

AN INTERESTING PROBLEM

IN PROVIDING WORK FOR UNEMPLOYED AFTER THE WAR

Joseph James Points Out How Large Section of Ontario Can be Rescued From Its Perilous Condition—Mining and Water Power Outlined

In an article submitted to the Whig, Joseph James, of Actinolite, Ont., deals with a problem in an interesting manner. He takes up the question of providing work after the war, and endeavors to show where not only work can be provided for many newcomers, but also a large and important section of old Ontario can be rescued from its present perilous condition. He says that three years ago, a report made by Prof. Fernow, on conditions in a section of old Ontario, dwelt upon degeneracy, as being a condition amongst a portion of the inhabitants. This part of the report met with vigorous contradictions from a number of men. To the writer it only disclosed a condition that has been apparent to any observer of living conditions, brought about by several causes, not all arising from a lack of employment at profitable labor, but largely so. The writer adds:

"During the many years in which the lumber and allied industries were active in that section of 'old' Ontario west, say, of Smith's Falls to Peterboro, and north of the Ontario division of the C.P.R., this district supported a much larger and more enterprising and vigorous population than it does now. The population left is composed in part of a weaker, less enterprising class. The ultimate result of such conditions are what I suppose Prof. Fernow desired to draw attention to."

"To open up New Ontario is, undoubtedly a duty laid upon our Government. Judging from the speeches made, Commissions and officials appointed, New Ontario receives a great deal of attention, all of which it is worthy of, but is it wise to devote all attention to New Ontario and leave even a section of old Ontario stagnant and coming perilously near a state of degeneracy?"

"If that section of old Ontario to which I refer did not contain within its borders anything in the way of natural resources capable of being developed and utilized so as to support a much larger population than it ever before had, the complaint against those who could have done much in preventing the present conditions from arising, and liable to become a very pressing danger of worse to come, would not be so strong, it may be that the men on whom the responsibility rests are unaware of the rich and varied resources of this district. That is not a legitimate excuse, nor will it bar them from the condemnation by public opinion they so richly deserve. Old Ontario has paid, and is paying too much in salaries, sessional allowances and in many other channels to put up with such a state of affairs any longer. Even some of our public men that go about the country making speeches on the war, economy, saving, recruiting, and other subjects, could serve their country more efficiently (if more prosaically) by doing the work pertaining to the position to which they have attained.

"In what way are we in Eastern Ontario to derive our share of the benefits in trade and commerce that will be within our reach, when this war is over and the new conditions arising from it are in force?"

"The press in both England and Canada have done and are doing good work in discussing this question and urging action on the part of our Governments and Public Bodies, but more is needed if the people of any particular district are to benefit, the people of a district that contains within its borders possibilities of an unique character must by their own endeavor bring these unique features to the notice of the other portions of the Empire in order that they may know that valuable raw materials, such as are required by the manufacturers in England are to be obtained here in Eastern Ontario. How can this be done?"