

Land Settlement for Soldiers.

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(Second Article.)

With the announcement that another Soldiers' Settlement Act is to come before the Canadian Parliament early in the New Year as a natural corollary of the one now existing providing for settlement on free homesteads, the whole scheme is gradually being worked out to a perfection of detail which ought to provide the best of opportunities for every Canadian ex-service man who wishes to become a farmer and his own landlord.

The prospects of a man of limited means being able to secure, with the assistance of the Canadian Government, a valuable piece of farming land, near railways and elevators is very alluring, and will produce eminently satisfactory results, but the whole scheme is intended to be a business proposition by a business Government to assist business-like men in the production of agricultural wealth, and nothing is more essential to success than the basis on which the Government will expend public money, viz., the physical and temperamental capacity of ex-service men to reasonably succeed.

By this is meant the acquisition and cultivation of the "farming instinct," without which no man's earnestness of purpose tends to success.

The man experienced in farming may be sufficiently qualified to take up his land and secure a loan thereon from the Board without further education on agricultural lines, but he must still have the desire to acquire more knowledge of a technical and scientific character, and special arrangements will be made for acquiring this additional technical knowledge at the various Agricultural Colleges throughout the Provinces of Canada.

The farmer who thinks he knows it all is as much mistaken in that industry as in any other, and it is equally true with farming that when one has nothing more to learn it is time to die. Indeed the path of agricultural activity is strewn with thousands of derelict hopes because the amateur farmer believed he had only to open the earth, put in some seed anyhow, and his bank account was considerably swollen without further effort.

I very cordially recommend the reading of a new book by Hopkins Moorhouse, entitled "Deep Furrows," which tells the story of how Canadian farmers fought their way to great achievements in co-operation. It is well worth reading.

Generally it is the man who is most experienced in farming who seeks the advice and education of practical agricultural colleges. It is, however, to the inexperienced man that those of us interested in the movement specially offer advice and assistance.

"While shepherds watched their flocks by night," is a simple well-known sentence appropriate to the present season, and illustrates a condition, as present now as in old pastoral times. The good farmer surely looks after his stock the last thing at night, and instead of actually watching with them, he gets up early in the morning as his first duty is to tend them again. What is worth doing at all is worth doing well, and nothing pays in the well-doing so much as sane farming on scientific and up-to-date lines.

It is not necessary nowadays for the inexperienced man to endure the privations and hardships of pioneer days: he can

obtain instruction on the land itself under conditions which will not be very different from those under which he will farm his own land eventually. Canadians can see in England as they can observe in Canada the diligent intelligent farmer has the atmosphere of a successful man surrounding his every day activities.

Early to Rise.

The soldier who can face "two o'clock in the morning over-the-top" is not dismayed at the need to rise at five a.m., even in winter time when the moon has both eyes wide open. It is not merely business to do so, though that is often an incentive to perform disagreeable duty, but it comes quite naturally to a farmer to get up early, just as it is the lot of a policeman on night duty to go to sleep by day, or the enterprising burglar to take his rest while everyone else is awake. It may be necessary to elaborate the point to a townsman, but it should not be necessary with a soldier whose leisure moments may have been any hour past midnight rather than before noon.

The beginner in farming finds it difficult to get his eyes open early, but business is business at five o'clock in the morning as it is at noon, and later on he may find it necessary, as I have seen it in practice, to put a lantern on his binder and reap his crop by starlight, so let him get used to strange hours if perchance he has not been in the front trenches and learned to keep vigil there.

I should welcome the opportunity for every man to try the early morning treatment before definitely deciding to be a farmer. He will find it pays in health as well as in business.

An intelligent Canadian soldier is able to bring to bear on any business a large amount of commercial intelligence, and should do so with his farming as with everything else. He should not sign a promissory note, and "Thank God! that debt's paid," but keep a record of the due date, and save to meet it.

The stories of successful farmers show quite clearly that it was successful business attributes that brought them to the front. Be a farmer! Yes. Be a business man as well, and learn to buy and sell to the best advantage, as well as to produce abundantly after Nature's own kind by intelligent agriculture.

You may, after a while, engage help on your own farm, so qualify to be your own foreman without being—or making—a slave of yourself or anyone else. Get and give a good day's work by industry and perseverance, and expect a good day's pay in experience, in kind, or in cash. The two latter we all understand, but believe me the former is really the capital of the beginner on the land, and how are you to get it?

Experience has shown that the best way to learn to farm is to farm. I believe in hiring out to a good farmer, who is not foolish enough to expect a "green hand" to do as much the first week as a man of three years' experience, but find a man who will appreciate your desire to learn, and in return for your willingness to do your best will bear kindly with you when your first attempts to milk offend the meek and docile cow, or you allow his pet mare to tear her shiny coat on some misplaced coil of barbed wire. I do not recall, in thirty-five years' experience,

any Canadian farmer who did not appreciate the intelligent willing pupil, even if such was not always treated fairly. If you are not satisfied, trade him off for another master quick. No matter what the farmer gives you to do it is nine chances to one it will be an experience worth many dollars, and don't spoil his property from a mistaken modesty that you are asking too many questions. Do it right and learn your lesson as you did the lesson of fighting. The Overseas Settlement Board are working on these lines, and will be able to direct inquirers to suitable farmers in every Province, and if you want more extended and theoretical training the agricultural colleges in each Province stand ready to give you that assistance.

What you should aim at acquiring, whether working with a farmer or in a college, is embraced in the full synopsis that is likely to be adopted by the Khaki University of Canada, something like: instruction in the handling of horses in association with vehicles and the implements of tillage; in the construction and assembling of the common farm implements and in the operation of gas engines; instruction in carpentering, blacksmithing and general repair work, and in the planning and construction of buildings; instructions in farm management and the importance of good business methods in relation to successful farming; instructions in the preparation of the soil and the growing and harvesting of crops. Instructions in the selection, care, feeding, and management of horses, cattle, sheep, swine, and poultry, etc., etc.

To Remember.

There are several other points to remember. The practice of farming by experienced men is generally correct and sound, and a partly experienced man only goes to college to secure that knowledge he cannot learn from an ordinary farmer. You cannot farm at a distance, nor engage in it merely as a pleasant pastime, and the more an experienced man learns of the industry, the more interested and successful he becomes. Farming is first and foremost a matter of experience, of practice, of industry, of commonsense and business aptitude. These are not showy things. They are not got out of books, and the visitor is not often impressed in the harvest field by these bedrock necessities, yet a farmer is always welcomed in town: he brings with him a freshness of Nature's own inspiration, and if a city man is too old at forty, a farmer is then only coming into his best.

The inexperienced man with a family has not yet been fully dealt with. As a preliminary point it must be evident that without extraneous assistance from somewhere the businesslike farmer is not able or willing to pay sufficient to support the family of his inexperienced help, as well as the man himself, in return for such work as the man only is able to perform. In every case the merits and interests of each family must be considered; the man's wife can readily help in the household, if she has not the care of too many children. The would-be farmer not blessed with children, but having a wife as good a worker as himself would be invaluable to any farmer at a good wage from the first day besides board and lodging, but generally speaking, it must be made tolerably comfortable for them, no matter what the size of the family. It is not good for man to be alone, and a number of healthy children are a blessing to all. If farming is made attractive to the family as well as to the wife and husband all will be well, and the Nation as well as the individual will prosper.

So the inexperienced man can help himself and his family, and be a valued asset to Canada.