

# Agricultural Possibilities of North Land Emphasized

Major Ashton, of the Soldiers' Settlement Board, Urges Ottawa Kiwanis to Remember Agriculture as Well as Mining Wealth of North. Sixteen Million Acres of Fertile Land. Dairying and Live Stock Will do Especially Well Here.

When people in this North Land itself in view of the spectacular mining wealth here and the resources of the forests, are liable to forget the possibilities of the agricultural development of this great North. Only a week or two ago The Advance had an article on this topic, agreeing with Hon. John S. Martin, Minister of Agriculture for Ontario, who visioned a great future for agriculture in the North, if this coun-

try specialized. The specialties Mr. Martin suggested were dairying and poultry. In an address to the Ottawa Kiwanis last week Major E. J. Ashton, of the Soldiers' Settlement Board, warned people about forgetting the vast agricultural possibilities in the spectacular mining development of the North. Major Ashton spoke so pointedly that extended reference to his address is well worth noting for the advantage of readers of The Advance.

"The west is not Canada's only land of opportunity" said Major Ashton. He did not expect to see a spectacular agricultural development in the north, the country did not lend itself to it, nor did he expect it to become a grain growing district. The whole area lent itself in particular to dairying and the raising of livestock. As a colonization area, Northern Ontario was in many ways preferable to the west and had greater advantages.

"The old adage—'Go West young man'—has been in vogue so long and the habit of thinking of new lands of opportunity as being Western is so firmly held that a statement that Ontario has a Northland full of promise and of opportunity creates surprise," said Major Ashton. "It is true we realize the mineral possibilities of our North Country and many of us spend a good deal of time studying broker's boards which give the prevalent market opinion of the possibilities of our Northern mines. Naturally therefore, when speaking of Ontario's North Country we do so in terms of rock and mine and visualize a country of mining opportunity, affording possibilities for investment with but few features which would attract permanent settlement.

"There are 16 million acres of fertile clay land in Northern Ontario; at 160 acres a farm, 160,000 families or a million agriculturists, to say nothing of townfolk could find homes here. Most of this land is of a type suited for agriculture and is, in fact, of far better quality than much of the land we pass on our way from Ottawa to the St. Lawrence.

"It has deep soil whose first two feet contain 10 per cent. of lime, with a greater lime content lower down. Due to this high percentage of lime, it is singularly free from sourness and grows wonderful clover almost voluntarily. It is well known that lands which grow good clover are sound farming lands.

"It has a forest cover which is often difficult to clear though compared to the work needed to develop a Carleton County farm in our forefathers' time, its most difficult acres would seem easy. It is of particular interest to Ottawa people as a good deal of the southern slope drains into Lake Temiskaming and the Ottawa River.

"Men first went into this country about 1900 by way of Lake Temiskaming and settled near New Liskeard. The Ontario government built the T. & N.O. Railway as a colonization road, about 1908. When I first spent some time investigating Northern Ontario's possibilities in 1918 the T. & N. O. was making deficits which were a source of worry. This year, they handed the Ontario Government a cheque for \$1,300,000 after paying all charges. While the mines furnished much of the freight, the farmers around New Liskeard are making much greater contributions than heretofore.

"The creamery at New Liskeard made 40,000 pounds of butter in 1918, last year it made 253,000 pounds and in the meantime four new creameries have been opened in the district.

"Many of the farms in the lower clay belt have good buildings and good livestock. The country looks much more stable than in 1918, and in spite of two or three very wet years recently, loan companies consider it a sound loaning area. Many farmers have almost their entire acreage under the plough. There is no reason why progress in the Northern clay belt should not be quite as rapid as farther south.

"In its home markets, this whole territory possesses a potential asset seldom seen in a pioneer country. You certainly don't find it in the West. Timmins and Schumacher, near which are Hollinger, McIntyre and Dome and other mines possess a population of 13,000. Kirkland Lake is a good sized town with five to six thousand people. Iroquois Falls and Ansonville depend on Abitibi lumber operations and have a population of 3,000 to 4,000. West of Cochrane—Kapus-kasing has a population of more than 3,000 and is building rapidly.

"Ten years ago its site was occupied by an internment camp. Today it has a better hotel than any in Ottawa except the Chateau and the best hospital in the whole North Country.

"This industrial population purchases trainloads of supplies which could be produced in the North country. I never expect to see it a great grain producing area though good crops are grown. I do expect, however to live to see it producing livestock of quality in numbers. A country which can grow the clovers it does, can raise choice livestock.

"May I digress here for a minute to

tell you something of what the large companies are doing for the welfare of their employes.

"At Iroquois Falls, Abitibi are maintaining a model town; there is a good modern hotel which accommodates their unmarried executives as well as transients. You need fear no discomfort staying there. The town is laid out on a well thought out plan and considerable money is being expended in making it attractive. The company owns and operates the water system, and incidentally there is a first class nine hole golf course also built by the company on which the Northern Ontario championships are being held next year.

"At Kapuskasing, the Spruce Falls Pulp Company have built a good hotel for staff and transients, a large recreation building and splendid hospital. They have boulevarded the river front, built tennis courts, bowling greens and generally take a keen interest in the welfare of their employes. We hear much of the grinding nature of the competition small concerns have to meet when in competition with big business; it is well to hear something of the other side too. The big companies want to keep down the turnover of labour and realize that men have to be treated well to get the best

work out of them.

"The country to be opened up is not all solid bush. The forest fires of 1917 and 1922, though disastrous in loss of life, property and forest, were yet a boon to the Northern farmer. They killed the bush in large areas and where both first crossed cleaned up the windfall and brule in such a way that large stretches of country present clearing problems of no great difficulty. It is in these brule districts that newcomers should go to fill in and reinforce existing settlements.

"If you want to know your north country, motor through it next summer. The Furguson highway runs right through to Cochrane, and is partly built between there and Kapuskasing and Hearst. I motored right to Cochrane from North Bay in October last and met no trouble on the highway.

"There is an old saying that it takes about three waves of settlement to establish a sound agricultural district. The war gave new settlement in the northern clay belt a pause and the second wave of settlement to reinforce and in some cases replace the first wave never appeared.

"The problems are not only these of new settlers, in addition there are problems of finance, employment and marketing. It would be poor policy

## ANNUAL MEETING OF THE WOMEN'S MISSIONARY SOCIETY

The annual meeting of the Women's Missionary Society of the United Church was held on Friday evening last in the church. The following were the officers elected for the ensuing year, many of them being the 1928 officers re-elected for 1929:—

President—Mrs. Monck.  
First vice-president—Mrs. L. E. Dorway.  
Second vice-president—Mrs. Alexander.  
Secretary—Mrs. Ian Gordon.  
Treasurer—Mrs. Traver.  
Supply Secy.—Mrs. R. Richardson.  
Stranger's Secy.—Mrs. D. Maxwell.  
Representative Mission Monthly—Mrs. J. M. Studor.

to put settlers into a green bush country with clearing costs of \$150 per acre when there are areas which can be developed at much less cost and effort. The newcomer will need assistance to buy his farm, and often to get his stock. Provided that assistance is rigidly kept as low as possible, and care taken to foster his qualities of self reliance it will be good policy to give it. It is a task that challenges us."

## HUNDRED AND FIFTY TEAMS DRAWING GRAVEL FOR ROADS

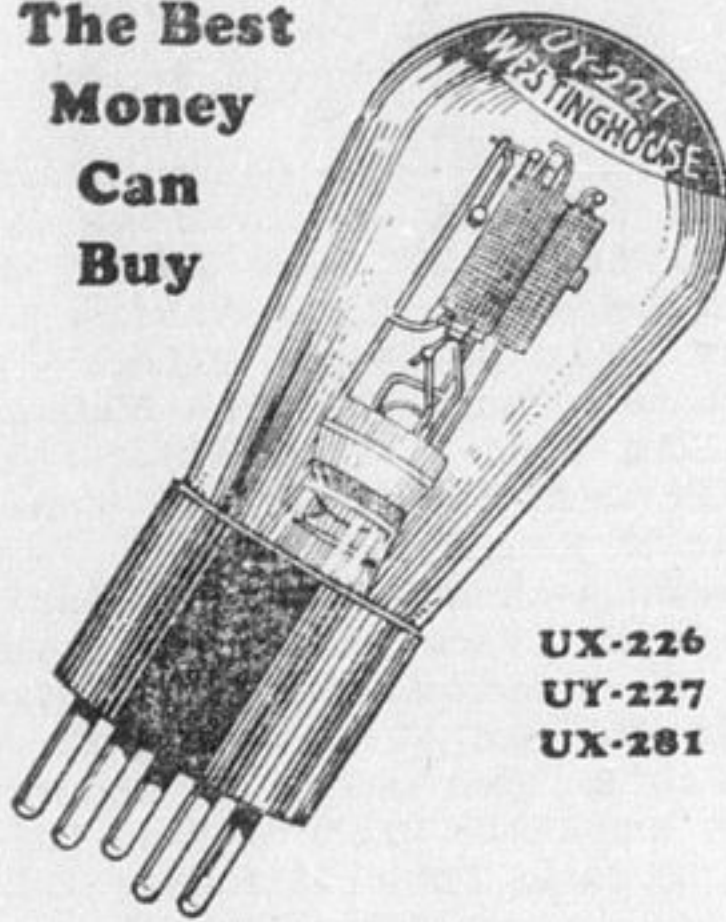
In commenting on an article in The Advance a couple of weeks ago, The New Liskeard Speaker last week says:—

"We quite agree with the Advance. Prompt action was taken under the Hon. William Finlayson's Department and already as many as 150 teams have been employed between Temagami and the northern boundary drawing gravel for the roads. The thaw last week put a temporary stop to the work but it will be resumed just as soon as the snow comes again. This work is being done under the direction of Engineer Miller, and was assisted in the selection of gravel pits by Mr. Kennedy, M.P.P. We often speak of the direct and the indirect advantages of some undertaking; but in this matter both advantages are direct: Our farmers have the direct advantage of receiving the cash for their work and also the direct advantage of having better and more permanent roads. Yes, the Government has done the right thing with our farmers, and the Province as a whole will receive the indirect advantage."

"Go west, young man." It seems that some other person said, "Stay east," and the one who heard the remark sort of reported it wrong.

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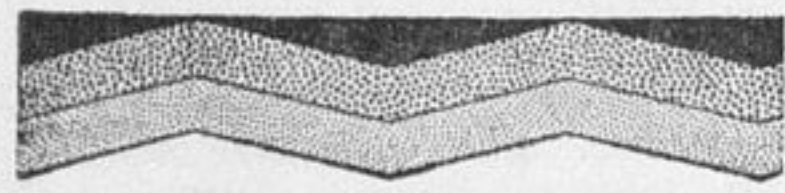
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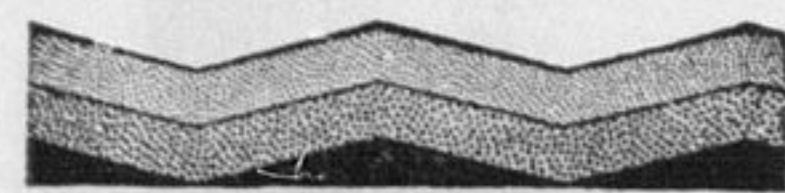
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