

FREE GRANT LANDS.

How Intending Settlers Should Proceed.

LIFE IN MUSKOKA.

DEAR SIR—I have tried to give an impartial and disinterested view of Muskoka, as a field for Ontario's growing and surplus (qualified) population to migrate to. I say Ontario's surplus population, for I firmly believe that without going outside there is a sufficient number of our people hanging round the cities and large towns of this province looking in vain the most of their time for a day's work, to fill every vacant farm, and locate every acre of free grant land in Muskoka. I have advocated for the most part for many reasons the introduction of a special class as settlers of the free grants. When a community are all of the struggling class, with no capital only their own honest labour, no matter what their intentions may be, no matter how honest or praiseworthy, the want of infusion of the element which is vitally necessary to their future prosperity—capitalist settlers—such a community must for many years to come find that progress in the backwoods is slow and uncertain; they have to seek employment outside to enable them to clear and remain on their lot. But the class I speak of if they went into the free grants or on partly cultivated farms, they would not require outside employment, but would be able to contribute as well as derive a benefit from the product of their labour. They would give to those who are honest and courageously struggling to build up a home of independence, a fair chance of carrying into effect their hopes and desires, and they would at the same time be deriving great benefit by having at immediate command experienced labour to carry out at once the reclamation of their location.

I made this quite clear in one of my former letters. Such a class of settlers introduced into Muskoka would greatly tend to its speedy advancement, and under the conviction that this view is equitable and just, for the benefit of the incoming settler, I venture to suggest the following scheme which might assist him in making a start towards the building up of his future home.

When several in one locality are contemplating taking up land, free or otherwise, for the sake of economy, and as a satisfaction to themselves, before making a final move, it would be well that a selection of one or two should be made out of their number, who by their experience and knowledge of land, would be competent to direct the others. Let them come here and fix upon a suitable location for the settlement—say in the township of Perry and Bothwell, through which and passing through Kearney the line of railway from Ottawa is surveyed and will soon be completed into Parry Sound. The expenses could be defrayed out of a common fund; that is, all intending settlers for whom these men would be acting as pioneers could each contribute his share towards such expenses. The expense to each individual would be very small. If these men were satisfied, and found what they considered suitable places to build up for themselves comfortable homes, they could instruct and act as leaders to the parties going in. By this little bit of economy an easier and better basis of action for all concerned could be arrived at; and as all would travel together they could do so at reduced fares, railway companies making special arrangements and reduced fares for emigrating parties. Also the cost

of conveyance of furniture, etc., would be greatly reduced, likely to free of charge, by parties moving in a body; and if advertisements were inserted in some of our papers by parties making ready to start, calling attention to others who are inclined to join them and go in together, no doubt a large number could be formed. Many advantages would thus be derived, in many respects instead of struggling among strangers, they would be surrounded by old friends ready to give each other assistance. Deriving all the benefits of a large settlement, there would be plenty of statute labour to open and keep in repair roads. Each according to his own trade or calling could be rendering assistance to the other, schools could be opened for the Catholic education of children, and the future prosperity of all would be insured.

In this way success would be much sooner obtained, the difficulties of a pioneer's life be greatly modified, economy would be studied and a greater amount of confidence established as to what they were about to undertake. The pioneering party on returning to their homes, or writing, would be in a position to satisfy the most enquiring as to the advantages or disadvantages of Muskoka as a market for their labor and capital.

As to the prospects for mechanics I would say if they are good workmen of a practical turn of mind and understand the cultivation of land, they should, if in well settled places, by combining both trade and farming, be able to succeed. Blacksmiths and wheelwrights especially are a necessity in all promising communities. In thriving villages, such as Kearney, which has a good backbone of farming country round about to sustain it, no enterprising craftsman need be afraid to venture the risk of meeting with success. Than Kearney there is no place I know of in the whole district of Muskoka and Parry Sound so highly recommendable to settlers on account of its many advantages. It is already well opened up and within an area of ten or twelve miles can boast of as good land and as great a quantity as anywhere found within the same area in this north country. It has all along been in easy reach of market, being only about five miles from Emsdale, where the P. T. Railway passes. By this time next year they will be in the advanced stage of establishing their market in their own village with a station and railway accommodation at their service. The O. A. P. and P. S. Railway passing through Kearney supplies a long felt want and will give new life and vigor to the old settlers and encouragement to the new, besides raising to a state of activity the cosy village, picturesque from its well-wooded slopes and natural surroundings, and graced by the presence of the silent Magnetawan, wending its way through in its onward course. Being situated about forty-five miles from Parry Sound and having at its back on the Ottawa side an area of some sixty miles of country soon to be opened up by railway, which includes a variety of valuable timber, besides a considerable portion of good land, Kearney is destined to become one of the most enterprising business towns in the northern district.

Business men are not slow to observe this, and are already procuring building lots in the village where a hotel will be soon in course of erection, and another is to be built a short distance away near where the railway station is likely to be placed. Any of our business men in the overcrowded cities and large towns, having little capital, would do well to take into consideration what a field there is to work in here with every chance of success in their line of business. With the exception of one small store there is no opposition here in the way of any energetic young man who contemplates

engaging in a business of this kind as a means of earning his bread. Now is the time to select a spot and secure a lot before they are all taken up and bought by some greedy speculator. Another advantage our people have here is the great consolation of having a nice little church which so far is attended from Bracebridge. They are also fairly well supplied with public schools, but we expect to see the day, not far distant, when we shall be in a position to build our own school for the convenience and welfare, spiritual and temporal, of our Catholic children. The undertaking of this movement will be hastened or delayed according to the greater or less influx of newcomers.

Intending settlers will not forget this important fact that the land in market now in this vicinity, known as the free grants, will not be in market twelve months from now, because as soon as the rails are laid on the track the Railway Aid Act comes in force which for twelve miles on either side of the line of railway, excludes the settler from the free grant land, and henceforth he will have to pay his two dollars an acre for such land as comes within this claim. Yours truly,

T. F. FLEMING, Priest.

Bismarck and Leo.

At the recent Catholic Club banquet in Philadelphia the president said: Speaking of those troublous times for the Supreme Pontiff, it was my privilege, in company with a friend, who is now a fellow-director of this Club, to have had an interview with Pius IX. in the summer of 1874. The picture of that grand old man looms up before me to-night just as I saw him twenty-one years ago. A British officer, a non-Catholic, whom I met in Rome, told me that he had seen Pius IX. many times, but each time he left the Pontiff's presence with an increased desire to see him again. There was a charm about his personality which cannot be described in words. How patient and dignified he was under the indignities and wrongs heaped upon him by those who should have been his dutiful children. Pius IX. died, honored and loved by millions, but the Pope never dies; and he who is now Pontiff is known as Leo XIII. A non-Catholic, a gentleman of extensive reading and profound thought, said to me a few years ago that he considered Leo XIII. and Bismarck as the two great men of our age. Bismarck and Leo XIII. What a contrast! The one a man of iron force, who believed that bayonets and stringent laws, enforced by imprisonment, could conquer all things, spiritual as well as material; the Iron Chancellor, who hoped by the aid of the Falk laws to make the Church the puppet of the Empire. The Falk laws, after having failed to accomplish their mission, have been repealed, and the iron hand to-day lies shattered and powerless. Leo XIII. sits in the Vatican, without so much as a corporal's guard to protect him or to enforce a single decree, and yet two hundred millions of Catholics listen with reverence to his words and call him "Father." Though shorn of all which in the eyes of the world represents power, yet people of all nationalities and of all conditions—the white man and the black man, the free citizens of republics, the creatures of despotism, the learned and the unlettered, the dwellers in great cities and the children of the forests, all alike acknowledge Leo XIII. as the Head of the Church on earth.

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