

**The Development of Vocational Agricultural Education in Virginia.**

**A Thesis Presented for the Degree of**

**Master of Science**

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**L. B. Connelly, Jr.**

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( A SURVEY WITH SUGGESTIONS FOR ENLARGING THE SCOPE OF  
AGRICULTURAL INSTRUCTION IN VIRGINIA.)

Every person in Virginia and the United States should be interested in the Agricultural future of the country. The cry has been raised by thinking men "Back to the farm - back to the farm". It is well enough to raise such a cry and to write verbostic editorials which are heard and read by men, who are made to realize the necessity, who carry the thing on until they are lost and no results are obtained. It is vital to get to the root of an evil to kill that evil. To make farmer men you must first make farmer boys who see farming as a profession as honorable and high as some other professions that now hold such a dignified place in the minds of the people. The profession of farming is a profitable one in any way and is still more profitable one on a scientific basis. The farm is the foundation and solid principle on which the wealth of a nation depends. With these facts so evident it is not only important but absolutely essential that farming should move along the road to betterment parallel to other industries and professions of the day. We realize that definite plans must be devised to keep young people interested and to educate them in their line - farmers of the future. To have our farmers educated in the future the sapling must be treated and we must educate the farm boys of today.

A farmer after he reaches a mature age may study and develop new methods but if he does he is one in a large number. There is too much of that Chinese tendency in the old man of every kind of work. The old person almost without an exception, sadly reflects upon the delinquencies of the young people and earnestly desires a return of the old methods. These same young people will grow into old age and sadly reflect upon the younger generation around them - always seeing the race going to the bad. This cycle has been and it seems that it will continue to be. The old proverb is evident and we can see that the author knew what he was talking about when he said, "As the sapling is bent so will the tree grow" .

There is no intermediate ground, there must be progress or retrogression. Farming must improve or it will go backwards. Science, medicine and industrial methods have made rapid strides. Farming must keep up or it will literally "Lose out ". It takes more than double the energy and time to teach the old farmer new tricks. Then, it is a matter of real need and economy to give sound vocational training in Agriculture to our farm boys. The duty then devolves upon our state to educate its rural population with a view to making farmers of them. The farm is the farm and the city is the city. The boy is going to choose the most attractive. The need on the farms of Virginia is not greater number but but more brains and leadership. The state should be concerned more with better farmers than with production of crops. If we can keep the farmers best sons on the farm the farm problem is settled. In order to do this the farm must be made attractive. If the possibility of great changes and improvements are shown the farmer boy he has something to practise his yankee ingenuity on. If the farm boy can be interested in farming as a profession through agriculture studies in school and if he is convinced that the soil will drink all his little knowledge and cry for more the thing takes a new aspect. Statistics show that the need of it is not a mere hypothesis but an alarming fact. In the recognized rural high schools of Virginia in 1922-23 there were 25,732 pupils enrolled, forty three percent of which were boys. This is a mere handfull of what it ought to be, but it is enough to show our possibility. Of this number between 1600 and 1700 boys were taking agriculture. It is evident that we have room for improvement. New schools and additional equipment are hoped for in the future. The equipment of the departments working at present can accomodate about twice the number they are now serving. With these departments working with full force the interest of the people can be aroused and greater things will naturally follow. In order to do this the following methods have been used throughout the nation, some are successful in one community and some in other communities:

1. Personal appeal of the instructor.
2. The county unit plan, consolidation.
3. Part Time and Evening Class Work .
4. Prevocational agriculture work in adjoining T erritory.

### Personal appeal.

In order to make Agricultural Education in the Secondary schools of this country a permanent and practical thing the people who are to be affected by it must understand, appreciate and support it. By personal appeal on the part of the instructor to the pupils and the farmers much of this all important foundation work can be done. The personal activities of the instructor would come under two classes; those of a general nature, and the specific work to reach more boys by appeal to the boys themselves. An instructor must by some means get himself before the public eye and let the community know that he is really worth while. The essential prerequisite in this problem is to have the interest of the agricultural work and the interest of the community at heart.

Practically every county has either a farm bureau or a farmers union or some farm organization. The instructor in most cases can serve this organization in some way. The new field of co-operative marketing is growing very rapidly in Virginia. This field offers a great opportunity to the instructor to help the farmers. Each time he renders a service to farmers in general he increases his agricultural prospects indirectly and his usefulness directly.

The instructor can usually be of great service to farmers in the county fair, agricultural exhibits etc. Wherever the instructor is willing to help and goes at the problems in a sensible way he can usually be of service. However, all of these things should be worked into slowly. An instructor should be particularly careful not to be too much of a "pusher" but progress slowly on his merit and form a firm relationship that will be solid, trusting and lasting. He should work with farmers and not drive them.

During the school year, while the instructor has his pupils in closest touch with him, the agricultural department can increase its popularity and enrollment in various ways. Probably the appeal to the practical boy for a practical education is one of the strongest ones. The practical side is always uppermost in the work.

social and recreational features have greatly increased the enrollment. When a boy can be interested in no other way an appeal to the line of least resistance gives a good start. Once interested in his school by various things the work of interesting him in more important things has received an excellent send off. Athletics has its appeal. No red-blooded boy can resist the appeal of a winning team. Fairs with special exhibits and judging contest help very materially in putting over the job, of making a popular department. As with the winning team, success in other things has a lure when put before the eyes of an appreciative public.

Agricultural Clubs have increased the enrollment in a number of sections. In Illinois this plan has become very popular. This club work has so many points in favor of it that a discussion of some of the most important points would probably be helpful. A group of boys in the high school who have chosen agriculture as their vocation have a sufficient common ground of interest to effect a good permanent organization. It is a good thing for these future farmers to form the habit of organizing and observe its benefits, since they will need to organize and co-operate in later life to become successful farmers. In addition to this the members of the club learn to participate in social and community activities. The club provides a connecting link between the department and the adult farmers of the community. The public programs do not necessarily have to be elaborate. The simplest piece of acting or singing by a boy of the community has a far more definite appeal to the people of that particular community than does the best acting by a stranger. Sample programs for the month of September are given below. As is shown the programs should be timely.

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| <p>A</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Music</li> <li>2. Opening business, Roll Minutes, etc.</li> <li>3. Agricultural Talks<br/>"Shall I be a Farmer"<br/>"My Project"</li> <li>4. In lighter vein, Reading.</li> <li>5. Special talk by the farm Advisor<sup>4</sup><br/>"Selection and storing of seed corn"</li> <li>6. Closing business.</li> <li>7. Music</li> </ol> | <p>B.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Music, orchestra, group singing, or solos.</li> <li>2. Opening business, Roll, Minutes, etc.</li> <li>3. Agricultural Talks<br/>"My trip to the State Fair"<br/>"The plan of my project"</li> <li>In lighter vein<br/>"Troubles of "Ben putting it off"</li> <li>5. Special address by suitable person.</li> </ol> |
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B. 5. "Hessian Fly and its control"

6 Closing business  
Music

### Consolidation

Consolidation has its merits and is one long step toward bringing pupils together that instruction can be more thoroughly and economically given. Where responsibility is more centered uniformly better work is always accomplished. Patrons appreciate this because they can definitely place their finger on mistakes and cause correction; - there is not that open chance of shifting the responsibility to the next person. However, consolidation has been improperly dealt with in many cases and overcrowding has a tendency to smother the very objective that consolidation hopes for. Naturally the grades, up to the fifth, have the greatest number of pupils to the grade and as they move up to the higher grades various causes take pupils out of school. The important preparatory work can be easily handled by teachers in the one-room schools. After the fifth grade, or even the fourth, trucks and other methods of transportation can be efficiently used to haul children to central schools which are better equipped in every way. Then, for the agricultural work consolidation has proven to be thoroughly satisfactory. Where the farm boy does his chores, goes to school, and is then carried back to his evening chores he has an opportunity to put into practice some of the things which his agricultural teacher has taught him during the day. The boy is still of value at home. It is a much better policy than sending a young boy to the central school to board and spend his unending energy in some other way. Consolidation and good roads go hand in hand and both are growing rapidly in Virginia.

### Part Time and Evening Class Work

A definition and a short discussion of the two classes of work would probably be of value. Part time and evening class work has an excellent future in the state, the surface has hardly been scratched in this important field. In every farming community there are some boys or young men who, because of home conditions or financial circumstances, are not able to avail themselves of the

full time course in agriculture. They will however, be able to devote a few weeks during the winter to instruction if a special course is available. This type of work is being offered in a number of schools and should be offered in many more. These short courses should be offered during the slack season of the year, usually in the winter. They may extend over a period of time varying from two weeks to three months. The greatest success has been attained by offering a unit course on some particular phase of agriculture. The alert teacher should arrange his work so that it will be truly vocational and give a sufficient mastery of the phase of farm work undertaken. Some form of supervised practice should grow out of the short course instruction. The instruction is the result of a need by the pupils taking the work and the practice, or project, should be in the nature of follow up work

Evening class work is that instruction offered by the instructor to the adult farmers of a community. It is distinguished from the short unit course in that it is for adult farmers and the short unit course is for the younger people. Both types of this work could be offered in the same school but it would hardly seem advisable, in most cases. The evening class work is conducted for one or two nights a week over a period of six weeks. The course of study should be complete and thorough but not too inclusive. This work should receive close supervision. Cooperation and efficient leadership is very essential to success with adult farmers.

After a study and enumeration of the kinds of instruction possible an effort has been made to observe the activity of various units throughout the United States. This naturally led to a nation wide survey. Thirty four of the states reported. Thirty three of the states showed that some work was being done along this line. Some methods have proven more successful in one state than another, in others it proved different and still in others all of the methods have been used. an attempt has been made to classify the work done in various states to see how methods have succeeded as a whole.

The most emphatic need brought out in the survey and report of the thirty four states is that of expanding the scope of instruction beyond the regular class-room form of instruction. The primary work of the instructor is in his particular class-room. However, often the demands of the class is not sufficient to permit entire expenditure of time and energy. Then comes an opportunity to expand and reach pupils outside. Methods for reaching regularly enrolled pupils have been discussed before. All are meritorious and every instructor can benefit by using some of them. Certain communities have made honest efforts and not enough pupils can be enrolled in one school to justify the entire time of a well trained man. This applies particularly where an efficient, highly trained man is in charge.

Report of Survey Follows:

Copy of questionnaire sent to all State Agricultural Supervisors.

My dear Sir:

In the organization of vocational instruction in agriculture, to which of the following types of instruction are you giving special emphasis:

1. Evening school work with adults and older boys.
2. Part-time courses in four year high schools.
  - (a) Pupils who enter regular agriculture classes for a part of the year.
  - (b) Special classes in agriculture or in agriculture and related subjects.
3. Unit course instruction in outlying schools.
  - (a) For a part of the year.
  - (b) For the entire session of the outlying school.
4. Any other special plan.

Please check the headings that you are stressing, and if it is not asking too much, kindly let me have a brief explanatory paragraph concerning the work. I will also appreciate it if you will give me the names of two of your instructors in vocational agriculture who have done outstanding work in one or two of these lines.

With best wishes, I am

Very truly yours,

STATE	1.	A.	B.	A.	B.	4.
Alabama	✓		✓			Part-time Adults
Arizona	✓	✓				
Arkansas	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	All Types Work
California	✓		✓			Do Bois Special.
Connecticut	✓	✓				
Delaware		✓				
Florida				✓	✓	
Georgia	✓	✓		✓	✓	
Illinois	✓	✓	✓			
Indiana						
Iowa	✓				✓	?
Kentucky	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	All Types
Maryland	✓	✓				
Massachusetts	✓	✓	✓			Unit Course
Michigan	✓					
Minnesota	✓		✓			
Mississippi				✓	✓	1922 Report
Missouri	✓	✓				Junior Project
Montana	✓			✓		
Nebraska	✓	✓	✓			Unit Course
Nevada	✓			✓		
New Jersey	✓	✓				
New York	✓	✓	✓			Home Study Week
North Carolina				✓		* D.M. Altman
Ohio	✓		✓	✓		Special Unit Course
Oklahoma	✓			✓		
Pennsylvania	✓			✓		1922 Special Report
South Dakota	✓	✓	✓			Unit Courses
South Carolina	✓	✓		✓		Junior Project
Texas	✓			✓		
Utah	✓					
Vermont		✓				
Wyoming				✓		
Virginia	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	

\* made this as a special report- not from State Authorities.

#### EXPLANATION

1. Evening school work with adults and older boys.
2. Part-time courses in four year high schools.
  - (a) Pupils who enter regular agriculture classes for a part of the year.
  - (b) Special classes in agriculture or in agriculture and related subjects.
3. Unit course instruction in outlying schools.
  - (a) For a part of the year.
  - (b) For the entire session of the outlying school.
4. Any other special plan.

Naturally some of the reports were more interesting than others. In order to show the attitude of the workers throughout and the enthusiasm of a few for the success of this very important phase of vocational agricultural instruction extracts have been taken. Where they have been considered worthy of quoting verbatim the most attractive are given below.

of Alabama says: "In Alabama we have centered our work in agriculture during the past year on all-day school instruction, evening school instruction for adult persons, junior project work for promotional purposes, and we have organized three or four part-time classes for adult men and women.

The evening and part-time work are on the unit basis of not less than six weeks duration, two evenings a week, not more than an hour and a half a lesson. In addition to the six weeks, seasonal lessons are given throughout the year. We hope to be able to make some progress in part time instruction this year".

of Arkansas says: "I will advise that we are not giving special emphasis to any one of the phases of the Smith-Hughes work to which you refer, but are attempting to formulate a well balanced program which will include all of them".

of Georgia says: "It is very hard for me to answer your letter, for the reason that we have never made any very great success with any of the methods that you have suggested. For the coming year, however, a number of our teachers will serve two schools instead of one, and several of them will conduct class in nearly rural schools.

Up to this time our great success has been in evening classes with adults, but in my opinion we should give more of our efforts to encouraging part-time classes with boys from sixteen to twenty one years of age.

of Illinois says: "Our special emphasis is being placed upon the classes of regularly enrolled pupils in all day schools. Second emphasis is being placed upon evening school work for young men under twenty five. Third, unit courses for any group of those employed on the farm.

says of Iowa: "The greater part of our work for this coming year will be in what is known as the day school. We are planning that a large number of schools put on evening courses of agriculture during the coming winter. Our emphasis will be placed upon these two plans of teaching. In the past we have had a special short term or a part-time day school during the months of January and February, but this plan is no longer in operation.

of Kentucky says: "I cannot say that we are giving special attention to any particular phase of the vocational work, each individual is pushing his own program to the fullest extent. This includes all items.

of Ohio reports: "I feel that our greatest service can be rendered by working with older boys rather than with adults, yet an analysis of our seventy five courses held last year shows that the actual enrollment included a larger number of adults than people under twenty one years of age, so while we wish to serve first all younger groups, we do not limit the activities of the teacher to that group alone.

In the part-time courses we have nothing in the way of an organized program to take care of the pupils who might come into the agriculture classes for a part of the year. We do have special classes for agriculture organized in a manner similar to the evening classes. I believe we have only one instance in which a unit course of instruction was offered for an outlying school, and that for a part of the year only. As to the relative emphasis of the above three phases of work our data shows that we are reaching a larger number that classifies as evening classes (although they usually meet in the daytime) and part-time classes are second in rank.

As to any other special plan, it might be mentioned that we use special instructors for gas engines and tractors. These men are given instruction for the work and the courses at the time and place arranged for by the supervisors, each course governing a period of three weeks. Last year I believe thirty-nine courses were given.

of Maryland says: "In Maryland we have been emphasizing day school work for high school pupils and evening school work for farm boys not in school. We have something like 7000 farm boys in school in Maryland and 11000 farm boys out of school. Agricultural teachers, of course, are making a campaign to increase enrollment in their day classes. Evening work is a new thing to most of them and they are feeling their way this year. The county superintendent in this State is beginning all of his teachers with a fixed salary for day school work and additional money for evening work. This administrative move on his part has done more than anything that I know to interest teachers in the possibility of an evening school program.

of Missouri says: "Will say that we have been trying to emphasize evening school work with adult farmers and Junior Project work. Our organization in this State is based on an eight-period day which precludes the possibility of our teachers doing any part-time work during the day".

of Nevada reports: "In the organization of vocational instruction in agriculture the type of instruction receiving special emphasis in Nevada is unit course instruction in outlying schools for the entire session of the outlying school. I am endeavoring to put more emphasis from time to time upon evening school work with adults and older boys but up to the present time little progress has been made.

of Oklahoma says: "Will say that we have been going evening school work for adults and older boys. We have also had one school doing unit course work in outlying districts.

Several of the state supervisors gave the names of two or more men who had been successful in reaching the outside pupils. These men were written to and some of the answers are especially interesting. The most interesting ones are quoted.

of the Albert Lea Public Schools of Minnesota reports: "In regard to reaching pupils for Smith-Hughes agriculture our most successful way has been through the extension of evening schools throughout the county. We are putting on fourteen schools in every part of the county this year. Nearly all have begun. We will have enrolled upwards of 300 men and women. These men and women are real assets in feeding our day schools with nine and six

months all-day pupils. These schools are held in bank or school buildings throughout the county. The banker or farmer who is a leader in the community acts as a pivot man in working up the enrollment. These schools are conducted one evening in the week for twelve weeks, thus giving each town twelve lessons. The instructor in charge conducts schools in five or six town or communities each week. The five or six <sup>groups</sup> constitute a unit or circuit .

We are running two circuits this year. The county agent will conduct a class in a town also. This is our third year of this kind of work. The plan is growing in popularity in this county and state. Our day school in agriculture has grown to 25 boys all from the farm. There is every indication of 35 to 40 next year, as a direct and indirect result of the evening schools.

This type of work needs to be seen, to be appreciated".

. Mount Airy High School of Maryland reports:

"I am doing pre-vocational or junior project work in two nearby schools and in the seventh grade of this school. The classes in the nearby schools are also limited to the sixth and seventh grades. These three schools are visited once a week and instruction given for one hour. The plan of instruction is a unit course method. Each boy carries a project that is supervised. The junior work is of a preliminary nature leading up to the vocational work.

believes in educating her farm boys in the best modern farm practices. For several years the board has employed a teacher of agriculture who has given most of his attention to boys who were regularly enrolled in the high school, but now they are broadening the work by offering a short course in agriculture during the winter months for the farm boys who cannot go to school during the full year. These boys will come to school every school day from November 20 to March 20. During the morning hours they will study farming problems of the region dealing with farm crops, livestock and marketing of farm products. In the afternoon they will study farm arithmetic and English.

In addition to the work done at the school house, each boy, under the direction of the teacher of agriculture, will carry out some improvement project at home that deals with up to date farming methods.

This type of work is being established in other sections of New Jersey by the State Department of Public Instruction as a part of its program of broadening the influence of the schools.

A report was received from \_\_\_\_\_ of the Harlowtown Montana Agricultural school and its activities.

This report shows so very much work accomplished that it is given in detail.

No. of pupils	23	
No. Unit Courses	8	
Attendance at unit Course	167	
Attendance at Farmers Short Course	820	
No. community meetings	41	
Attendance at C Meeting	482	
Demonstrations	11	
Veterinary calls	39	
No. Animals vaccinated	810	
Office calls	1490	
Gopher poison	4000	Pounds
Grasshopper poison	600000	"
Special calls for assistance	1200	
News paper articles	168	
No. agricultural club meetings	21	
Value of farm shop	\$600	
Value of repair work	\$400	
Issues of agri. News	7	
No. farmers getting paper	294	
No. circular letters	1800	
Personal letters	319	
No. students induced to attend H.S.	8	
No. field trips	43	
Samples milk tested	288	
No. rural teachers assisted	71	
No. cattle dehorned	471	
Surveyed miles of ditch	51/2	(four ditches)
Seeds samples tested	161	
Seed bought through school	6000	pounds
Amount saved on seed	\$660	
No. shows or contests	2	
No. Eggs marketed for farmers	3000	dosen
Amount saved the farmers eggs	\$150	
No flocks culled	9	
No hens in flock	850	

Signed

Agricultural Instructor

This report shows what one man can do if he applies himself diligently to his job of putting the agriculture work across.

## The County Unit Plan

The county unit plan has been successful in reaching more boys in the states in which it has been tried. The name is a good one, it implies county as contrasted with community in the case of the regular vocational agricultural department. The field of operation covers the entire county. This work has attracted widespread attention and its success is apparent. Several benefits are in evidence:

(a) by their itinerant teaching a large number of pupils can be reached and instructed through home projects almost as successfully as by the vocational schools; (b) The organization of vocational schools and vocational departments would be stimulated by the county supervisor.

The most prominent phases of the work of the county vocational supervisor of agriculture are:

1. Itinerant teaching in certain selected rural schools of the county, as well as in other centers where vocational schools may be organized. This supervisor usually has four or more such centers in the county. These schools are visited once a week.
2. He supervises the agricultural work given throughout the county.
3. Promotion of vocational education; in this phase of the work the county supervisor meets with school boards and attends public meetings. He also arranges exhibits, contests and roundups to further demonstrate the successful operation of vocational work.

There has been in Virginia an effort to combine this plan, with modifications, with the agricultural instructors duties.

### Proposed Plan.

There is a county in Virginia where the agricultural school is located at the county seat which is the geographical as well as the political center of that county. However, it is not the agricultural center at all. A community six miles away from the county seat has a very well organized school. Almost without exception every boy who attends this school comes from a farm and ninety percent are poor and from tenants homes.

Here is where a real harvest could be reaped. Farming is the natural vocation and these boys should certainly have the chance to improve their given inclination to make the very best of it. To place yourself in their position can do nothing but to show you what a hum-drum and dreary future awaits them - literally slaves who must follow a rut that promises to be just as straight in the future of this community would certainly be easier than to make farmers out of politicians some at the county seat. We are not in a position to say that this central school should be cut that the aim of the project should be considered and the other community should most certainly have its chance. All of us know of similar conditions and the problem is one of helping those boys with the means now available. We do not propose an elaborate system of equipping new schools here and there at once. We realize that the people must be educated to it as they have everything else. But, we do propose to make the very best of what we now have and to push every available resource to the highest knot that the other schools may have a better and more promising future. In this proposed idea the boys could use their own tools and what would be better shop work than to equip their own shop by their own hands. It is thoroughly practical and that is the very essence of the stuff needed to educate and interest those who are to derive the benefit. The instructor could cover more ground and the expense, which would be a minimum, would be small when the possible results are entertained.

Conscious efforts have been made in the new field which have been successful and have opened the way for broader possibilities, some of these methods can be combined and the best used to make a stronger and more effective organization.

while at Windsor, Virginia, efficiently organized a class of boys in an adjoining school. This class was met after the regular vocational school was dismissed in the afternoon. With this short time allowed to this work the project was a success and gives promise of leading to greater things.

at Lawrenceville, Va., has done similar work with a marked degree of success. went into four or five adjoining schools and organized agricultural clubs. Interest was registered by the boys and it likewise opened a big field for the future.

A combination of the two plans with modifications to prevent

an attempt to cover too much ground and to produce more system should fill the need at the present time. It is much better to start on a smaller scale and build a solid foundation which will support an encouraged growth than to build too much overhead structure in the beginning and stand any chance of dwindling.

The conscientious instructor is ready and willing to cover as much ground and apply himself to the limit. He, however, wants results and feels that a little ground thoroughly covered and work well done is the best. Small additional expense would be incurred by the instructor having to travel from one point to another to meet his classes. This additional expense can be solved by cooperation.

The instructor can have one central school as a base of operation. His classes can go in regular time at that school without interference. The time before and after those classes can be devoted to classes in the other schools which need the work. In these other schools classes can be organized where they are most needed and the work itself can touch the subjects most needed and all detail work can be avoided. Two or three classes in each outside school a week for periods varying from eighty minutes to two hours would cover an enormous amount of important subject matter. The judgment of the instructor can best fit the most important work for the various and off times widely different sections. Credit toward a high school diploma is given for the work where it can be given in accord with State requirements.

This plan covers a wide field at very little expense and should receive careful consideration when just such a need is so vividly apparent.

The various methods of reaching more pupils have been collected from data of over half of the States of the Union. Some methods can be applied to some localities and some to others. The movement is merely in its infancy. Encouragement and consideration are the best fertilizers known. The need is apparent and the time is ripe for steps to be taken. One idea suggests another and it may only result in a new and still better scheme but the steps must be taken to gain the end. The fact is this:

More ground is needed to be covered, our resources at present are limited and we must make the best of what we now have to grow into greater things; and, when the consciencious Instructor applies himself, and makes the work practical, economical and popular with the people, more ground can be efficiently covered and we can say that the talents given are best invested and that success and greater things cannot help but come with a little time.