

ciently favorable arrangement. This element, however, is one which cannot be ignored, and there is a very strong feeling that it would be wise to so change the regulations as to make the homesteads the same area as in the United States. If the Government yields to this opinion, I hope at the same time that they will exact full payment in cash for the pre-empted quarter sections. That, as I have said, will prevent persons without any capital from attempting to secure a farm of three hundred and twenty acres, and will thus meet what seems to have been the view in the adoption of the eighty acre system.

There is, in some quarters, an opinion, although it is not a very general one, against the large and somewhat complicated system of reservation that has been made. People ask, as I have said, why not adopt the American system? In view of the competition in the matter of immigration, there would be an advantage if the two systems were precisely the same. In that case, the sentiment of loyalty which prompts so many to seek their homes under the British flag, would not be interfered with by fine drawn arguments in favor of the American land system, as distinguished from the Canadian. There does not seem to be much difficulty in the way. If the Government would make a reservation of twenty miles on each side of the railway; reserve alternate twenty mile sections as railway lands, say at five dollars an acre, and open the other alternate sections to quarter section homestead and pre-emption—the pre-emption price being two dollars and a half an acre; and then throw open all the rest to homestead and pre-emption at a dollar and a quarter, the thing could be done. The reserved railway sections might not sell rapidly in the meantime; but as the others became settled they would sell, and would bring a handsome return to the Government. That plan would have the element of simplicity about it, which is of all things important when we consider that it is not the educated or culti-

vated class we are appealing to. It would be the American system, and would, therefore, take from the railway and immigration agents in the States what has, during recent years, been their trump card, viz: the chance of drawing long bows on the subject of the differences between the two systems. And it would yield, I am confident, a greater direct, and an immeasurably greater indirect, return to the Government.

I have dealt with this question, as with others upon which I have written in these letters, with the most perfect freedom. In the presence of the great interests which are involved in the settlement of these territories, all mere party or personal considerations sink into utter insignificance. The record of the Government's dealing with Northwest matters during the last five years, has been a record of stupendous and expensive blunders. No one can have travelled as I have done during the last four weeks over this country, without realizing how important to its future development and prosperity it is that wise measures should be taken in connection with its railway and land policy. I have travelled, in a direct line westward from Winnipeg, a distance greater than that between Montreal and Sarnia, and it is certainly no exaggeration to say over a country, in its average, infinitely superior for agricultural purposes; and I have after all but skirted the borders of this magnificent region. How shall we convert it into a prosperous settlement of happy and contented Canadians, makes a problem worthy of the best efforts of statesmanship, and far transcending any questions of mere party politics. It is in this conviction and in this spirit that these letters have been written; and if I have been so fortunate through them as to create a greater interest in the Northwest, upon whose development the future of the Dominion depends, I will feel that my "Chronicles by the Way" have not been written in vain.

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