

LAND SETTLEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN THE ANNAPOLIS VALLEY

(Paper read by Lieut. Col. Robert Innes, B. S. A., Director of Agriculture, Soldier Settlement Board of Canada, at the N. S. Fruit Growers' Association Convention Last Week.)

I did not hesitate to accept the invitation of your Secretary to give a paper today as I welcome this opportunity of placing before the people of the Annapolis Valley some of the factors which in my opinion, influence the proper development of this portion of the Province of Nova Scotia.

I pride myself on being a native of this Province and Valley, and I hope, therefore, that you will regard what I have to say, not merely as an expression of the views of a Government Colonization official, but as the convictions of an interested fellow citizen.

While it is obvious that natural conditions in the Annapolis Valley are very favorable for a greatly increased agricultural development it was felt that any policy for the development of this and other sections of the Province should be based on the fullest possible knowledge of present conditions.

With this idea in mind the Premier of Nova Scotia arranged, last fall, for the Soldier Settlement Board of Canada to co-operate with the Provincial Government in investigating the opportunities for land settlement in all parts of the Province.

For the past three months we have been working in the counties of Kings and Annapolis. Our field work in these two counties is now largely completed and we are at present engaged in tabulating and compiling the information obtained through our enumerators. I regret it is impossible for me to give you many final figures at this time.

A complete report will be published in due course and will no doubt be made available to all who are interested.

So far, in Kings County we have located 45 vacant farms which are not being operated, 41 totally unimproved holdings of various sizes, and 304 farms which are for sale in whole or in part.

The number of farms which are occupied but are not being operated is 31. I can assure you that lack of suitable available land is not a limiting factor in the development of this district.

Our reports indicate that probably the greatest field for increased settlement is on what we have termed "surplus holdings." There are in the County of Kings, 931 farms of over 100 acres.

As the average amount of improved land per occupied farm in the County is 30 acres, it would seem that even a 100 acre farm is larger than is necessary. I have often thought that it would be better for the Valley if our farms averaged 50 acres instead of 100. It has been encouraging to find that a majority of the owners of these "surplus holdings" have expressed a willingness to sell them at a reasonable price.

Their apparent appreciation of the fact that their surplus holdings are at present of little use to them, and that by converting them into cash, they will secure capital which may be utilized to advantage in the further development and improvement of the area which they are now actually operating.

This offers an excellent opportunity for the real land settlement. Instead of replacing established farmers, you retain them in the Valley, provide them with additional working capital, and the district reaps all the benefits of increased rural settlement.

Some Census Figures  
(a) In 1871 the population of Kings County was 21,510; in 1921 (50 years later) it was 23,723 which means an increase of only 2,213 (or at the rate of about 40 per year).

(b) The acreage of improved land in Kings County in 1871 was 150,022 acres. In 1921 it was 105,384 acres, a decrease of 44,638 acres in the 50 years.

(c) The acreage of field crops in 1901 was 68,570 acres. In 1921, 61,535 acres, a decrease of 7,035 acres in 20 years.

(d) In 1901, there were 13,600 acres of orchard. In 1921 there were over 20,000, an increase of approximately 7,000 acres in 20 years. (It will be noted that the acreage of orchard has increased to about the same extent as the acreage of field crops has decreased).

Very Little progress in last fifty years  
These figures indicate that during the past 50 years our population has not increased to any extent, and that our acreage of improved land has steadily decreased.

ion is that there is no money in anything but apples. My personal experience and observations lead me to believe, that the farmer in this Valley who is making money and saving it, is the man who swells his annual income by selling dairy products, pork products and poultry products.

I would like to see the Provincial Department of Agriculture institute a Farm Management survey of our farms to determine definitely to just what extent this is the case. Are we fruit growers not going ahead from year to year more or less like a ship without a rudder, depending altogether too much on our fruit and not paying sufficient attention to the various other phases of farming for which this Valley is just as well adapted?

This district gentlemen, cannot develop so long as we continue to specialize to such an extent in the growing of apples. Some people will tell you that we should not attempt to encourage immigration to this district because farming is not sufficiently profitable and we are now producing more stuff than we can sell.

At present, this may be true but growing about it will not improve matters. All of us can profit with the methods and accomplishments of others. Denmark did not adopt scientific methods of marketing in connection with her agriculture until her farmers were on the verge of ruin.

She has now made herself into the greatest dairying nation in the world. During eleven months, ending last November, Denmark exported to Great Britain over 194,000,000 lbs. of butter valued at \$75,250,000 (38 1/2 cents per pound) and over 35,000,000 lbs. of bacon valued at \$88,470,000 (24 2/5 cents per pound).

Denmark found it possible through co-operation to get out of the rut she was in. Can we not do the same? In the course of our investigation we found farms capable of maintaining 20 head of cattle with only two in the barn.

The general argument was that stock of any kind doesn't pay under present conditions. A majority of farmers express a willingness to increase their stock if the difficulty of securing a market for their dairy and pork products was overcome.

Dairying localities all over Canada are generally prosperous. Why should we not take advantage of this additional source of revenue? Apples are a world product, governed by universal law of supply and demand. The same thing applies to dairy products. Maritime lands must look to the sea.

We are fortunate in being so situated geographically, that we can place our apples on the world's market with less expense than any other district which produces them. The same advantage would largely hold true in connection with our dairy products, and so far as I know there is no reason why we could not obtain a large share of the butter and bacon trade which Denmark is now receiving from Great Britain.

The sentiment of "trade within the empire" is growing stronger in the mother country every day. Local Markets  
Our neglect of our home markets is unpardonable. In the city of St. John in the year 1909 (I regret I haven't later figures) the wholesalers of that city imported from outside New Brunswick a total of \$2,275,000 worth of farm produce of which—

- \$ 6,000 was for poultry
- \$ 28,600 was for eggs
- \$ 25,800 was for butter
- \$ 14,432 was for cheese
- \$51,100 was for pork product

These figures represent the quantities handled by brokers and do not include large imports by dealers direct. The figures are for St. John alone in the year 1909. What is the situation in St. John and other cities right as our doors today? Are we content to know that such enormous sums are going out of the Maritimes for products which we can raise ourselves? You know as well as I do that in all sections of the Maritime, we are importing either food or feed that we ought to be raising at home.

Co-operation  
It would seem obvious that there must be a further growth of the spirit of cooperation. The best way to make more money from farming is to produce high grade products, and then cooperate with other producers with like ambitions, in order to place the goods on the market and get a fair share of the consumer dollar.

Through an efficient cooperative organization, I am satisfied it would be possible for the farmers of the Annapolis Valley to obtain profitable prices for all classes of farm products which can be produced here. All that we need is an organization which will handle our manufacturing and marketing problems in a businesslike way.

You may wonder what all this has to do with settlement opportunities in the Annapolis Valley. To my mind it is the crux of the whole problem. Nothing succeeds like success and if we can improve conditions among our own people, and demonstrate that real and varied opportunities for success do exist here, our development problem will be solved.

Number of Fruit Farms Limited  
Another reason why more diversified farming is essential to the proper development of the Annapolis Valley is because the number of immigrants who can afford to buy developed fruit farms is just as limited as the available number of farms of this type. The scope and variety of opportunities for new immigrants must be widened.

immigrants must be widened. Immigration  
Some of us object to immigrants—we ridicule their chances of success and criticize the Government for inducing them to come here. In order to obtain a proper attitude on this question of handling immigrants make an attempt to put yourselves in the position of one of them—say for example an Indian Army officer—who has come to the Annapolis Valley to settle.

What sort of reception would you expect to receive? What are the chief things you would look at as evidences of progress and stability in this district? You would arrive here a stranger to our methods, a stranger to our social conditions, a stranger to our medium of exchange and a stranger to the community in which you settle.

General conditions of existence in Canada and the British Isles are by no means the same. Your preconceived notions of how affairs are conducted are rudely upset. You are faced with conditions which are novel to you. You have been told that no man should undertake the management of a farm in the Annapolis Valley or anywhere else, until he has learned by practical experience how a farm should be operated.

other district in Canada. It will be obvious to you that these settlers were not established on highly improved fruit farms. There seems, I am sorry to say, to be a feeling in some quarters that as some of the Indian Army officers who are coming to the Valley have a fair amount of capital, they are fair prey. Apparently, some people are of the opinion that settlers of this class should be required to pay a bonus for the privilege of living here.

I have just this to say, that so far as the Soldier Settlement Board is concerned, no Indian Army officer or any other settler will be assisted on farms in the Annapolis Valley, unless land is available at a price which is in keeping with its revenue-producing capabilities.

Some of the farms reported to us in the course of our survey as being "for sale", have not been considered as "opportunities for new settlement", as the prices placed on them are out of all proportion to their value as commercial propositions.

I have often heard that Annapolis Valley farmers have the reputation of being the most proficient men on earth in the gentle art of skinning an immigrant, particularly an Englishman, and if this is true, let me assure you that so far as the Indian Army officers at least are concerned they have been fully forewarned and in addition, the Soldier Settlement Board is very much on the job in looking after their interests.

Class of settlers desired  
We have excellent opportunities for men with brains, breeding and sufficient capital to buy a semi-improved farm, but there is a limited supply of immigrants of this type. We need, and can accommodate, thousands of the farm laborer type—people who are content to work hard and live simply. We need, principally, men who are willing to pioneer, to take over some of our unimproved land and surplus holdings, and develop them into productive farms.

Men of this type by raising their own vegetables, milk, butter and eggs on a small acreage of cleared land, and by working out with nearby farmers, can maintain themselves and families until their farms become self-sustaining, or, if you like, until they develop into apple growing plantations. By encouraging settlement of this kind, we not only fill up the vacant spaces, but provide a steady supply of labor for ourselves.

In this connection the following extract from an article which appeared in a recent issue of the "London Times", regarding the state of affairs in the Western Isles of Scotland is of interest. "A distressful situation exists in the western Isles of Scotland. The potato crop is a failure, the hay has been ruined by rain, heavy gales from the Atlantic have destroyed the harvest, and on account of the sudden state of the sea there is a shortage of fuel. There is no work of any kind beyond one or two small schemes of road resurfacing, unless, unless, measures are taken promptly to deal with the situation a population of not less than 20,000 people in Lewis, Skye, and Western Ross will find themselves in a few weeks' time face to face with starvation. Lewis this year has known neither summer, nor autumn, only an endless succession of grey, sunless days of drizzling rain. There have been only 20 dry days since May, and there had not been a single day since September 2 on which rain had not fallen until last week, when the dreary succession was broken by snow and frost. It is the unkindest law in the United Kingdom, and the crofters are too small and unprofitable to maintain one family, much less the two or three families who squat upon each of them.

Women carrying fish to Stornoway

walk barefooted till they get within reach of the town, and then halt and put on their boots. The plight of the children this winter is pitiable. Many of them are without boots. They go wet and barefooted to school with only barley bread and tea for breakfast. Their clothes in many cases are in a deplorable state. The housing conditions are extraordinary. There are hundreds of cases in which human beings and animals live under the same thatch, with only a partition between the living-room and the byre. Not all the houses have chimneys, and some are even without windows.

How would even our poorest North Mountain farms for instance appeal to these people? That they would be desirable citizens for this country, there can be no doubt. I had the pleasure of showing Father MacDonnell, Managing Director of the Scottish Immigration Society, around the Valley last fall. He was investigating opportunities for settling some of them. Continued on page 7

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