

# IMMIGRATION After The WAR

By Col. J. S. DENNIS

CANADA'S greatest need is agricultural production. Out of her population of less than 8,000,000 people, only slightly more than half are from the rural districts. Nature's most bounteous blessings to Canada were in our rich farm lands. She should not only raise all her own food products, but should be an exporter of these products upon a large scale. The balance of trade in favor of Canada is now piling up at the rate of half a billion a year, as compared with a reverse balance of some \$275,000,000 in 1913. To maintain this balance of trade on the right side of the ledger is the greatest problem that Canada must face during the reconstruction period after the war.

During the ten year period previous to the war, some 2,500,000 immigrants came into Canada. Of this total, Great Britain provided roughly 1,000,000; the United States 900,000; the balance coming from other countries. Only a small proportion of the immigrants from Great Britain settled on our farms, while most of the settlers coming here from the States went on to farms in Western Canada.

Our problem will be, how we can obtain settlers for our vacant farm lands, and at the same time care for the unskilled labor which is quite sure to flock to our cities after the war.

The United States at the close of the Civil War practically threw open her doors and invited immigration from most parts of the world. A comparison of conditions prevailing in the United States then, and Canada now, however, shows a number of important differences. The urban population in the United States was only about 16% of the total at the start of the Civil War. A large proportion of the enlistments in the United Army came from among the farmers, as against only 12% of our enlistment from among farmers and ranchers. When the Civil War ended there was a wave of industrial development that called for a large quantity of labor. The returning soldiers for the most part turned back to their farms, or moved with their families to the newly opened homestead lands in the Central West. This made it possible to absorb the unskilled labor from Europe as rapidly as it came to the States. In the meantime, the agricultural production soon was brought back to a normal basis and then started to increase rapidly. The opening of the new lands in the West created a demand for extensive railways, and about 15,000 miles were constructed in the central and Mississippi Valley States during the half decade following the Civil War. This in turn added to the demand for labor and helped to absorb the flood of immigration.

A survey of labor conditions in Canada indicates that there will be employment for about 300,000 more men after the war than are needed at present. This would take care of the returning soldiers but for the fact that when the manufacturing of munitions ceases, probably 200,000 persons now employed will be seeking other jobs. Perhaps of this number 75% will not require positions; still, this leaves fully 100,000 to be cared for even after the returning soldiers are placed.

This situation indicates that we should restrict our immigration to the cities as much as possible and encourage our agricultural development to the greatest extent possible. We cannot hope for the railway construction boom that absorbed the surplus labor in the United States. Canada

already has a greater rail mileage per capita than any other country in the world—some 3,000 miles for a population of 8,000,000, while the U. S. boasted only 24,000 in 1910 with a population of 36,000,000. Our industrial development must come in manufacture and mining, backed up by as large an increase in agriculture as possible.

It will not be patriotic or good business to invite unrestricted immigration from the Mother Country after the war. Great Britain will need to look to her own agricultural development. There will be a demand for labor there to rehabilitate British industry. It has been the desire of economists to develop a larger portion of the British population into farm workers. It would seem that the reconstruction period will afford this long sought opportunity. Canada and to the northern European countries for agricultural immigrants. In the United States alone, there are a large number of young men each year who leave the farms and flock to the cities because of their inability to obtain cheap farm land. Every effort must be made to interest these men and by placing the inducements of Canada before them, attract them to this country.

There is every reason to suppose that the tide of immigration that flowed to Western Canada from the United States before the war can be started again through the proper direction. But most all of this immigration was from experienced farmers, whose training had been under practically the same conditions of climate, soil, government, language, money and society, as they found in Canada. Failure among this class of immigrants has been the exception. In large numbers of cases these immigrants came from European countries originally, having merely passed a period of acclimation to American continent conditions during a stay in the United States.

Canada will continue to attract numbers of agricultural immigrants from the northern countries of Europe in spite of the rigid laws, in many of these countries, against emigration. Sweden, Norway, Denmark have sent many valuable farm producers to our borders, and we may expect many more. Even Russia, in spite of the broadening democratic development there, should be a source from which a large number of good agricultural settlers can be obtained.

Special homestead provisions for British soldiers have been proposed as a possible means of colonization in the Dominion. Canada's experience with such a plan after the South African war was anything but satisfactory. The objective of providing liberally for the men who have fought for the Empire by granting farms through the issue of land scrip was reached in only a small percentage of cases. Instead, the plan made it possible for land speculators to obtain the choicest of the Government lands through the purchase of the soldier scrip at a heavy discount. And it has been the experience of the west that speculators have held back the development of large areas of excellent land. In our Western Provinces, drastic measures have been taken for forcing this unoccupied land held by speculators into the hands of producers by the imposition of a sur-tax on unimproved land.

As previously stated, the crying need of Canada is greater agricultural production. Colonization by our returning soldiers that will increase the number of our producers will help us

solve both the labor and immigration problems, but we know from experience that the men from the offices, the stores and the trades, will seldom make good on the farm, unless they are given some sort of special training in the principles of agriculture, or have had some experience in this line of work. One way to successfully place soldiers upon the land would be to organize them into military colonies after they have been given one year's instruction at a district agricultural school.

It would be an excellent investment for the government to even support the families of such soldiers, through the same separation allowance that was given soldiers' families during overseas duty, while they were attending the agricultural camps. Agriculture is a business requiring special knowledge, just as store-keeping, or any of the trades.

The Civil War veterans were allowed a rebate in time equal to the period of their service in the army in obtaining title to their homesteads. A similar provision has been adopted in Canada. Due care should be taken in the other regulations surrounding the homesteading of soldiers as well as civilians, so as to be sure that every entry comes from a man who has a sincere desire to engage in the business of farming. It must be remembered in this connection that almost 50% of our Canadian soldiers, and a larger percentage of those of Great Britain, have had no experience in farming. As against this, the predominance of farmers among the Civil War veterans, and the population of the country, was almost 3 to 1. Yet the history of the Central Western States during those reconstruction days is filled with stories of hardships endured and ultimate failures of those veterans who were not familiar with conditions attending farm life.

Canada has been wont to consider that all her farm problems are located west of the Great Lakes; that the Eastern Provinces are sufficiently settled. We have now to face quite the same problem that the United States faced a decade after the Civil War, namely the re-population of the farms in the older sections, left vacant during the rush to the prairie lands in the West. Michigan, Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania, New York and other States were for years dotted with vacant farms. The same situation is to be found in Ontario, Quebec and the Maritime Provinces today. Our Provincial and Federal Governments have only recently come to realize this fact and are now putting forth a concerted effort to bring a betterment of these conditions.

And again we have large areas of new lands in both Ontario and Quebec—lands tributary to rail service even—which are awaiting for occupation and production. Canada's immigration problem concerned as it is with the economic foundation of our future prosperity, should receive the most careful attention of our Government, and the deepest thought of our statesmen. Canada's greatest economic need is more farmers. This need translated into other terms means a remedy for a prolific immigration of the sort of settlers who have the inclination to go on to our lands and the knowledge of how to make them produce to the utmost, so that Canada may at least feed herself, and finally develop a surplus to sell abroad. This is the real immigration that we need, and it should be the result of the very best experts obtainable.

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## Where do YOU stand?

To Back up the Boys— To Hasten Victory— To Win the War—

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