

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

The development of agriculture had received little attention from former Governments and the industry would have been better off if it had not the attention it did receive.

In the dry belt, conditions were allowed to arise under which purchasers of lands, the value of which depended upon irrigation, were permitted to settle on a plan whereby the irrigation company supplying water became bankrupt and the settler faced ruin after years of hard work.

In other places, while no assistance was given the farmer, the assessed value of his lands was increased time after time on "boom" prices by the Government Assessors, so that when the time came which forced the farmer to rely on his own exertions to get along, he found assessment so high and so out of proportion to the producing value of lands that ruin stared him in the face.

In the newer areas lands were tied up by speculators who paid neither purchase price nor taxes, who would not settle on the lands themselves and who held them from settlement by anyone else.

Naturally settlement and progress were barred and British Columbia, which should be an exporting province, instead imported annually over \$20,000,000 of farm produce yearly, and still the farmers, disorganized and struggling, were unable to make a respectable living.

The underlying policy of the present Government is, by means of intelligent legislation, by help in marketing and organizing and assistance in co-operation, to make those now on the farms actually prosperous. This result when accomplished will go a long way to solve taxation and other agricultural difficulties. For example, the cost of producing what we eat is often less than the cost of selling these things to the purchaser. It is actually greater when we bring it on a long train or boat journey, pay profits to farmer, merchant and wholesaler in the South, than transportation charges, importer, wholesaler and retailer, (with all their profits) here. It is as well a serious financial drain on the country.

Proper organization means elimination of unnecessary waste and real profits to producer with lower cost to consumer.