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Necessity of Promoting Immigration

Duty of Our Statesmen to Consider Comprehensive Schemes for Land Settlement After the War—Some of Our Best Minds Working on Problem—Discussion in Britain on "Soldier and Land Settlement."

Next to the prosecuting of the war, the most serious business facing the Dominion and British Columbia in particular is obtaining population by means of immigration. Before the depression set in and in the hey-day of our expansion, immigration was still our crying need. How much more so must it be now? Since 1913 it would be a conservative statement to say that nearly one half million people have left the Dominion. Of those however that were placed on the land it is safe to say that only an infinitesimal number have returned. The business of those who have left the Dominion was railroad construction and other public works, private contracting and speculative businesses or lines which were overcrowded.

Since the outbreak of war, which has intensified the depression, the outflow has in some lines been more rapid, that, together with 150,000 of our best men either at the front or training to go there, the dearth of men to carry on our productive activities will be seriously felt at the first quickening of our industrial and commercial life.

While it is perhaps premature to launch out on an active campaign of immigration—there is only one country that is now available, that of the United States—it is nevertheless time for preparation to be made in a statesmanlike manner on the part of the Dominion, all the Provinces, and the various railway companies, for a thoroughly comprehensive scheme of land settlement and immigration.

Notwithstanding that the outlook for a speedy conclusion of the war is yet a long way off, one phase of the land settlement problem within the Empire is engaging the attention of the British Government, that of the soldier and land settlement. A deputation from the Royal Colonial Institute recently waited on the Colonial Secretary, Mr. A. Bonar Law, and the President of the Board of Agriculture, the Earl of Selborne, and presented their views, which are covered in the September issue of the "United Empire," the

organ of the Institute. The deputation was composed of a committee of the Institute appointed last March to consider the question of enabling ex-service men to find employment on the land after the war. Some time subsequently Lord Selborne appointed a committee with the same object in view.

One of the speakers at this audience pointed out some of the principles of successful land settlement: (1) Settlement in groups; (2) access to capital; (3) the making of the initial years as easy as possible from a financial point of view; (4) the fullest use of co-operation; and (5) the immediate provision of expert guidance. All of the speakers were of the opinion that the open air life of army service was rendering the prospect of returning to their old clerical positions, on the part of the soldiers, not very alluring. Testimony was offered in abundance that a large number of those at the front were anxious to get on the land.

Mr. J. G. Jenkins, of the deputation, spoke of the efforts of South Australia in handling the land settlement problem. Part of the solution was in small holdings and in assisting in that settlement that Government had repurchased large areas. The Land Act there was amended to allow a man from 21 to 42 years to pay for his land, charging a small interest. Small rate of interest for individuals who are struggling to make a living during the first few years is essential. In that Commonwealth through the State Bank Department money was loaned on improvements that could not be obtained from the ordinary

banks. A Produce Department was established which would if requested take possession of the small grower as well as the large grower and handle for him—not for love, but as a pure business transaction.

Mr. G. McLaren Brown, speaking for Canada, said in part that the future of the people of these islands (United Kingdom) who may settle in the overseas Dominions should be so absolutely assured that there will be no doubt about it. We need their services in the arrangements of the British Empire in the future as we have needed them in the past. There is one point which must have struck you, gentlemen, that although there will be this vast number of British people who will be anxious to find homes after the war is

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