

# THE VISITOR

Devoted to the Interests of Agricultural Education in Minnesota Schools

Volume XXXVI

JULY 1949

No. 4

## A CHALLENGE

This is as good a time as any to ask ourselves: Are we keeping pace with the times? Are we out in front in our professional thinking? Do we anticipate the broad and critical problems facing agriculture at this time? For example, what is our attitude toward conservation of our natural resources, particularly the soil? The feature article of this edition of THE VISITOR will do much to stimulate our thinking and point up in sharp relief our responsibilities in this area.

Most of us know about Mr. Willard W. Goslin, formerly Superintendent of Schools at Minneapolis, now holding a similar position in the Pasadena school system in California. Superintendent Goslin has discussed the problem of conservation and the responsibility of education to conservation before many groups of farm people, business men, and teachers. To the best of our knowledge, this article was first published in the Phi Delta Kappan, April, 1949. We are reprinting it in THE VISITOR because we feel it has particular significance to agriculture instructors. We know you will enjoy it and we hope it strikes a spark.—The Editor.

## EDUCATE FOR CONSERVATION OF RESOURCES

By WILLARD W. GOSLIN, Superintendent of Schools, Pasadena, California



WILLARD GOSLIN

In a little more than three centuries now, the earth's population has been multiplied five times. The population has doubled in the past one hundred years.

At the same time, we have exploited and destroyed the good earth's capacity to nourish us—more during the last century than during all recorded history before that time.

Look at the great areas of Asia. There, the fields once were covered by fertile topsoil. There once was enough of the earth's growth

in terms of grasses and forest to hold moisture resources. Now the hillsides are barren, the streams are dry excepting at flood time. The people there live now in poverty. Poverty and starvation are the ways with which the population is kept in balance with the capacity of the earth to eke out a living. If that matches anyone's concept of the dignity of man, as we have thought of it in the framework of freedom and democracy and the ethics of this part of the world, I fail to understand it!

Go and look where the great population centers of the world live! Most of the people are living but a step away from starvation.

If there is an answer, one may be in the final stability of the earth's population. A second lies in the direction of conserving and rebuilding the good earth's capacity to support those already with us.

We may argue in America that we have plenty. We have a relatively thin population, the soil is rich, the moisture is adequate. We have a lot of the other things that add up to a good life. I'd like to remind you of the road we have traveled in America in the last hundred years. I'd like to do it by taking you on two quick walks across this country, one about a hundred years ago when the white man began to come in appreciable numbers, and again today.

### When The White Man Came

A hundred years ago the white man began to pour in from the Atlantic. He found a reasonably fertile Atlantic coastal plain, fertile enough to grow his foodstuffs, and have enough left over to send some back to the old

### VISITOR

Published quarterly during the calendar year in October, January, April, and July, by the Division of Agricultural Education, University of Minnesota, University Farm, St. Paul 1, Minn.

Entered as second-class matter at the post office at St. Paul, Minn., under the act of August 2, 1912.

Accepted for mailing at special rate of postage provided for in section 1103, Act of October 3, 1917, authorized August 2, 1918.

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country to start a balance of trade. When he moved over the Appalachians, he found there a magnificent stand of hardwood. When he dug into the hills of Pennsylvania, he found coal and oil waiting for him to start the Machine Age. Pushing inland, he went on to the great midwestern area, the bread basket of the United States—the valleys of the Ohio, the Mississippi, the Missouri, and their tributaries. He found a most remarkable expanse of land, well warmed and well watered, better than he had ever found any place on the face of the earth.

He came further west to the Great Plains of the country, where conditions were good for growing grass—short grass, if you please, a little bunch of grass on top of the ground and a good root system under the ground. It was the root system that was important to America.

Then he threaded his way to the Great Rockies, and through them to the Pacific coast, where he found great stands of timber on the hillsides, and where the land was so fertile that it would grow anything, with water on it.

He took a couple of side trips on his way west. He took one through Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota, and found remarkable stands of Norway white pine. And one day when he was digging on the Mesabi Range, he found the great ore pocket out of which we have grown great as a nation, through our steel industry, and fought two great wars.

Then he took a side trip to the Southland, and he found there the amazingly fertile hillsides of what came later to be known as the cotton patch of America.

I haven't said anything about the wild life—the rivers, the lakes, oil wells, and the other things that made up America—but that is a thumbnail sketch of what the white man began to take over in this country about a hundred years ago.

I wish you would take the same walk with me today. I don't think you'd like it so well. I know the young people in America don't, because they don't have anything like as good a chance for a decent standard of living as

they had when you and I were their age. It is not right, it is unfair. The rape of the raw materials of the North American continent by about three generations of white men will go down in history as one of the great immoralities of all time.

### We Owe The Next Generation

No generation has a right to use up its resources. The only thing that a generation has a right to use is the interest on the resources at its disposal. The people have to turn over a bank account to the next generation equal to the one they inherited, or there is no future ahead for a great people.

For one hundred years we have tried to see how fast we could race through the topsoil, the trees, the moisture, and the other resources that make up America. The Atlantic coastal plain has been denuded of fertility in great areas, abandoned outright and allowed to grow up to scrub timber. The Appalachian plateau has been so denuded of its trees that now the flood waters run the people out of the valleys spring after spring after spring.

I know cowpaths in ten or a dozen of the great food-producing states of America. I can take you to thousands and tens of thousands of acres that have grown their last crop in my lifetime and yours. I have lived little more than half a lifetime, yet I lived long enough ago that I could ride the plains of America day after day and hardly see an acre plowed. Now I can scarcely find one that hasn't been plowed. Ten years ago, they battened down the doors and windows all the way back to the Atlantic coast in order to keep the dust of Kansas and the Dakotas out of their living rooms. They'll batten them down again, because the dust will blow again. There is no way to escape it, because that is the way we have farmed in this country, because of the lack of protection for the topsoil of America.

Come with me and look at the forest regions of the Pacific coast, where we don't even take the trouble to cut the trees at the ground—we cut them off at the height of my head. The same thing happened in the state of Wisconsin: the figures indicate that of the magnificent stand of timber that was there when the white man came, only one board foot in seven ever saw any useful purpose around America. I can go on and on in reports of waste.

This nation has developed a technological skill no people ever had at its disposal in all of civilization. What has it used it for? For two purposes: One, to prolong life, which means that more foodstuffs had to be taken out of the good earth. Two, to multiply the rate at which we have used up the cotton, the trees, the oil, the moisture, in order to convert it into gadgets for your home and my home around America. We are trying our dead level best to see how quickly and how

completely we can reduce America to a dust bin.

I have heard predictions within the last two weeks that by the end of this century the population of the United States would reach at least 275,000,000 people. The pressure of the population is pushing us out into the desert to find a bucket of water. It is pushing us out into the cold tundras, any place where we can find enough heat to grow foodstuffs.

Is it hopeless? You and I will be able to live out our lifetime, in the main, but more people of the next generation will be hungry in America. There will be more children in America in the next generation who are like some of them in the South now, who have not had a decent diet on which to grow up to be the kind of citizens that this nation demands to carry the load on their shoulders.

#### What Have The Schools Done?

What have we done about it as school teachers in America? We have done next to nothing. We have the notion that the business of education is to teach reading, writing, and arithmetic! I have no particular objection to reading, writing, and arithmetic, but you can't save democracy with it, nor can you feed the people of this nation or any place else with it.

We can educate a generation of American youth, from Manhattan out through the corn plains of Iowa, to the citrus groves of California, that, in the final analysis, what they have to eat, what they have to wear, what they have over their heads in the way of a roof, and what they have left over to run institutions like schools would be produced by the labor in someone's hands as applied to the raw materials of America, in its topsoil, its forest and trees.

I have lived on the banks of the Mississippi for nearly twenty years. Day after day, week after week, month after month, year after year, the topsoil of America went past my doorstep, and every time some of it went past, a part of America's opportunity to live well went past.

With all the enlightenment that we have, with all the psychological understanding that we have, we are still cutting the soft timber of America twice as fast as it is growing.

#### The Forces of Education

We can't go on, and hope to survive. We could survive if we would educate; education could make the difference. It could hold off disaster long enough for us to recreate a capacity to develop new resources for the people of this nation.

Here we have, as Allison Davis says, the last best chance of man to maintain and flourish the freedoms which he cherishes. Ideals and freedoms go out the window when the stomach is empty. This is an affair a school teacher has to pick up! In great

sections of the world it may be too late, but in America we still have time. In spite of all our excesses, in spite of all the immoralities of two or three generations, there is still time in America. The one force that can make a difference would be a program of education that would recognize the relationship of the basic raw materials of a nation—its topsoil, its moisture, its grain, its minerals—to the welfare of its people, and would use such areas as reading, writing, and arithmetic as avenues through which to develop a generation of American youth with a social consciousness necessary to match the demands of our kind with the dedication of purpose that would bring about the conservation of the human resources of America and with the conservation of the national resources of America. Thus they can have a decent standard of living with which to support our ideals and our institutions.

Will you read the book, Voght's *Road to Survival*? Will you read Osborn's *Our Plundered Planet*? If you can read them, and sleep with them, or if you can read them and face the ten-year-olds in your school's system the next morning without doing something about it, then you're tougher than I think you are.

The force of education will not be used by accident. It can be used by an enlightened, determined corps of teachers in the American school system.—The Phi Delta Kappan, April 1949

#### SUMMER SCHOOL ECHO

Summer school, vintage of 1949, is rapidly becoming history. THE VISITOR hopes that those of you who attended found it worthwhile and interesting. So far as we can tell, this was the largest summer school enrollment in Agricultural Education and we sincerely hope this trend continues. On the basis of the 1949 summer session, we feel safe in predicting that agricultural education in Minnesota is moving ahead. We know that all of you who were with us this summer join in expressing our gratitude to the many divisions of the Department of Agriculture who cooperated so well in making the 1949 session a success.

#### SERVICES OF STATE SOIL TESTING LABORATORY AVAILABLE TO MINNESOTA FARMERS

PAUL M. BURSON  
Division of Soils  
University of Minnesota

On July 1 funds were made available by the state legislature through the University of Minnesota, Division of Soils, to establish a state soil testing laboratory. Other states have had the services of a soil testing labora-

tory for a number of years. Wisconsin has the oldest laboratory in the country. It has been in operation since 1913. Other neighboring stations such as Iowa, Illinois, Missouri and South Dakota have established state laboratories in recent years.

The purpose of the laboratory is to provide a testing service to farmers in assisting them in determining their fertilizer needs as related to different soil conditions and different types of crops. A soil testing laboratory will also aid in finding problem areas of the state where more research work needs to be done besides providing a better basis for carrying on educational work in soils in each county. A state laboratory established in the Division of Soils can provide the most accurate recommendations to farmers because it will be backed by the research work of the University and directed by those in the Soils Division who are working closely with soils and soil problems of the state. Proper interpretation of the tests, as related to soil type, past treatment, management and crop requirements is essential in making sound recommendations.

The new laboratory will be equipped with new types of testing equipment and will provide for a capacity of 40,000 samples per year. A charge of \$.50 per sample will be made. Each sample will be tested for available phosphate, available potash, texture, level of organic matter as related to nitrogen and pH. In the case of pH, it will show if the soil is neutral, alkaline or acid with the amount of lime to be added in case of acidity. From these tests, recommendations for fertilization and management will be made.

The testing program in the county will be directed through the county agent. He will have the necessary information forms that are to accompany each sample. Also, his office will have available containers and shipping cartons for sending samples to the laboratory. Vocational agricultural teachers, G.I. teachers, S.C.S. personnel, farmers, and others can obtain the necessary information and materials in the county from the county agent. As time goes on depots will be located in the counties where farmers can bring in their samples and they can be sent to the laboratory in quantities. Such depots may be schools, service companies, fertilizer and seed dealers, creameries, elevators, etc.

Reports of the test will be sent to the farmer and also a copy of the report and the information sheet will be sent to the county agent for further use. In the case of vocational agricultural classes or similar

groups this report and the information sheet can be passed on for use in classes, farm planning, etc. Such an arrangement will give an opportunity for the development of meetings with groups and give the farmers an opportunity to further discuss their soil problems.

As soon as the containers are available, which will be very shortly, they can be obtained from the county agent. The laboratory should be in full swing by late summer. However, samples should be sent in now. All samples must have the information sheet and be accompanied by the \$.50 per sample before the tests are made. For further information see your county agent or write directly to the Soil Testing Laboratory, University Farm, St. Paul 1, Minnesota.

### AMERICAN-SWEDISH STUDENT EXCHANGE

Notes from KENNETH FREEMAN written en route and upon arrival in Sweden.  
July 7, 1949

Just a note from out on the blue Atlantic. We are having beautiful weather and are both fine. It was terribly hot the first day out but since has cooled so a coat feels good. It has seemed like Sweden ever since we got on board because Swedish is practically the only language spoken. We have met a couple who are grad students at Uppsala and very interesting.

July 22, 1949

We were sightseeing around Uppsala today. We arrived here yesterday and living just now with Professor Johansson's assistant while we look for an apartment. Apartments are very hard to find and quite expensive. We stayed a few days in Gothenburg and two days in Stockholm and met the people in the Svenske Institutet.

Abraham Lincoln said—

"Property is the fruit of labor; property is desirable; is a positive good in the world. That some should be rich shows that others may become rich, and hence is just encouragement to industry and enterprise. Let not him who is houseless pull down the house of another, but let him labor diligently to build one for himself, thus by example insuring that his own shall be safe from violence. I take it that it is best for all to leave each man free to acquire property as fast as he can. Some will get wealthy. I don't believe in a law to prevent a man from getting rich; it would do more harm than good."