

which would be worth from \$600 to \$1,000 in Manitoba were of no value there, because they had no money left. In addition to this, a man would invariably have a chattel mortgage on his stock. Of those who moved into South Dakota there were but three families that had not chattel mortgages, to a more or less extent. We tried to assist them to sell part of their stock, with a view of paying off the mortgages.

Q. Are there any more of them left?—A. Yes; many of them. As I was informed, the farmers could not get more than $1\frac{1}{2}$ cents per pound for their steers, so it was found impossible to raise money by selling a portion of the stock, then this homestead company paid off the mortgages, drawing 40 per cent. interest, and gave loans at 8 per cent. The mortgage would perhaps amount to \$350, and the balance of the loan would cover the cost of transportation. When the immigrants arrived at their destination, stock that possessed very little value before, would assume a value of from \$600 to \$700. Chute brought up his property to Yorkton, and it is worth \$1,600.

This, in brief, is a statement of what we have been doing since I was before this Committee last year. I am more hopeful now than I ever was since I commenced, four years ago, of the success of this work. I saw then—and I made the statement in a report I presented to the Government at the time—that the Dakotas, outside of the Red River valley, were a total failure as a farming country; that it was only a matter of time for the people to leave there. Dakota is being now depopulated much faster than it was ever populated. I can name whole counties in which you can drive 35 miles and only pass two inhabited houses; and remember, that seven years ago there were families in every quarter-section in South Dakota. The land was taken up so rapidly that there was not much chance of pre-emption for a quarter-section homesteader. There is in North Dakota, the Red River valley, about 30 miles wide, extending from the boundary down to South Fargo, which, to my mind, is as good a country as there is in the world, but it is simply a speck.

Irrigation in South Dakota.

By Mr. O'Brien:

Q. You except irrigated lands?—A. There are no irrigated lands in the Dakotas.

Q. I know of some in neighbourhood of the Black Hills?—A. I am speaking now of the country east of the Missouri. I saw land west of the Missouri not worth a dollar. There is no farming country in South Dakota. Another attempt has been made to boom it, in this way: The farmers are told if they put down artesian wells they will all get rich. There have been a number of wells sunk in that State, some of them to a depth of 2,000 feet, and giving unlimited quantities, but we do not see the grass growing any higher than it was before. When I asked the people why they spent money in putting down artesian wells, they had no answer to give. My view is, there is something wrong with the water. There is only one farmer, as far as I know, who has made any attempt to irrigate, and he does not seem to have met with any remarkable degree of success. I think, Mr. Chairman, that is the information I have to give the Committee regarding this movement. Four years ago I went, at the request of the Government, to the Dakotas, to make a comparison of the agricultural resources of that country with Manitoba. I did so, and examined the country with all the care I could possibly command, and all the intelligence I possessed. I felt at the time I was describing the country more favourably than was the case, and the lapse of time has proved that my opinion was correct. The country has gradually been getting worse since 1887, when I made my first report, and it is now absolutely a total failure from an agricultural point of view. The counties are bankrupt. Take Brown County: It has \$268,000 of taxes, and so on, with county after county. The wheat was taken as it was threshed to satisfy chattle mortgages drawing 30 percent., so that when the last bushel was threshed there was nothing to eat, and when next year comes around, no seed. In some cases the county was bonded, and bonds to the amount of \$50,000 issued. Then they sent down to Minneapolis to buy seed, which was distributed amongst the farmers. This was sold at two prices, at big rates of interest, and caretakers