

Canada's Key Problem

The Creation of a Unanimous and Vigilant Public Demand for a Comprehensive and Constructive National Colonization Policy.

AS SEEN BY CHARLES W. PETERSON, CALGARY, ALTA.
The First of a Series of Special Articles to Appear From Time to Time Exclusively in THE CHRONICLE

IMMIGRATION AND MARKETS FOR FOODSTUFFS

At the last convention of the United Farmers of Alberta, a resolution criticizing colonization effort at public expense was passed. The resolution recites that Western farmers cannot be expected to view with enthusiasm any proposal to contribute additional taxes merely to bring in outsiders to compete with existing agricultural producers, particularly in view of the demand of Canadian manufacturers for protective legislation for industrial products. To say the least, this resolution was somewhat unfortunately worded. It mixes issues. It lacks entirely the imprint of intelligent consideration and a proper sense of responsibility on the part of an organization which is now generally regarded as one of Canada's most important and sane deliberative bodies.

AN ILL-ADVISED RESOLUTION

The general views of the U. F. A. on the principle of protective tariffs are well known. The convention now, however, endorses what virtually is a protective policy for Canada in respect to agricultural development, which is hardly consistent. Of course, this resolution is not to be regarded too seriously. It was evidently intended as a piece of sarcastic pleasantry. But it was, nevertheless, distinctly out of place to vent the displeasure of the convention in respect to other matters upon a national issue of such vital importance as colonization. It might, however, be profitable to briefly consider to what extent additional agricultural producers might injuriously compete with or affect our domiciled rural population, and also what benefits might, on the other hand, accrue to our farmers from added agricultural population in Canada. These seem to be the questions involved in this resolution.

THE EXPORT MARKET

To start with, we should clearly realize that the Western farmer is producing almost entirely for export sale. Also that there is not, within the next couple of generations, the faintest possibility of an industrial development in Canada on so magnificent a scale as to create a home market large enough to completely consume the staple products of our enormous Western agricultural empire. We need not, therefore, even consider the problems such a changed economic situation would present. The export market is, and will remain, our only outlet.

STARVATION IN 1960?

The increasing population of Europe and the development of trade in agricultural products with the teeming millions of oriental countries, coupled with the increasing home demands of many of the present exporting countries, will amply counterbalance any enhanced Canadian production of foodstuffs. Professor East, of Harvard University, has even made the cheerful prediction, after painstaking investigation, that by 1960 the whole world will face starvation through under supply of food! So we need not apparently concern ourselves over much about the question of not finding a ready market for any volume of Canadian staple agricultural products we are apt to raise. It is, therefore, difficult to see how an increased number of Canadian agricultural producers could seriously demoralize our present markets.

ADVANTAGES TO AGRICULTURE

We might also reasonably conclude that a farmer in Great Britain, Sweden or Roumania is just as much in competition with our Western farmers in the export market, whether he produces in his own country, in ours, or in any other. If, however, such a competitor settles in Canada, his presence with us will tend to stabilize the value per acre of all agricultural lands, much to the advantage of the Canadian farmers. A healthy inflow of new settlers also has a decidedly beneficial effect on the prices of work horses and domestic breeding stock of all classes. The absence of such an outlet for a class of stock not always in demand at the public market owing to age and condition, has had its effect on all live stock values during the past years of colonization stagnation. The Canadian farmer should welcome new settlers with open arms for these reasons only.

NOT A CLASS PROBLEM

The colonization problem in Canada is not in any sense a class problem, and those who endeavor to make it so, assume a serious responsibility. A vigorous and intel-

ligent policy to add further agricultural population to every province in this far-flung, undeveloped, young country must of necessity be of benefit to all classes, directly or indirectly. This question is, in the minds of thinking people, beginning to loom up as a great, national issue, the successful solution of which would automatically solve practically all other minor, national problems which now confront us. It would for instance, lighten our heavy load of taxation by distributing the burden over many additional shoulders. It would effectually solve the transportation question. Every citizen in Canada, irrespective of occupation, should make this problem his own.

The seed catalogue doesn't intentionally mislead. It just takes too much of your elbow grease for granted.

Agricultural Com. Report

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and saves money for the shipper and for the country.

Steamship Combine Ended

The Committee has satisfactorily cleaned up the question of a steamship rate combine in cattle transport. A Canadian Shipping Conference was called into the field in December last, and this conference has decided to have open rates for cattle transport. It may be asked how we can be sure of this. It could not be otherwise with such ships as the "Carnia" of the Anchor-Donaldson Line entering into the business and providing the best accommodation and that can make the trip in eleven days in the worst of weather, is in a better class than the vessel that takes sixteen days, and the actual money paid per head does not cut a very important figure. We went into all these aspects very thoroughly.

Poultry and Eggs

In regard to poultry and eggs, we find that the grading of eggs is working out satisfactorily and on account of the improvement of the quality, there has been a greatly increased consumption in the home market. This view of the question in regard to all foodstuffs was emphasized by Sir Joseph Flavelle, who stated before the Committee that whenever an improvement was made in the quality or palatability of any food, it was immediately fol-

lowed by a marked increase in the demand for it.

I understand there is at present a shortage in the supply of eggs, and one of the largest dealers informed me a few days ago that his company was importing, for the supply of his customers, through the ports of Toronto and Montreal, an average of three or four car loads per day during the months of January, February and March, and getting them at 5 cents per dozen, less than is being paid by local dealers for Ontario eggs.

It would also appear from the returns of the Department of Trade and Commerce that the market for all poultry is undersupplied. Taking all poultry in storage in Montreal on February 1, 1926, there was but 1,549,813 pounds of this class of food commodity, as against 3,044,337 pounds at the same date in 1925, and this was about an average quantity over a number of years. This shows there is a large opportunity open to the farm women of Ontario to enlarge their flocks, and it is a question whether the average of 25 chickens on a farm could not profitably be increased to 200 without danger of over-production.

Agricultural Limestone Cut in Half

The question of bringing the price of agricultural lime for the correction of acidity of soils, we considered of the greatest importance, but in that part of the province known as New Ontario, where on account of the nature of the soil, the need is greatest, we were met with the statement that the cost was pro-

hibitive on account of the high cost of the long rail haul. Statements were made to us at a number of meetings up there that some lands were becoming practically unproductive on account of the exhaustion of the small percentage of lime originally existing there. We took the matter up with Mr. Doolittle, President of the Canada Crushed Stone Company, and he was so impressed with the possibilities of it as a business proposition that he made an offer to cut the price for the long haul on a graduated scale, provided the Railway Companies would do the same. After a number of interviews with the freight managers of both companies in Montreal, and after laying the case before the Railway Commission at Ottawa, we succeeded in getting practically all the concessions asked for. As an instance, I will just mention that for points distant from 900 to 1,000 miles where formerly it cost \$10.40 per ton, it can now be laid down for \$5.50. The Canada Crushed Stone Company went a step farther in engaging Mr. Cline, a graduate of the Ontario Agricultural College, and who was engaged on the soil survey of the Province previously, who has been devoting all his time in carrying on a propaganda on the benefits to be obtained by the use of lime. It has been found that even in the sandy soils of the County of Norfolk there is need for it, and the Company has been getting the children in rural schools educated in its use by giving supplies to be used on experimental plots, and donating cash

prizes to the children who wrote the best essays on the value of lime. When it is realized that the soil survey made by the Ontario Agricultural College shows there is 1,000,000 acres of acid soils in the province, it can readily be seen how important it is that a supply should be available at a reasonable cost. In a very exhaustive article in The Farmers' Advocate of April 16, 1925, this Committee is given credit for the reduction of rates and prices, and their estimate is that it will benefit the farmers to the amount of \$200,000 annually.

Legislation Needed to Help Farmers

I am still hoping some legislation will be passed enabling farmers to procure necessary supplies and have payments extended over a term of years somewhat after the manner of the Soil Drainage Act.

Canadian Fresh Beef in England

One other question on which I hold very strong opinions personally, and I believe the other members of the Committee will endorse me, that is the shipments of fresh beef to the British market. There appears to be an almost unsurmountable prejudice with the English consumer in favor of the home-killed beef. Now this beef, in order to have it in the most prime and palatable condition, hangs about two weeks in the butcher's storage before it is retailed, and there is no reason that I can see why some of our best cattle cannot be slaughtered on this side in our own abattoirs at Win-

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How Many Words Can YOU Make

Out of the Letters in This Sentence?

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1. Any person who places an order for a suit of clothes or any other garment with a Hobberlin Agent from NOW to June 30th is eligible for a prize.
2. The order doesn't have to be for immediate delivery. You may place your order now and arrange for delivery any time up to July 15th.
3. Write your answers plainly on one side of sheets of white paper, numbering them, and bring it in with your order, or obtain special forms from the House of Hobberlin or any Hobberlin agent.
4. Any person may compete—boys, girls, grown-ups—as long as it is certified that an order is accompanying the answer. The prize-winners will be announced during the first week of July.
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The first prize will be awarded to the largest list, the second prize will be awarded to the second largest list and so on. In the unlikely event of ties, the list first mailed by the tying contestant will receive the prize.

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