

Considerations for Purchasers of Land

Why One should Buy for Use and Not for Speculation

It is human and natural that those who have land to sell should desire to obtain the best prices. Owning or selling land is not less legitimate than dealing in any other commodity. Criticism of real estate owners and operators is often unfair and many men who are engaged in land dealings suffer from the odium drawn upon their profession by unscrupulous vendors. People, however, should blame themselves when they are deluded by improper speculative real estate operations.

It is in the interests of those who own land or those who represent the best type of real estate operator that the public should be educated to understand what should be avoided in dealings with land. During the past ten years, millions of dollars have been lost in real estate speculation. This has destroyed confidence in land investment; has increased municipal taxation and created incalculable hardship to small purchasers.

One of the fallacies which receives general acceptance is that there is no distinction between the ownership of property through borrowed money and the renting of property. Ownership of houses and land only possesses the merit that is claimed for it when it is free or comparatively free of mortgage. When property is heavily mortgaged, the payment of interest is equivalent to paying rent and is often more burdensome and irksome than the payment of rent to a landlord.

The following facts should be considered by those contemplating the purchase of land for building:

1. If land is purchased for immediate use, a higher price can be paid for it than if purchased for future use. If held for future use, the cost of the lot will increase by reason of the taxes plus compound interest on the purchase price. To a purchaser of a lot costing \$400 and held for six or seven years without being built on, the real cost will be about \$800. If the purchaser proposes to hold land for six or seven years, he should only pay half the price he thinks he can afford to pay for a site for his home.

2. In the final analysis, the cost of land should be estimated to include the capital cost of local improvements, and these may be roughly estimated at \$10 per foot frontage or \$500 on a 50 foot lot. If, therefore, \$400 is paid for a lot 50 feet wide, its real cost when improved for the purpose of a residence, will be \$900. Thus, fully improved land at \$18 a foot front is worth as much as unimproved land at \$8 a foot front in a case where the local improvements are paid for and are of reasonably high quality.

3. A purchaser of a lot at \$400 in 1919—to use exact figures—must estimate that the lot will cost \$701 in 1924 and \$983.50 in 1929, allowing compound interest at the rate of seven per cent and without any allowance for taxes, which should also be capitalized during these periods. Negotiable bonds paying 5½ to 6 per cent are as good or better than money earning 7 per cent if tied up in real estate.

4. When land is unimproved upon and is held for speculative purposes, it injures the person who wants to buy for immediate use, inasmuch as the price is increased to the latter by the competition of men who buy for speculation. Any one who speculates should take into account the fact that he is working against the interests of those who wish to buy for use.—T. A.

Conservation of Wild Life

Importance of Game Resources—Difficulties to be Overcome—Remedies to Adopt

That Canada, which once was nothing but a vast happy hunting ground for the Indian and teeming with game and fur-bearing animals, has now become a country where stringent restrictions are often necessary to preserve the wild life from actual extinction, is a fact of which the seriousness is not generally appreciated. The condition is casually dismissed as being due to the spread of settlement and civilization and as therefore inevitable, even if regrettable from certain aspects.

It is not necessary, however, that our wild life be exterminated and there are many reasons that precautions should be taken to prevent this. Let us remember that, in this respect, we are trustees for posterity in a very special sense, since the injury we may do will be irreparable. We ought also to recognize that our wild life constitutes a natural resource of great present and future value.

Game is still a necessity for food purposes in certain frontier districts and for thousands of Indians. The fur-bearing animals constitute a resource which, in the last fiscal year before the outbreak of the war, provided exports valued at \$5,569,476, while even in 1916 the exports amounted to \$4,778,337. In addition to the furs exported, large quantities are used in Canada and the severity of our winters makes it certain that this home demand will be permanent. Further, it will naturally increase with the growth of our population.

Mankind has other needs also than food to eat and clothes to wear. People need recreation. There is no healthier form of recreation than that which is carried on with rod or gun or camera along the streams, in the woods, across the plains or among the mighty mountain ranges. The attraction of game, big and little, is one of the most powerful lures that leads men into these healthful surroundings. Canada is famous as a sportsman's paradise. She must not lose that pre-eminence. Her splendid stretches of unspoiled nature, still within easy reach of her largest cities, are perhaps the greatest advantage she possesses over older lands.

The biggest difficulty in the way of wild life conservation is wholesale indiscriminate killing for commercial purposes or even, in some cases, from pure wanton lust of slaughter. Much complaint has been made that certain tribes of Indians are the greatest sinners in this respect, but white men are not free from blame. If this ignorant waste is stopped in time by well-enforced close seasons, the wild life can be preserved and there will still be

enough for legitimate taking. New Brunswick is an example of a province where this has been done and where the number and value of the game has actually greatly increased in recent years. But in the Northwest the big-horn sheep and the wapiti and some other animals are as much in danger of extermination as the buffalo and beaver. It has, therefore, been found necessary to prohibit altogether, for an indefinite period, the killing of certain species.

One of the most effective methods of preserving at least a nucleus of the game and other wild creatures is to provide sanctuaries within which they shall never be molested. This has already been done in the Rocky Mountains, Waterton Lakes and Jasper parks and the increase of wild life has been astonishing.

Electrification of Railways in Canada

Density of Traffic not Usually Sufficient to Warrant Change from Steam

The question is often asked, "Why are not more of our railways electrified?" It is pointed out that Ontario and Quebec, abounding in water-powers from which cheap hydro-electric energy can be made available wherever required, are coal-less and the coal necessary to operate our steam roads in these, our largest provinces, has to be hauled long distances and almost all of it has to be imported from the United States.

In view of these facts it would seem at first sight hard to explain why all our railways, at least within these provinces, have not already been electrified. Although electric tramways and interurban electric railways have rapidly developed, the electrification of heavier traffic roads has been confined mainly to very short distances in connection with operations imposed by special conditions, such as the Montreal terminal and Mount Royal tunnel of the Canadian National railway, the St. Clair tunnel of the Grand Trunk, and the Detroit tunnel of the Michigan Central.

An explanation is found in the fact that, although electricity fills every requirement of railway service, the problem of electrification is not one of mere ability to secure cheap power but is governed rather by the volume of traffic or amount of power necessary to operate the line. To use electricity, a large investment in equipment and installation must be made and this is little less for sparse than for dense traffic. Electrification has so far progressed slowly even in the United States because railroad executives were not convinced that the advantages to be gained are always worth the cost. From their angle it is purely an economic question with the amount of traffic as the principal factor. But, for us, there is also a national aspect in that it means substituting the utilization of our own water-powers for the importation of foreign coal.

When a section of railway has become ripe for electrification the additional advantages gained by the conversion are almost numberless. In a recent paper before the American In-

stitute of Electrical Engineers, Mr. Calvert Townley states: "The service performed on the electrified section comprises practically every kind of railroad transportation. The Bluefield division of the Norfolk & Western R.R. in West Virginia is an example of an important coal road operating through the mountains. The Chicago Milwaukee & St. Paul 440-mile main line, through Idaho and Montana, demonstrates what can be done by a transcontinental carrier on a large scale with through traffic, both freight and passenger. The New York, New Haven & Hartford R.R. stretch of 73 miles between New York and New Haven shows how through freight and a heavy passenger traffic can be taken care of on the most congested four-track section of an important eastern carrier and what is possible for complicated freight-yard operation, with the New York Central and the Pennsylvania out of New York city are splendid examples of our greatest modern passenger terminal electrifications."—L. G. D.

Australia Leads in Forest Legislation

Canadians should Recognize that Trees are a Crop which Belongs to the Nation

Canada may well profit from the example set by the states of Australia, Victoria and West Australia, in particular, have recently enacted forest legislation so progressive in character that our position in Canada seems backward by contrast. Their legislation sets a new pace, particularly as to land classification, forest reservation, control of cutting operations, reforestation, and the amount of money to be spent on the protection and development of state forests generally.

Our forests have a wealth-producing capacity, the possibilities of which, from a long-time viewpoint, have as yet been realized only in small part. To transmute these possibilities into permanent actualities requires, however, the general acceptance, by the people in general, and by government in particular, of the fundamental principle that the forest is a crop, not a mine, and that cutting operations on non-agricultural lands must be conducted always with a view to the perpetuation of the forest as such.

The practice of silviculture is still in its veriest infancy in Canada, as it is over most of North America. The tendency is to practise it anywhere except in the woods. It must, of course, be realized that forestry is essentially a business proposition, and that business considerations place definite limitations upon what it is feasible to do in the direction of intensive methods.

However, the forest lands of Canada are predominantly Crown lands and are, therefore, for the most part, the property of the people of the country. It follows that the public interest, from a long-time viewpoint, should govern in determining the conditions under which exploitation takes place. With the present increased stumpage values, many things in the direction of better management are now becoming economically feasible which would have been out of the question in years past.—C. L.