

RURAL EXODUS AND ITS REASONS

To show that, besides the congestion of cities, we suffer from a rural exodus, is a very simple task. The census of Canada for 1901-1911 officially unfolded the fact for twenty six counties of the Province of Quebec, some of which, in the course of the last generation, have had a decrease of fifty per cent of the number of their farmers.

Therefore the evil exists, and it is epidemic, which makes it worse. What is the remedy?

Many causes are being ascribed to the fact that fields are let run wild, and the fact itself is sometimes considered as unavoidable; but this opinion is too positive and really too accomodating for those who have the responsibility of government and leadership of the nation. Possessed with that dangerous fatalism, many well-meaning citizens have come to the conclusion that it is useless to open new lands to colonization, when so many old ones are deserted. Even if there were no known means of checking, or of lessening the desertion of farms, it would be the duty of public men to search for one. They should work at that with courage and steadiness. The learned have not given up, for instance, the search of a cure for tuberculosis; and, although they have not as yet found a sure remedy, they nevertheless succeeded in attenuating its ravages.

But it is in our power to efficiently fight against land desertion, and it is the duty of the leading classes to find the best means and to apply them as soon as possible. It is preposterous that a young and fertile land as is that of our Province, can be condemned to "die" in the way described in a book by René Bazin well known in Canada. Recently, on a Sunday paper, the new secretary of this Chamber was pointing out, over his signature, how the renovation of agriculture by the improvement of cultivation