

Settle the Speculator.

It goes without saying that the very first consideration in attempting to develop national life and greatness is that of applying proper methods and attention to the settlement of the country. It is well, then, to inquire if some of the prevailing methods of securing and holding land in the Canadian Northwest are calculated to facilitate or retard the settlement of that vast expanse of territory.

The settler is coming, and is destined to come. This is satisfactory as far as the report goes, but from the standpoint of the settler, is everything satisfactory? One of the first considerations of the new settler is, will I have neighbors in sufficient number and of the right type to insure development along all the lines essential to a prosperous community? The absence of neighbors means an absence of schools, religious services, local improvements, social life, etc. It means a lonely life on the prairie, which few care to endure. The average settler, it is true, does not expect everything to hand in a new country. He is naturally led, however, to expect that others will shortly settle in his vicinity, and help bear the burdens of frontier life. Are the conditions such as to justify such an outlook? In many cases the contrary.

Traversing large areas of sparsely-settled districts, the traveller is led to ask, "What is the matter with the land here? It looks good, but how is it there are so few settlers?" Here is a quarter, there a half, and across the way a whole section of land, with not a sod turned, or anything to indicate possession or intended improvement.

"Oh, you cannot touch that," is the answer. The speculator has got hold of it, and his price is away up. He wants double, or four or five times the price he paid for it, according to the largeness of his heart. The settler must be turned aside, for the speculator has got in ahead of him, and he is going to take advantage of the settler or keep him out altogether. The speculator thus stands as a hindrance to the development of the country. In very few cases has he any intention of improving his property. He is interested, of course, in the developments taking place around his land, for it is clearly to be seen the improvements of one or two settlers at once enhances the value of the land held by the speculator. His land will go up in a few years; in the meantime all he has to do is put it up beyond its legitimate value, and wait till the few settlers have got a start made, then others will be quick to see the advantage of settling in a neighborhood where roads have been made, schoolhouses erected, and local improvements well under way.

Is it fair that the speculator should be allowed this undue advantage without any guarantee to the state that he will contribute in any proportionate degree to the advancement of the community in which his land is situated? Is it fair that a few settlers should be deprived of neighbors, and through force of circumstances be made the benefactors of the man who stands in the way of settlers coming in?

The speculator, of course, is not an avowed enemy of society. With him it is merely a policy of help yourself, to which there are no restrictions except the length of a man's purse, and it does not need to be so very long to hold down a lot of land. The first payment secures it against all-comers, and plenty of time is given on the remainder.

If, however, the policy of the state stands for the settlement of the country, the policy of the speculator stands opposed to it, and in that view he is virtually an enemy of the state. Unfortunately, however, he is not so recognized. There is no general outcry raised against him. Is it because he is generally generous? No, it is because the craze for land speculation has become general. That is the worst feature about it—everybody is into it. If it is right for one, it is right for another, and the individual—whether he be lawyer, merchant, preacher, or farmer—has just as good a right as an American syndicate; though it may be said in favor of the latter, that the syndicate takes upon itself the role of an emigration agency, and by extensive advertising induces settlers to come that would not be reached in other ways.

It may be questioned if the Government would not be interfering with the liberties of the citizen by assuming control over the re-sale of land. It may be argued that it is a free country, and the holder of land has a perfect right to hold his land as high as he pleases, or hold back the settler as long as he likes.

Let us see if that position can be maintained in other stages of development which the state is interested in. Take, for instance, the extension of railways. No holder of land wishes to have a railroad cut up his property; but the state rightly recognizes that no citizen has a right to stand in the way when the interests of the country demand a railway; and whether a man likes it or not, he is under obligation to come to terms. Has the state not just as clear a right to interfere when another stage of development is arrested by men who claim the right to exercise control over the earth, simply because they have the money to do it?

The right of the Government to arbitrate between the speculator and the settler is very clear, and the

remedy for the evil that exists is very simple. Make it compulsory by law for the holder of unimproved lands to do settlement duties the same as required of the homesteader, with the alternative of placing his land on the market for sale at an advanced price on the original, in proportion to the same amount of capital invested and bearing interest at current rates.

If this fails to settle the speculator, it cannot fail to open up the land for settlement, and that is what is wanted at the present time. The interests of the country demand it. There is much every way to be gained by bringing the land under cultivation. It greatly lessens the dangers from prairie fires, and in a measure insures against the damage of frost. Aside from this: How it would strengthen many a weak community; how it would encourage many a struggling



Hugh Frazer, Elmsdale, N. S.

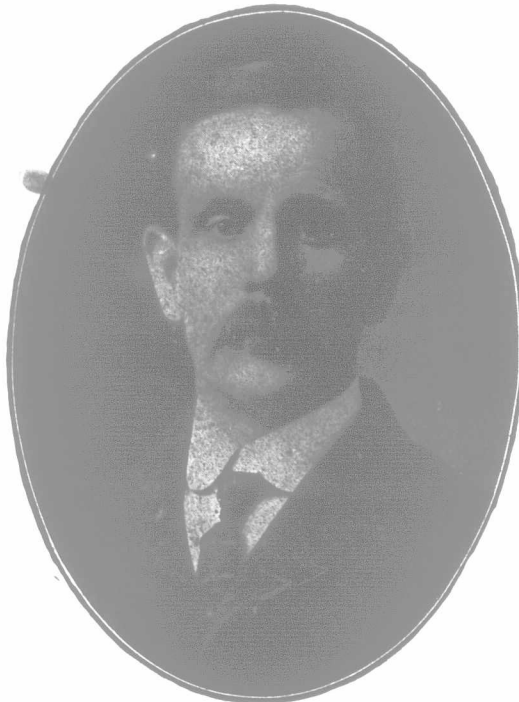
President Nova Scotia Farmers' Association.

congregation; how it would gladden the heart of many a lonely life, if the land that is now closed against the settler were occupied by him?

It is true the land, or much of it, can be bought; but the ordinary settler cannot afford to buy land at an exorbitant price. If obliged to do so, he will be handicapped for years by a heavy burden of debt.

It is hard to see how the evil is going to be corrected unless the state assumes control over the re-sale of unimproved lands. The law of supply and demand will continue more and more to legislate in favor of the speculator, and should have little jurisdiction here, from the simple reason that land, in its original state especially, can never be considered as a commodity on the market in competition with products of industry in one form or another.

Allowing the speculator to check the settlement of the country to-day is but the beginning which has for its end full control when all the Government land is



C. R. B. Bryan, Durham, N. S.

Secretary-Treasurer Nova Scotia Farmers' Association.

taken up; then will come the reign of inflated values, which already is proving itself so obstructive that it may indeed to-day be regarded as the curse of the West. The moral effect cannot be other than that of discounting honest industry as a method of making money, and this in itself does not augur well for either the individual or the state.

Grey Co., Ont.

R. DEZELL.

Fairs Association Dissension.

Dissatisfied because the Canadian Fairs Association at its recent annual meeting in Toronto decided upon Toronto as the permanent place for holding all meetings of the association, the officers and directors of several of the leading agricultural societies in Eastern Ontario have decided to break away from the parent organization, and establish an Eastern Ontario Fairs Association. For this purpose a meeting has been called for Thursday, March 9th, to be held in the City Hall, Ottawa. The delegates from Eastern Ontario at the convention in Toronto, requested that the annual meeting should be held at Ottawa or London occasionally, in order that the extreme eastern and western parts of the Province might receive some benefit from the association. They also suggested that the Province should be divided into divisions, and each division have its own association, in the same manner as the Dairy-men's Association is conducted. These proposals were voted down, however, by the delegates from Central and Northern Ontario. The eastern delegates contended that a meeting should be held at Ottawa occasionally, as some of the best county fairs in the Province are located in the Ottawa Valley. It is expected that the outcome of the meeting will be the organization of the Eastern Ontario Fairs Association, to be run separately and independently of the Ontario Fairs Association.

Death of Mr. Albin Rawlings.

The death of Mr. Albin Rawlings, of Forest, Lambton County, Ontario, occurred at his home on February 20th, in the 74th year of his age, after a long and painful illness, having been for the last year or two practically helpless. Mr. Rawlings was a native of Wiltshire, England, and came to Canada in 1851. He was one of the most enterprising and successful farmers in Lambton County, and quite an extensive exporter of beef cattle, of which he was an excellent judge, his services in that capacity having frequently been sought by the management of leading Ontario exhibitions; Herefords being his favorite breed. He was for a number of years a useful member of the Council of the Agriculture and Arts Association of Ontario, and for one term President of the Association. Mr. Rawlings, before his illness, was a man of fine physique, and of a cheerful and genial disposition, and he was actively instrumental in encouraging the improvement of agriculture and stock-breeding in the fine district in which he lived.

New Westminster Gets Busy Over the Dominion Show.

The decision of the Federal Government to allot the \$50,000 to New Westminster in 1905 for a Dominion Exhibition has borne fruit, and Manager W. H. Keary and his staff of whole-souled directors are hustling every day to make the show a big success.

The nominations for judges were made, according to the Vancouver Province, as follows: Heavy horses, W. J. Black, B.S.A., Winnipeg; Robert Ness, Howick, P.Q.; Robt. Miller, Stouffville, Ont. Light horses, Dr. Rutherford, Ottawa; R. Graham, Claremont, Ont. Beef breeds of cattle, Wm. Duthie, Tarves, Aberdeenshire, Scotland, and John Gardhouse, Highfield, Ont.; and J. C. Snell, live-stock editor "Farmer's Advocate," London, Ont., and Geo. Clemons, St. George, Ont., on dairy cattle. For sheep, Dr. Hopkins, of this paper, has been selected, along with John Jackson, of Abingdon, Ont.; and in the list to judge swine are Prof. Grisdale; Thos. Teasdale, Concord, Ont.; Jas. Bray, Portage la Prairie, and Jas. Brethour. Sharp Butterfield was suggested for poultry.

The stockmen of the prairie should get ready with the horses, cattle, sheep and swine. The stock show is to be held the first week in October. The estimate of finances is \$105,000, to be divided as follows: For prizes, the manager bargains on paying out \$35,000; for the grounds and buildings, \$25,000; for attractions, \$20,000, and for advertising, \$10,000; while the grant to the Manufacturers' Associations will amount to \$15,000; totalling \$105,000.

It was unanimously decided to hold a stock-judging competition this year, which should be open to farmers' sons under thirty-five years of age, for which Joseph Reichenbach, Esq., has donated a gold medal. A silver cup is offered by the B. C. Fruit-growers' Association for the best commercial display of fruit. Entrance fees, it is expected, will be the same as charged at Winnipeg in 1904, viz: One dollar for cattle, fifty cents for sheep and pigs, and twenty-five cents for poultry. Membership tickets will cost \$3 this year for the general public, while exhibitors paying more than \$1 in entrance fees will pay only \$2 for theirs. Exhibitors will be permitted to have one attendant for every five animals exhibited in classes A and B, and on every ten in C and D, who will be admitted for fifty cents while the stock show lasts. Attendants in the buildings will pay \$1 for their tickets.

Col. J. A. McGillivray's Sale.

The auction sale on February 23rd, of 55 Shorthorns from the herd of Col. John McGillivray, at Uxbridge, Ont., was very largely attended by farmers and breeders from the surrounding district, and quite a number from distant parts of the Province, though many were kept at home owing to the blocking of the railways. The sale was, on the whole, satisfactory, the whole number averaging \$95, and the highest price \$300. Lack of space prevents the publishing of the sale list in this issue.