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Immigration and Centralization of Effort

Necessity for Early Start on an Immigration Policy and for Co-operation of the Provinces with the Dominion Government—Contribution of Sir Donald Mann.

An Eastern newspaper has been presenting to its readers a symposium on the problem of immigration after the war, and has put forward the views of many men competent to express an opinion. That Canada is overbuilt as to railways, and undermanned for the purpose of development of resources and industry, few will doubt. The crying need of Western Canada and British Columbia is population properly placed, and it is incumbent on the Federal Government, with the assistance of the various Provincial governments, to make comprehensive plans: first, for the securing of desirable immigration at the earliest date possible after the conclusion of war; and, second, to undertake to place this immigration in productive industry and development. It is none too early at this date to mature plans for the attainment of these objects. The intimate connection of the railway man with the immigration problem renders an expression of opinion from him a valuable contribution to the subject. Of such, Sir Donald Mann is entitled to speak, which he has in the Eastern press, part of which follows:—

“Canada has always had keen competition for settlement, and will have keener competition than ever in the readjustment era after the war. Argentina, with its large land holdings and favorable tenancies, will continue to attract the surplus farm labor of Spain and Italy. South Africa and Australasia have much to offer for settlers and, it must not be forgotten, have creditable war services with which to win sympathy in the United Kingdom. Russia undoubtedly will proceed with renewed vigor to fill the vacant lands of Serbia. Nor should it be assumed that the countries within the war zone will tamely submit to the drawing-off of their remaining population. And in the bids for settlement, Canada must lay stress, not merely upon the possession of great, rich, natural resources, but upon the fact that these resources are now accessible. Plant food, stored in Saskatchewan, might as well have been in Patagonia, until the means were devised for commercially marketing the crops of the prairies.

“Just before the war, there was a lull in Canadian development: immigration fell away, production declined, and the spirit of confidence was shaken. For the most part this recession in prosperity was caused by a visitation of one of the periodical crises which are apparently inevitable to all countries, and most severely felt by healthy growing countries. But, in part, the reaction was due to national indigestion. And herein lies a lesson that should not be forgotten in our next period of reconstruction. We must

unify and strengthen our digestive apparatus, devising some means whereby the misfits may be properly placed. A poor mechanic, with proper opportunity, may become a good farmer, just as a poor farmer may conceivably make a good miner. A farmer who utterly fails on the wheat lands of Saskatchewan, may very well become independent, cultivating, with intensive methods, the valley lands of British Columbia. There are opportunities for everyone in Canada, except the unemployables; but the country is so big that very often the right job and the right man fail to meet. And in a country in which so large a percentage is not native-born, the work of sorting out men and opportunities is of prime importance.

“Colonists will come with little or no capital, relying upon their manual labor for sustenance; and, if they have healthful bodies and a willingness to work, they should be made welcome. But the welcome must not end at the wharves of disemmarkation, if we are to prevent a congestion of the unemployed in the large cities. An efficient follow-up

system must be instituted, and, in order that this may be effectively undertaken when the time comes, may I suggest that provision should be made now for a national survey or census of labor opportunities? The Census Department at Ottawa is well equipped to perform this work, and the maintenance of a permanent staff of investigators would render the department capable of performing its important and arduous decennial activities better than in the past, when it has had to rely largely upon the services of inexperienced men who were willing to accept temporary employment. The possession of a thorough knowledge of the country's agrarian and industrial labor requirements, the wage scales, seasonal variations, and like matters, will

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