

THE RAPID SETTLEMENT OF THE COUNTRY

can best be secured by a liberal homestead law, and by offering such lands as are not set apart for homesteads at reasonable prices to actual settlers. To sell such lands in unlimited quantities to speculators whose purpose is to make the settlers pay a heavy advance upon the Government price is most unwise and unjust, and must seriously retard settlement. To offer special inducements to speculators by selling public lands to them at a lower price than is required of the settler is worse than unjust, and should be condemned by every Canadian who desires the welfare and prosperity of his country. In fact the Government should allow no middleman to come between itself and the actual occupant of the soil. The public lands should be deemed the heritage of the people, to be managed by the Government in their interest. The price received by the Government should be in every case the price paid by the settler, and no more.

THE WILD SPECULATION

that is now rampant in the North West bodes no good to the country. It has already reached the proportions of a mania, and must inevitably end in a collapse more or less severe. A similar land speculation fever in the United States in 1835 and 1836 was largely instrumental in bringing about the crisis of 1837, and the complete prostration of public and private credit. The course of the present Administration in adding fuel to the flame of this furious land craze, by affording unprecedented facilities for the wildest land speculations, is one of its greatest sins. Already millions of acres which should have been carefully reserved for the actual settler have been placed in the hands of speculative companies on terms practically amounting to sales at half price, as will be more fully explained below, and these companies will inevitably exact from the actual settler the utmost farthing that it is possible to obtain.

THE ACTUAL SETTLER ONLY CAN DEVELOP THE COUNTRY

As actual settlement alone can develop the country it is clear that the Govern-

ment should make great efforts to secure a large immigration of *bona fide* settlers, and it can well afford to make its policy a liberal one. The more question of the amount of revenue to be derived from the sale of lands is of much less importance than is the getting of the country settled by a population whose labors will add to the wealth and greatness of the state, and whose contributions to the revenues of the country will be large and constantly increasing. Not only does the very nature of the case call for a liberal policy towards settlers, but such a policy becomes doubly necessary from the course pursued by the Government of the United States. That country has vast tracts of wild land open for settlement. It fully realizes the importance of inducing settlement, and its policy towards actual settlers is a most liberal and enlightened one. If we are to compete with that country in securing the rapid settlement of our public lands we must make our policy at least as liberal as theirs is, or we shall fail to secure our fair proportion of immigration. A comparison of the character of the policy under the two Governments, and also of the results secured by each, will show conclusively that our own policy as compared with theirs is not sufficiently liberal.

THE TWO POLICIES CONTRASTED.

In the United States all unappropriated public land is open for homestead; in the North-West four sections in each Township are reserved for the Hudson's Bay Company and for school purposes, and sixteen sections for railway grants, or for sale. Only eight sections in each Township of thirty-six sections are available for homesteads, or less than one-fourth of the whole. In the United States all unappropriated lands are open for pre-emption; in the North-West only eight sections in each Township of thirty-six sections are available for that purpose and the entire homestead and preemption reserve can at the pleasure of the Government be sold at auction, or can, as will be more fully explained below, be granted to speculative companies in all that region north of the Canada Pacific road and outside