

A group of outstanding French Canadian intellectuals are not satisfied with Confederation. Let me quote from a speech delivered by the honourable senator for DeLorimier (Hon. Mr. Dandurand) on June 18, 1936:

I say to the younger generation of French-speaking Canadians, now dissatisfied with their lot, more especially in the economic field, that they can by superior training and higher culture qualify for an important role in the Canadian Confederation. They will thus form part of the élite which will mould the destiny of this country. They must resolutely apply themselves to the task. The leaders who have preceded them have not had their opportunities for higher study and culture. The men of to-day and of to-morrow should be better equipped. If they have superior culture, character and moral stamina, with unity of purpose to serve their country, they will command the respect of their associates for themselves and for the rights and privileges they so deeply cherish. To those young men, to that coming generation, I declare that I have no hesitation whatsoever in placing under their guardianship these rights and privileges.

Hon. ANTOINE J. LEGER: Honourable senators, may I be allowed about five minutes to make a few general observations, quite apart from and incidental to what has already been so well said by the two honourable gentlemen who have already dealt with the present subject?

Borrowing a thought from Lord Elgin, I believe that the grandeur and prosperity of Canada will largely depend upon the advantages derived from our vacant and uncultivated lands, and that the best way to use them would be to cover them with a population of industrious, virtuous and happy settlers. If this was true in the days of Lord Elgin, how much greater is the urgency for establishing a vast system of colonization to-day, when we see our cities and towns crowded with a population eager to work, but unable to find employment.

In this abnormal situation, if we turned to the available soil we should find there the wherewithal to give work to a large percentage of our unemployed. In New Brunswick alone, out of a total of more than ten million acres of arable lands only a little over four million acres are under cultivation. And perhaps the same proportion would apply in all other provinces, with the exception of Prince Edward Island.

But, honourable members, besides providing for the unemployed we should encourage our youth to go on the land if we do not want to run the risk of seeing this important part of our population become demoralized. We must depend on our youth to accelerate the development of our natural resources and so re-establish our needy industries. Then why not give more attention to the tillage of the

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soil? We are told there is already over-production and our people are growing indifferent towards agriculture. True, we have had over-production of agricultural products; but it is under-consumption that has adversely affected us, not over-production.

In 1934 the world's agricultural production was lower than in any one of the preceding seven years. Yet in that same period the population of the world increased by at least ten per cent. The trouble was not that agricultural products were too abundant, but rather that purchases were restricted on account of the aggravated economic situation. Governments and institutions favourably inclined towards the back-to-the-land movement ought therefore to continue to give it their support and sympathy.

As to the present indifference towards agriculture, it is true that a few years ago our farmers, attracted by the alluring prospects of industrial life in urban centers, left the plough for the tools of the mechanic arts. They have since, however, come to realize that when they abandoned the well-settled farm for the crowded city they helped—unintentionally, of course—to disturb the economic balance, and thus contributed to unemployment and depression. Urban industry, once so eagerly sought by our farmers, having inundated the world with its manufactured products, but being unable to produce bread, is now rejecting that surplus labour from the country districts.

If to-day those erstwhile farmers only had the means to buy the necessary implements, they would return to the abandoned farms and colonize virgin land. It is therefore reasonable to assume that a certain amount of money now spent for the relief of unemployment could be used to much better purpose in promoting colonization and rendering possible re-occupation of abandoned farms. This would reduce materially the number of our unemployed.

This impels me to say that in agriculture the main difficulty, to the solution of which governments in conjunction with farmers and business men should studiously apply themselves, is to render farming remunerative to our farmers. And let me say that it is the standard of living of the farmer and his family that I wish to see improved. It is generally conceded that so long as our agriculturists refuse to organize, in order to sell their products to better advantage and so ensure remuneration commensurate with the energy they expend, it will be difficult to attract the younger generation back to the farm.