

The Canadian Courier

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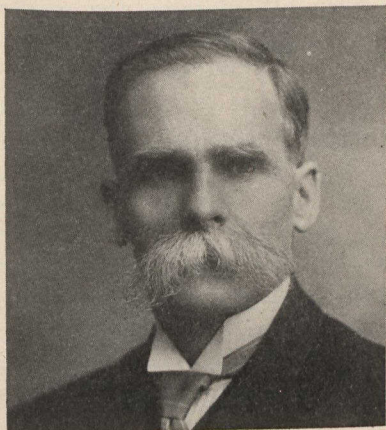
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IN THE PUBLIC VIEW



Hon. Frank Oliver,
Minister of the Interior.

Edmonton is to-day the capital of Alberta as well as the natural centre of immigration for that part of the West is due more to Frank Oliver than to any other one man. For Frank Oliver was not only a storekeeper and a cart-driver between Fort Garry and Fort Edmonton; but he was a newspaper man; and his little *Bulletin* was the first story ever published of the efforts then being made in a crude way to get people into those tracts of the new lone land.

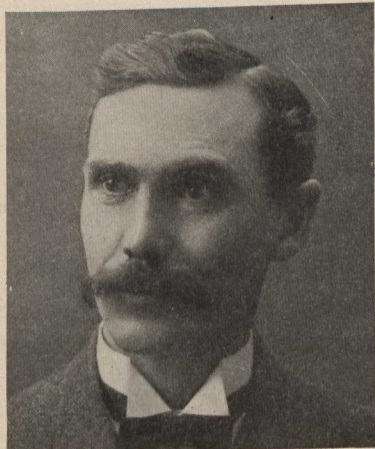
When the real movement began to the West, Mr. Oliver had for years been member of the Northwest Legislative Assembly and was already member of the House of Commons. Shortly after his election to the House began the most remarkable feature of the influx under the Sifton regime; that was the importation of Galicians, who in the language of the Opposition, on the prairie were known as "Sifton's sheepskins." Mr. Oliver was one of the few who had great faith in the Galicians, even when he disagreed with a great many other features of the Government's western policy. Time has justified his faith in these as well as in many other of the folk settlements that have transformed the two new provinces from great natural parks to great constructive communities.

Figures in this connection are valuable as showing what has been done in the way of numbers for that country since the modern era of expansion and immigration set in on the prairie.

For the calendar year ending June 30th, 1897, the total number of immigrants into Canada was 21,916; by June, 1903, another figure was added to the sum, which became 128,364; in June of 1908 the first figure of the sum was doubled and the aggregate became 262,469. Thus in eleven years the increase of total immigration to Canada was from 21,916 to 262,469—which is an expansion of more than twelve hundred per cent., or more than one hundred per cent. every year.

This of course includes every nationality admitted. Separate figures for British people arrivals are equally instructive. In 1897, total of British immigration reached 11,383; in June, 1903, the number for the fiscal year reached 41,792; again in June, 1908, the aggregate for twelve months had jumped to 120,182, which was an increase of more than 60,000 and more than a hundred per cent. over 1906-1907, and a total increase of nearly eleven hundred per cent. for the period, or nearly doubling the original '96-'97 aggregate each year.

As to proportionate arrivals of English, Irish and Scotch, the figures show that the Scotch have continued to multiply faster than either of the other two; although the large aggre-



Hon. Walter Scott,
Premier of Saskatchewan.

gate is held by the English. For instance, in '96-'97, English numbered 9401, Scotch 1476, Irish 933. By 1903-04 the proportional arrivals were 32,510, 7,046, 2,236; whereas by June, 1908, totals for the year ran: English 91,412, an increase for the period of nearly one thousand per cent.; Scotch 22,223, increasing about fifteen hundred per cent.; Irish 6,547, multiplying about seven hundred per cent.

The next most interesting and by far the most numerous numerically is the influx from the United States. In 1897 there was no American invasion, for the total arrivals from across the border were only 2,412. By June, 1903, the number for that blue book year had swelled to 49,743, an increase of a little more than two thousand per cent. over the period of 1896-97. Up to June, 1908, the number of United States arrivals in the western land of promise and performance made the record aggregate of 58,312, which is an increase for the whole period of nearly three thousand per cent.

Such is the story of mixed people arrivals in Canada as told by the English-speaking races and by totals for all combined. This is the story of the Sifton-Oliver period of immigration when there grew upon the prairie that network of folk-settlements on the three provinces; in Alberta the English, French, Germans, United States, Norwegians, Galicians, Mennonites and Mormons; in Saskatchewan, English, Germans, Doukhobors, Mennonites and Icelanders; in Manitoba a conglomeration of most of these with the Icelanders in the big majority.

So have the ancient first families that used to be the wards of the Hudson's Bay Company and the workers in the land—to wit, the Indians and halfbreeds—been crowded to the obscure places by the people of many tongues and creeds and customs. From which it may be judged that the affairs of the chief immigration official in Canada are quite as complicated as even Hon. Frank Oliver could wish them to be; and it may be conjectured that a census of the votes by which the Hon. Frank retains his Alberta membership that he has never lost, would reveal something very novel and bewildering in the study of names.

Nor must the Provincial Premiers be overlooked in connection with the peopling of the West. No more alive and aggressive immigration agent was ever known in the West than the Hon. R. P. Roblin, Premier of Manitoba, who less than a year ago stumped the southwestern states holding up the banner of the Canadian West to the imagination of the American farmer. Premier Rutherford of Alberta and Premier Scott of Saskatchewan are also enterprising immigrationists. Of course the provinces as such are not assumed to have much to do with the whole policy of immigration, which is under the aegis of the Minister of the Interior; but each of these provinces is nevertheless directly interested in getting people settled in the land and in seeing the waste land occupied with smiling homesteads. Both these new provinces are running something of a race just now in the matter of people and railway mileage; the rivalry is reflected not only in towns and cities and in folk settlements, but as well in the crop returns which in an agricultural area is a fair index to population and to wealth.

The next ten years will probably see marvellous advance on the figures above quoted, for the possibilities of the Canadian West are just beginning to be realised in overcrowded Europe. However, the work of the pioneer immigrationists will be remembered.



Hon. Frank Cochrane,
Minister of Lands and Mines, Ontario.



Mr. W. D. Scott,
Superintendent of Immigration.