers, suitable for a farmers' meeting, but as of no value for their people or teachers. However, this idea is becoming less prevalent, and people generally are coming to see that a knowledge of the great truths underlying this industry upon which all others depend will make a better, broader man, will help him to come into close touch with nature, will help him to be a better lawyer, a better minister, a better homekeeper or householder. The new course of study issued by the State Superintendent Schaeffer says: "The study of elementary agriculture is doubly important in town and city schools, because of the ignorance that prevails among the children of the twentieth century concerning many phases of country life. The school directors then should exercise the authority invested in them to require the teaching of this subject and furnish suitable text books and other supplies, the public should welcome the introduction, and the teacher should be glad of an opportunity to present these great truths of such high cul-

tural and practical value. The teaching of agriculture in the public schools is not a hobby; it is advocated by the U. S. Commissioner of Education and the leading educators of the country.

Last year the directors of this county at their annual convention by resolution endorsed the efforts of the County Superintendent to introduce the study of agriculture into the schools, and recommended that a course in agriculture be outlined and taught in all schools of the county. Such an outline has been placed in the new course of study now in the hands of the teachers. It is now the duty of the teachers to teach this subject using this outline as a general guide. The teacher having a text of his own and making a liberal use of the government bulletins can do something toward teaching this subject. But the teachers have not had much opportunity to prepare for teaching this subject, and they need a text book as a guide; the text will also give the pupils something definite to study. Since the directors have recommended the study of this subject, it is evident that it is their duty to provide books. I cannot too strongly urge grades. A number of the school districts in the county have already done this, and I trust the others will take early action in order that the books may be available for this year.

Most of the companies doing a school text business have a text on elementary agriculture, and any of these companies will send a sample copy to the secretary of the school board upon application. I have a number of these books in my office and will gladly go over them with any director and assist in selecting the most suitable text for the particular school.

In introducing a new study we must meet the objection that the ungraded schools are already overcrowded with classes. My idea is that this subject may be taught without any more classes, and none of the other studies neglected. This is the plan I wish to suggest to teachers: Combine agriculture with reading one or two days a week; that is at the regular reading period read from the lesson assigned in the agriculture text and discuss the lesson. Combine with geography one or more days a week by reciting at the geography period a lesson from agriculture; this lesson should be one that supplements some topic previously touched upon in geography. Combine with language occasionally by using agricultural topics as subjects of compositions. Combine with drawing by drawing some object studied in agriculture. Combine with arithmetic occasionally by basing the arithmetic lesson on problems involving agriculture such as mixing commercial fertilizers, making a balanced ration, etc.

Even with the very best text book the teacher must remember that while the pupil has one eye on the text, he must have an eye and an ear trained to see and hear the great lesson of the fields, of the forests, and of all nature.

Copies of the government bulletins may be had free of charge by writing to the Secretary of Agriculture, Washington, D. C. Write for the list of free publications, then select from the list such as are needed and ask for as many copies as you have pupils in the class. The various state experiment stations also have good publications which may be had for the asking. The work of the text should always be supplemented by a study of such bulletins as are available on the subject.

I am, respectfully,
L. MAYNE JONES,
County Superintendent.

The Brookville Republican ironically suggests that the fusion forces of the state name the minority commissioner of Jefferson county for Governor of Pennsylvania in place of Grim or Berry. Well, why not? McGaw would stand about as much chance of election as either of the gentlemen named and it is just possible that if it came to a test of ability he would have the esteemed gentleman from Chester beaten a mile.

There is a minister in Reynoldsville who is very plainspoken in his opinion that "the town is going straight to the devil," being moved to make that extraordinary statement by the unusually good patronage which the playhouses are receiving. But there are others who see in the reviving gaiety of the town an indication that the gloom of panic years is disappearing and that money is again circulating freely.

There will be a pretty fight at the next County Institute between Punxsutawney and Reynoldsville for the place for the next meeting of that association, with the chances in favor of Punxsutawney. So it looks, from our point of view.—Big Run Tribune.

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