

IMMIGRATION WILL BE ENORMOUS

Col. A. D. Davidson Says Influx of Settlers After the War Will Be Very Great.

Toronto, Nov. 17.—Col. A. D. Davidson, and commissioner of the Canadian Northern railway, and one of the most noted pioneers of Canadian development, stated in an interview today that the greatest flow of immigration in the history of Canada would commence with the close of the war. This opinion he based upon his recent observations in Great Britain, where he was for many weeks, and upon his knowledge of the effects of other wars on migratory movements.

"After the Franco-Prussian war in 1870," said Col. Davidson, "there began a heavy procession of families and ex-soldiers from Germany to the United States. Militarism, then, as now, sent scores of thousands in search of a land where worthier fields held sway, and the middle states benefited very materially. Canada at that time was not, of course, in the eyes of the world as she is now. The French held to their own land with that steadfast affection which has refused to recognize the lure of new homes in a new country. But the French peasant today must face a different problem. The devastation in the rich valleys where the troops are now fighting is near to absolute. Farm buildings, villages, are razed to the earth. Churches and schoolhouses are smoking ruins. Forests have been cleared away, roads blown up, almost every material thing about which associations cling exist no longer within the region of hostilities. When the war closes thousands of French farmers must face the question of starting life anew. Undoubtedly the French government will encourage them to return to their old homes, but against that will be the prospect of free farms in Canada, a land under the allies' flag.

Belgians Will Come.

"I am convinced too that we shall add to the population of Canada many thousands of Belgians. Commercially that heroic country is a wreck. Rehabilitation under the best imaginable circumstances must be slow and difficult. Is it, therefore, too much to say that large numbers of Belgian farmers, finding their life's work blotted out by German invasion, will look favorably upon the broad and peaceful fields of the Canadian west? I feel certain that this result will come about in the days following the war, and we could not open our doors to worthier fellow-citizens. As for the English and Scotch who have been coming to us in such splendid numbers, I anticipate a resumption of British emigration to an extent quite equal to what we have already seen. The reasons, I think, are obvious. Thousands of young farmers at the end of the war, possibly one or two years from the time they volunteered, will return to England to find their jobs filled by others or their connection with old employers disturbed in accidental ways. The point is, they will have been uprooted, as it were, sufficiently to enable them to make a clean start in a new country without a great sentimental sacrifice. Suppose that the Canadian people step into the limelight at such a time with an invitation to settle on free homesteads, is it too optimistic to think that the invitation will be greedily accepted and that large numbers of British army men will throw in their lot with us? Every likelihood points to that coming about."

Referring directly to the probabilities in land values, Col. Davidson said that a large body of new settlers annually would more than maintain the market for farm lands, while the higher prices for agricultural products had already prompted the farmers of the west to put a greater acreage under the plow. Col. Davidson did not hesitate to discourage all hope of the return of the late-lamented land boom. "No one with the interest of Canada at heart wants any boom to inflict the country," he remarked, "and while prices of western farm and city property will ascend according as such property is able to earn an increased revenue, there will never come again the mad scramble to deal on an artificial and temporary basis."

Col. McRae Agrees.

Col. A. D. McRae, of Vancouver, a partner of Col. Davidson, and who is spending some time in Toronto, thoroughly endorsed the prediction that the war will be followed by unexampled emigration to Canada. British Columbia's share of prosperity, said Col. McRae, would be equal to that of any other province in the Dominion. "Vancouver is making its way to a place as one of the largest cities of the country. I am not saying that out of self-interest, for I own to real estate in the city, but because I know that a community given such a combination of advantages simply cannot be held back. The benefits of the Panama canal have been suspended, as it were, because of the lack of ships and the dullness which has overtaken commercial effort everywhere. Restoration of peace will demonstrate the great gains resulting to Vancouver from new transportation routes by land and sea."