

Agriculture is the fundamental industry of Canada! If we neglect our other industries Canada can never be a complete and self-sufficient country. Thus the Great War Veterans' Association stands for our factories and industries as it stands for agriculture, but it stands for agriculture in a peculiar way, because agriculture is the fundamental industry of Canada.

I have continually drawn attention to the fact that in order to get the full benefit of this legislation it is imperative that the returning soldiers be educated in the possibilities of the land. I have said that the returned soldier who may have left Canada as a citybred young man has no real idea of the possibilities of agriculture, and that if Canada is to avail herself of the great asset of the returning soldier, he must be impressed with the fact that on the land there awaits him a happy and a prosperous home. Again, I have preached that to assure the success of the soldier-farmer, he must receive an ample practical education. I believe that neither of these suggestions has been carried out. I believe that the Government of Canada to-day is rapidly losing the chance of availing itself of the great asset of the returned soldier: that they are losing the greatest opportunity that any Government has had to stabilize our Country, to settle our land, to increase production, and to promote happiness amongst our people."

### SALVATION OF CANADA

"The president of the Montreal Chambre de Commerce, speaking of the enormous debt contracted by Canada in the war, a debt which in 1919 was \$1,363,000,000 as opposed to \$332,000,000 in 1914, says: "It is the surplus of the production of the farm which will save Canada."

What has been done towards assuring this surplus of agricultural production? What has been done towards encouraging farmers and Canada's national industry?

The census of Ontario in 1910 shows the rural population to have decreased by 54,184 in ten years. The same ten years show an increase of 400,000 in the urban population. Yet, on the labours of the countryman depend the whole strength and health, nay, the very existence of society. Those who go to the city like it at first; but city life is like the roll spoken of by the prophet, which was sweet in the mouth but bitter in the belly. The first generation are intoxicated by the new life, but in the third generation the cord is cut which connected them with Nature, the Great Mother, and life shrivels up, sundered from the source of life.

As children springing from the loins of diseased parents manifest at an early age their progenitors' defects in their constitution, so Canada and the States, though in their national childhood, seem already threatened with the same disease from which classic Italy perished, and the ravages of which to-day made Great Britain seem to the acute diagnoser of political health to be like fruit—ruddy without, but eaten away within, and rotten at the core.

No nation can be regarded as unhealthy when a virile peasantry, contented with rural employments—however discontented with other things—exists on its soil.

The disease which has attacked our great populations here is a discontent with rural life. Nothing which has been done hitherto seems able to promote content. It is true, indeed, that science has gone out into the fields, but the labours of the chemist, the bacteriologist, and the mechanical engineer are not enough to ensure health. What is required is the art of the political thinker, the imagination which creates a social order, and adjusts it to human needs.

It may seem a grotesque juxtaposition of things essentially different in character, to talk of national idealism and then of farming, but it is not so. They are inseparable. The national idealism which will not go out into the fields and deal with the fortunes of the working farmers is false idealism.

I do not believe it to be possible that our Government, responsible as it is for the sanest and most progressive land settlement scheme which the world has seen, will allow this greatest of all opportunities to obtain settlers for our agricultural lands to slip by. If the Government fails to secure for Canada this, the greatest potential asset that has been offered to our country since Confederation, nay, in all time, they will have neglected to secure for Canada the greatest bulwark against political heresy that it is possible to erect, they will have failed in their duty to the Dominion.

I cannot believe that our Government has deliberately failed in the organization of a plan to carry out more fully the Order-in-Council of the 11th February, 1919, for soldier settlement, but a great fear possesses me. The magnitude of the scheme as passed by that Order-in-Council can only be counted in billions. Is the Government afraid that our soldiers will not succeed as farmers? Yet sixty per cent. of the population of Canada are farmers and agriculture is Canada's national industry!

If, before the war, farmers had exercised the habit of keeping careful accounts, if they had taken into account all interest charges, wages and other expenditures, would it be found that under pre-war conditions farming was a paying industry for Canadians? Yet agriculture is of more importance to the Nation than any other

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