

SHAMEFUL POLITICS

Hon. J. A. Calder of Regina is quoted by an Ottawa paper as having stated "that the west has lost in population to the extent of over 500,000 citizens, during the last year or so, the majority being Americans who have departed never to return."

This is fine hay for those across the line who have been so very busy trying to stem the tide of immigration to Canada by libelling the Dominion. Similar statements have appeared frequently in American papers and those in western Canada have been kept busy denying them, but we hardly looked for a western cabinet minister to help out the people who are seeking to misrepresent the country.

On what does Mr. Calder base this remarkable assertion? From time to time the Census and Statistical Bureau has issued statements which show that, up to the declaration of war, there was a steady growth in population in the western provinces and there are no indications, that even under these abnormal conditions there are fewer people west of the lakes than two years ago.

Last year the three provinces raised a grain crop that was almost twice that of any previous year. Was this likely to be done by a declining rural population?

The Liberal government of Alberta issues bulletins now and then, describing the steady agricultural progress that is being made. One reached The Journal office the other day, from which the following is taken:

The mixed or intensive plan of farming is becoming more general and farmers are not only securing more live stock but there is evidence that better accommodation is also being provided for live stock of all kinds. In the dairy industry there is a large increase of production; greater and more general interest has been manifested and there is promise of still greater results for the coming year.

Does this look like agricultural decline?

Recently the Toronto Globe made an elaborate comparison of the recruiting in the east and the west and the population figures for the west which it gave showed a large increase on those of 1911. If Mr. Calder is correct, should he not set the Globe right?

The only definite answer that can be given to him is that of the western census now in progress. Would it not have been wise to have waited for that?

We hope he realizes what he means by saying that the west has lost over 500,000 citizens. There were only 1,653,000 in the four provinces in 1911, the year in which the Liberal government of the Dominion went out of office and when, according to Mr. Calder, the west started going to the dogs.

His amazing statement was, of course, made with a political purpose and is apparently part of a general opposition campaign to make it appear that the country is in a bad way under Conservative rule. We note that the Calgary Albertan, for instance, has an article referring to the large number of farmers leaving for their former homes across the line "because of the maladministration of our public affairs."

But the insincerity of this is shown by the Calgary Herald which quotes from the Albertan of the day before the statement that "no business is paying better in western Canada than the farm."

Everyone knows that this is so and it is a poor political game that plays right into the hands of those who are anxious to hold back the country by representing it as otherwise.

The Journal ventures to say that there will be few Liberals, who are citizens first and partizans afterwards, who will follow Mr. Calder in the shameful campaign that he has begun.