

Farms for Returned Veterans

The Canadian Pacific Railway, through its Department of Natural Resources, now makes an official announcement of its plans whereby its land holdings in Western Canada are placed at the disposal of such men who, having seen active service in the British forces in the European war, are desirous of taking up agricultural work at the close of hostilities.

After defining that amongst the many big problems to be faced by the British Empire after the war is the return to civil life of the many millions of men who, as volunteer soldiers, have taken part in the great struggle, the company recognizes "that active service in this cause will have created a desire on the part of many men who, before the war, were engaged in other work, to take up outside employment, and that of this number a considerable proportion will be desirous of obtaining land upon which they can create farm homes.

"Western Canada offers one of the best opportunities in the British Empire for those men who may wish to engage in farming. While of course any general scheme of land colonization in Canada by returned soldiers must necessarily be formulated and administered by the Dominion Government, the Canadian Pacific Railway, as a large landowner in the western provinces of Canada, is desirous of doing its share in attempting to solve this important problem."

Only those are eligible who can produce proof of service in the Canadian unit of the British Army or in the British Army or Navy, are married, of physical fitness and have had previous experience in agriculture. Candidates are required to appear before an Examining Committee before a contract is entered into.

Two kinds of farms will be available for colonization — Improved Farms and Assisted Colonization Farms. In the first case, a limited number of farms in selected colonies, with distinctive military names, will be improved, previous to occupation, by the erection of a house, barn and fence, the provision of water supply, and the breaking of forty acres. Live stock, implements and seed grain will, where necessary, be provided. In the Assisted Colonization scheme, in which an almost unlimited amount of land will be available, farms will be first selected by the intending colonists, and then improved by them with assistance from the company in the way of advances of building and fencing material, livestock, implements and seed grain.

In case where the Examining Committee is satisfied that the colonist is unable to provide living expenses for himself and his family during the first year of his occupation, financial assistance, in the way of cash advances not exceeding one-half the value of any work done by the purchaser in permanently improving the farm may be made.

On each Improved Farm Colony a Central Control Farm will be established and operated by the company, in charge of a colony superintendent.

The colonist's operations will be directed with the advice of the superintendent, and the central farm will be used for purposes of demonstration, to maintain service animals and to keep on hand the larger and more expensive machinery which the individual farmers would probably not be able to buy at first, for the use of which a fixed daily charge will be made. Assisted Colonization Farmers will also receive the benefit of instructive directions given by the company's inspectors.

Land will be sold to bona fide settlers only, settlement and occupation being the basis of the contract. Evidence will be required periodically that this requirement has been complied with. The maximum amount of land sold to one man is 160 acres under the Improved Farm scheme, with a reduction to eighty acres in case of irrigable land, and 320 acres of non-irrigable land under the Assisted Colonization scheme, but adjoining land will be as far as possible reserved for future extensions and for pasture.

The terms of payment provided are very easy. In the Assisted Colonization scheme, land will be sold on a twenty-year basis, and the first payment will not be due until two years after the date of the contract. In the Improved Farm scheme, the colonist will occupy the farm as tenant for three years, and will not be required to make any payment in the nature of rent until the end of three years, when an amount equal to six per cent. on the cost of permanent improvements will be charged for each year that has passed since the colonist went into occupation. The colonist will at that date enter into an agreement to purchase the land on a twenty-year basis, and will make his first payment on account of that contract one year later. No water rental will be charged for the first two years on irrigable land. The cost of permanent improvements and any cash advances made will in the case of both schemes be added to the purchase price of the land and thereby spread over a twenty-year basis of repayment. Livestock, implements and seed will be secured by lien notes or mortgages.

The announcement concludes: "The project has been formulated and brought into force with a keen desire on the part of the company to do its share in recognizing the work of men who have fought for the empire, and who desire to take up farming at the close of the war, and while it is recognized that the scheme must of necessity contain something of philanthropy in the way of easy terms and material assistance in the earlier years of the colonist's efforts, it is not intended to do otherwise than administer those farms on a thoroughly businesslike basis, or to allow them to be taken up except by men who are earnest in their intention to try and make a success of farming and who have the foundation qualifications to justify an expectation of success."