

The Commercial

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SALVATION ARMY COLONIZATION SCHEME.

Considerable alarm has been caused to some by the report that the Salvation Army organization was preparing to dump a horde of pauper immigrants into Canada. Some journals appear to have jumped at conclusions in considering the proposed Salvation Army colonization scheme, and have drawn out the picture of a ragged horde of useless vagrants, paupers and criminals, who are to be gathered from the slums of Britain and dumped down on the prairies of Canada, to become a burden upon the community here. In view of the explanation of an official of the Salvation Army stationed at Winnipeg, all this alarm seems to have been unnecessary, or at least premature, as it is explained that there is no immediate prospect of the establishing of an Army colony here. The officers have not even investigated the prospects for establishing a colony in Canada, and it is quite possible that they may decide, after mature investigation, not to establish a colony here. So far as the scheme has at present advanced, the preference seems to be in favor of planting the Army colony in South Africa, while there is perhaps as great possibility of going to Australia as to Canada.

The Salvation Army colonization scheme, when explained, however, does not seem to be a just cause for alarm. In fact the plan is the most thorough and practical one yet proposed in the line of colonization undertakings. In fact, General Booth, head of the Salvation Army and originator of the emigration scheme, seems to have studied out the question of emigration very thoroughly. He says in his book:

"Men and women have simply been dropped down into countries without any regard to their possession of ability to earn a livelihood, and have consequently become an incubus upon the energies of the community and a discredit, expense and burden. The result is that they gravitate to the towns and compete with colonial workmen and thereby drive down wages. We need not wonder that Australians and other colonists should object to their countries being converted into a sort of dumping ground on which to deposit men and women totally unsuited for the new circumstances in which they find themselves."

His plan is to avoid these mistakes by making thorough preparations at each end. The intended colonists will be prepared for their future home, and their homes will also be prepared for them before their arrival. This is certainly the correct basis for immigration work. A farm colony has already been established in England, where the intended colonists will be put through a course of education in agricultural work, and drilled in economy, industrious habits, patience and perseverance. This course of training will be persisted in from three to five years before

the colonists would be transferred to their new home. In its undertakings in other directions, the Salvation Army has always shown wonderful perseverance, as well as thoroughly systematic efforts of a practical nature. In its immigration scheme the plan outlined seems as good as could possibly be desired. Those who would go through the course of training prescribed, would undoubtedly make desirable, rather than objectionable settlers. Useless characters would certainly not submit to such a course of discipline at home. In fact only men of perseverance and naturally industrious habits would remain through such a course of discipline as is prescribed for intended colonists.

General Booth touches the weakest spot in Canadian immigration work when he speaks of dropping down men and women into a country where they are left to shift for themselves after they have been landed. It is just as important to look after immigrants after they have arrived, as it is to endeavor to induce them to come in the first place. In fact it is the more important work to look after them when they arrive, and try to get them settled down in the country in a prosperous way. Many immigrants arriving in Canada are quite at a loss to know what to do when they get here. In this direction greater effort should be put forth to assist new settlers to locate in the country. A systematic plan of taking immigrants in hand and assisting them to locate on land on their arrival here, would be productive of better results than most of the immigration expenditure in other directions. General Booth seems to thoroughly understand this feature of immigration work, and wherever his colony may be located, it is the intention to provide shelter, food and work beforehand for the colonists. Carried out on this basis, with the severe course of training prescribed before leaving the Old Country, the Army colony should prove a decidedly more successful venture than most other efforts in this direction made here in the past.

THE PRODUCTION OF WHEAT.

The principal disturbing factors in wheat at present are Russia and Argentine. The latter country now ranks third as a wheat producer, the United States standing first and Russia second, with the Black Sea countries (Roumania and Bulgaria) fourth and India fifth. India was formerly the dread of the wheat producers on this continent, but her production of wheat this year was only about one-third that of Argentine. With her vast population to be supplied at home, it seems probable that India has been over-rated in years past, as to her ability to expand her wheat production. On the other hand, Argentine is a young country, with a small population and with plenty of room to expand her cultivated area. The enormous increase of wheat production in the South American country of late has surprised the world. Russia, too, is a comparatively sparsely settled country, with abundant room to expand her cultivated

area. With better shipping and handling facilities, the production of wheat in Russia could no doubt be greatly increased. Russia and Argentine have always been free sellers at low prices, which makes them undesirable competitors in importing markets.

In Siberia there is a vast area of territory adapted to the cultivation of wheat. The black-soil regions of that country resemble, it is said, the famous wheat districts of Western Canada. The railway which the Russian government is now building across Siberia is expected to open a way to export grain from that country, and quite a rush of wheat is looked for as soon as the means of exporting is completed.

Australia has not shown any disposition of recent years to materially increase her production of wheat, and with the small yield usually obtained in that country, it is not to be expected that the Australians will find wheat such a profitable crop as to induce them to extend its cultivation.

In the United States it also seems probable that the surplus production of wheat above home requirements has about reached its maximum. The area this year was officially reported at sixteen per cent. less than in 1884, and with a rapidly increasing population and low prices for the cereal, the surplus of wheat production is more likely to decrease than increase in the future.

It therefore seems that for the future as well as the present, the keenest competitors of the American farmers will be the wheat growers of Russia and Argentine. The following shows the exports of wheat from the countries named for the past season:

United States and Canada	170,000,000
Russia	108,000,000
Argentine	51,000,000
Roumania, Bulgaria, etc.	28,000,000
India	20,000,000
Australasia	8,800,000
Other countries	10,000,000

THE MANITOBA NORTHWESTERN.

Mr. Andrew Allan, president of the Manitoba Northwestern railway company, has published a letter regarding the affairs of that road. The road, it is well understood, is in the hands of a receiver at the present time. As previously explained in The Commercial, there is some antagonism between the company and the bondholders of a portion of the road. The sum of £540,000 was raised for the construction of the first 180 miles of the road. Under the terms of this loan, the bondholders thereof have a lien on the first 180 miles of the railway, and their mortgage provides that they can take over this portion of the road under certain conditions in default of payment of interest. This default has been made. The Allans have a very large financial interest in the railway, equal, it is said, to nearly the full extent of all the bondholders. The receiver was appointed at the instance of the Allans, and this is one of the points objected to by the British bondholders of the road. The bondholders, or at least some of them, appear to resent the action of the Allans, and they seem inclined to demand the handing over of the first 180