

GIVE WORK TO UNEMPLOYED PUT MORE LAND UNDER CROP

New Idea Being Tried Out in West to Help Willing Men

IMMIGRATION STAFF TO HANDLE SCHEME

Assistance to Northern Districts of Prairie Provinces is Needed

From a Staff Reporter.

Ottawa, Ont., June 22.—The machinery for the plan of giving work to unemployed in the West and at the same time placing more land under production has been set in motion. It has been decided to utilize the immigration staff of the Department of Interior in Western Canada with Mr. Bruce Walker, Commissioner of Immigration, in charge.

The plan, as already announced by Hon. Dr. Roache, is to have unemployed register at the immigration offices and with the immigration agents. They will be requisitioned by farmers who wish to utilize their services for clearing off the large tracts of scrub land in Northern Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta. The Government will pay the men at a set figure and will charge it as a lien against the land. The plan can of course only be worked out on homestead land, but it is hoped the Provincial governments which have power of direct taxation on all other lands will follow the lead of the federal authorities. The farmers of the West are being widely notified where to apply for labor.

One advantage of such a plan is that it will not draw outside the country or even the jurisdiction of the Government the unemployed in the West. It is felt that when the harvest comes on every man in the West will be needed. These men can then be relieved of their present employment and their efforts directed towards harvesting the crop of the Prairie Provinces.

Not All Bare Prairie.

The present plan is not altogether a new one, although this is the first time there has been any attempt to prove its value. All of the land in the West is not bare prairie; there are thousands of acres of land in Northern Manitoba, particularly, which is covered with scrub oak and spruce. It is exceedingly difficult to clear and most new farmers cannot afford or cannot secure suitable labor. As a result this land has been settled very slowly and the settlers who are on the land have made difficult progress. This scheme, it is hoped, will finance the clearing of their land and will place great stretches of fertile country under production years before it otherwise would, while giving temporary employment to the out-of-works in Winnipeg and other centres.

Mr. George H. Bradbury, member for Selkirk, represents a riding running up to the very northern limits of Manitoba and which contains

enormous stretches of land of this character. It is interesting to note that Mr. Bradbury in the House last session advocated a very similar scheme. Speaking on the agricultural estimates in the House last session during discussion on the establishment of experimental farms, Mr. Bradbury said:

Mr. Bradbury's Speech.

So far as the northern part of the Province of Manitoba is concerned, experimental farms are of very little use, but demonstration farms are of the utmost importance. I believe that if we could induce this Government to clear dozens of tracts of land in the northern part of Manitoba and to start demonstration farms there, the work would prove of very great value to the people in that district. Some of the land in that part of the Province is very difficult of cultivation. Much of it is covered with scrub timber. The settlers who have gone in there, while they are first-class men, are not always in good financial circumstances, and, without encouragement, it is, almost impossible for them to make headway. I have advocated time after time that some comprehensive scheme should be adopted by the Government with a view to assisting these people to acquire and settle these lands. It has been said that I have advocated a paternal Government, but I think the time is coming when the Government of Canada should be more paternal than it has been in respect of the farmers.

The land in the northern part of Manitoba is, I believe, destined to become the most valuable land in the northwest country, but, owing to the nature of the soil, it cannot be successfully worked unless the Government comes to the assistance of the people. I would not advocate the 40-acre plots in my own district, but I would advocate the Government's taking up 10-acre plots in different parts of the northern portion of the Province, clearing them and putting them under cultivation in order to show these people the possibilities of the land.

Would Repay Dominion.

If this were done, I am sure that the Government would be amply repaid in a very short time, and that the settlers in that part of the country would very soon become a thoroughly independent and prosperous community. I would call the attention of the minister also to the fact that the northern portion of the Province is well adapted to dairying, but the people in the district being poor, they require some assistance in order that their efforts along this line may become productive. I have advocated, and I advocate now, that the Government of the country should make it possible for these men to secure sufficient stock to start them in the dairying business. If this were done, in a short time these non-productive districts would become productive, and every dollar of the money expended by the Government in the way of stock and the clearing of the land would be repaid. I would strongly urge upon the Minister of Agriculture the advisability of his devoting some little attention to assisting the farmers in this part of the Province.