

takably, towards the growth and encouragement of industrialism, rather than towards an increase of the area of agriculturalism, in any way weaken the contention as to what constitutes her real destiny as the granary of the Empire, if not, indeed, of the world. It is a question of proportion, of the most profitable investment of a limited capital, population; not, in any sense, of exclusion, or even of as undue a preference in favour of the farmer, as there seems danger of being in favour of the manufacturer. It is a question, that is to say, as to which is to come first; one in which the real cost, not the material or arbitrary, must, inevitably and inexorably, be taken into account, under penalty of irretrievable national bankruptcy. It is wholly beside the point, therefore, to insist on the necessity of industrial centres, as consumers of agricultural products; the issue being—it cannot be too often insisted on—one of the best use of a supply, now, and for an indefinite period, inadequate to the needs of two divergent, but not naturally antagonistic interests.

These very resources, moreover, the latter—water power, in its application to electricity—most particularly, has, obviously, the chief place in the modern and advantageous development of those means of transport on which agriculture, no less than manufactures, must, necessarily, depend for success. The whole matter, indeed, briefly stated, is one of population and of facilities of transport. If we decide on applying our limited human resources principally, though not exclusively, to agriculture, we must, evidently, make the investment as profitable a one as possible. In other words, since it is on men and women that we have to depend for the success of any industry, and of agriculture, probably, more than of all others, our first and most pressing object consists in making their occupation not only remunerative, which is mere justice, and without which it cannot continue, but as attractive, at the very least, as city life appears to the agriculturist—until he comes to live it himself. The two objects, profit and attractiveness, can, fortunately, to a very large extent, be attained by the same means: cheap and easy means of transport and communication.

Without, however, venturing to enter into technical details, still less to outline a scheme whereby cheap transport, cheap power, distribution of population, and other similar advantages, might be made possible in Canada, I would ask your attention to some account of what may fairly be called the most perfect systems in existence—the canals and light railways of Belgium. I owe it to the courtesy of the Belgian Consul General at Ottawa, that the material, here made use of, has been placed at my disposal. It shall be made as little statistical and technical as may be consistent with a clear presentment of it.