

SETTLERS FOR WESTERN LAND

Heavy Immigration From Northern Europe After the War

GREAT VALUE OF THIS YEAR'S CROP

Assistant to President of C.P.R. Talks of Future for West

Special to the Daily News.

Montreal, Feb. 4.—Probably no man in the West is better qualified to speak on past and present conditions there, and the prospects for the future, than Mr. J. S. Dennis, Assistant to the President of the Canadian Pacific Railroad, who is in Montreal attending the annual meeting of that department.

"The West," he said, "is wonderfully prosperous this year as a result of a bumper crop—a crop which may well be termed a double-crop, with yields running all the way from 30 to 72 bushels of wheat. Never has the West made such a record; never have the prairies so demonstrated their fertility, and, I may add, never, both from our point of view and that of the Empire, was it so necessary for the West to come through. In wheat alone, the three prairie Provinces last year yielded more than all other grains put together—340,000,000 bushels, as against 140,000,000 in 1914, and if you take wheat, oats, barley and flax, we have a yield in 1915 of over 700,000,000 bushels against 320,000,000 in 1914. These four crops in 1914 returned to the farmers approximately \$219,000,000; this 1915 crop on a conservative basis, will return \$400,000,000. It is quite evident that the 1915 crop surpassed anything in the history of the West, and that the financial returns per acre are greater than for any previous year; in addition, favorable late fall and early winter weather has permitted the farmers to thresh the greater part of their crops. Figures issued by the Provincial Governments just prior to my departure from Calgary, give Alberta a wheat yield of 36.16 bushels per acre; Saskatchewan, 28.75 bushels per acre; and Manitoba, 28.50 bushels. Such yields are much in excess of those in any other portion of the hemisphere, but must, of course, be looked upon as phenomenal. Conditions are also much improved in British Columbia. The fruit districts of the Province had the largest crop in their history, and the lumbering and mining industries showed marked revival and improvement during the year."

Too Few Producing.

"Immigration, of course, has fallen off, and is our big—our main problem—to-day; we want more population and a readjustment, as far as possible, of the present distribution of rural and urban population. The desired end can only be reached through stimulating and increasing the immigration of people of the right class, and so colonizing them as to produce the best results. In all the provinces of Canada there is an economically unsound distribution of the present total population; too many people live in the urban centres, and the rural and producing population is too small a percentage of the whole. This is particularly true of the four Western Provinces, where the population is divided on a basis of 43 per cent. urban and 57 per cent. rural, and this, in spite of the fact that these provinces contain one of the largest areas of good agricultural land, available for settlement and immediate development, in the world. Occupying a territory greater in area than that of the United States, Canada has a population of approximately 8,000,000 as compared with 100,000,000 south of the international boundary. Possessed of natural resources in our forests, mines, fisheries, and vast areas of agricultural land, Canada to-day is importing great quantities of manufactured products and food-stuffs, which could be and would be here were the population increased and distributed on a producing basis.

On Self-Producing Basis.

"Coincident with our remarkable urban development, the past decade has shown great expansion in our manufacturing and industrial plants, but we have not always built the superstructure on sound basis. Industrial development—particularly in the West, has established many industries, the raw product for which has to be imported, while sufficient attention has not been paid to those which would handle the raw products of the country, particularly those resulting from agriculture and animal husbandry. This fact is especially noticeable in connection with the flour industry. It is economically unsound that we should ship such a large bulk of our wheat out of the country instead of milling it at home, shipping the finished product in the shape of flour and retaining all the by-products, which are urgently needed to assist in expanding our stock-feeding and stock-finishing activities. Not only do we need more people on the land, but to build up our industries, and put our country on a self-producing basis.

A Big Programme.

"If you take the Dominion Government reports, you will find that the total immigration for the past 10 years has been a little over 2,500,000, of which approximately 1,000,000 are reported to have come from Great Britain; if these figures are correct, it is quite clear that only a small proportion were looking for farm homes and that the greater number were of the laboring class. The report further shows that about 900,000 came from the United States and the balance from other countries. Whatever the total may be, I am convinced that, if we are going to have any success in solving the problem of increasing and properly distributing the population of Canada, we must so stimulate our immigration as to provide

at least 100,000 a year for the next ten years.

"For the present, at least, we cannot do very much other than advertise our prosperity as widely as possible and prepare for the time when we can. The United States is, unquestionably, the field which should first be considered. They sent us approximately 60,000 in 1915. Colonies there, particularly in the Northern States, are analogous to those existing in Canada, and residents there, whether native-born or foreign, are accustomed to systems and methods of agriculture similar to our own, and to similar systems in connection with taxation, schools, currency, weights and measures, transportation, and general methods of living common to the two countries. The population of the United States is expanding so rapidly and the opportunity of obtaining cheap land or suitable employment decreasing correspondingly, that, inevitably, there must be and will be an increasing 'spilling over' into the adjoining countries, if the openings there are attractively presented.

From Northern Europe.

"Great Britain supplied, during the past decade, the largest number of immigrants, but the smallest number of agriculturists. The reason for this is readily understood when it is remembered that Great Britain is not an agricultural country, less than 15 per cent. of the population being engaged in agriculture (some 300,000 families in all), and under such conditions any marked propaganda on the part of the overseas portions of the Empire to reduce the present small agricultural population of the Mother Country is not good policy. Large numbers of the laboring class have been, and can be, obtained from Great Britain, but outside of skilled laborers, and a small number of farm laborers, the field is restricted. Of the unclassed immigrants in the above statement, the majority come from Northern Europe, including Belgians, Dutch, Scandinavians, Germans, Russians and Hungarians, and it is to the countries from which these people came that we must look for the large percentage of our immigrants on the conclusion of the war.

"That there will be a large movement of these peoples to America when the war terminates is my firm opinion. There has been such a movement following every European war of modern times, and, though it may be expected that all countries engaged in the present awful struggle will be desirous of and attempt to keep their people at home to assist in rehabilitating conditions, it is inevitable that all who can will be desirous of getting away from enforced military service and excessive war taxation, and move to the United States and Canada. It must be remembered also that there are numbers of people of all the nationalities engaged in the war already resident on this side of the Atlantic, and they will make every effort to get their friends and relatives to come and join them.

"The question of returned Canadian soldiers after the close of the war and disbanded soldiers in Great Britain is going to be one of the serious problems following the war. It has been an acute problem following all wars, and our earliest colonization in Canada was by discharged soldiers after the war of conquest in Canada, and the Napoleonic wars of Europe. . . . The problem of rehabilitating in civil life the men that Canada is providing for the present war is going to be a serious and troublesome one. In addition, consideration should be given to the possibility of helping Great Britain in the solution of this difficulty by bringing suitable men and their families to Canada. . . . I foresee an era of continued growth and development beside which our progress of the past decade will be comparatively insignificant."