

immigration, the essential facts are that emigration has begun and is steadily increasing in volume. . . ."

Mr. Thompson points out that the causes which have brought about the present movement vary with each different State or group of States whence it is derived. In the case of a considerable portion of emigration which proceeds from the "arid or sub-humid" regions of the United States, the cause is to be found in the fact that the settlers, "misled by the marvellous fertility of the soil made manifest in years of exceptional rainfall, have again and again pushed the line of settlement far beyond the line of safety, carrying the attempt to conduct farming operations by ordinary methods well into the arid region, only to see the hopes of prosperity slowly but surely fade through weeks of cruel drought, or blasted in a single night by the breath of the simoon. In February, 1890, Major J. W. Powell made the statement before the Committee on Irrigation of the House of Representatives, that there are parts of Kansas which had thus been settled and abandoned no less than three times within the preceding 20 years. A considerable portion of the emigration from Kansas and Nebraska is due to this cause."

Forest fires, such as have devastated portions of Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota, constitute another cause of emigration. These, however, are but minor causes. The greatest cause is the

EXHAUSTION OF THE PUBLIC LANDS—

a fact that must render the permanence of the emigration an ever-growing number.

"The last cause of emigration which I shall name, and the greatest as well, is the practical exhaustion of the public lands which are available for individual settlement and cultivation by ordinary methods. The Commissioner of the General Land Office estimates the total amount of vacant public lands existing in the various States and territories (exclusive of Alaska) at the close of the fiscal year ending June 30th, 1894, at 606,040,313 acres. Of this vast total, 475,000,000 acres, in round numbers, lie in the distinctively arid States. Nearly 114,000,000 acres more lie in the sub-humid States, and the most of this is in the arid portions of those States. Only 17,000,000 acres of public land remain in all the eastern half of the United States. Of this amount, 7,819,185 acres are situated in the northern States of Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan, and Missouri, and 9,346,743 in the southern States of Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida. Minnesota has the largest unsettled area—5,623,478 acres—but Arkansas is a good second with 4,632,278, these two States containing nearly 60 per cent. of all the vacant lands east of the arid region.

"Quality is quite as important as quantity, and when from the total amount of vacant public lands we take not only those which are arid, but also all those tracts which are unsuited for agricultural uses because too sandy and barren, too swampy, too stony, too heavily timbered, or too rugged and mountainous, the remainder will be found to be startlingly small.

"The public lands which are available for individual settlement and suitable for cultivation by ordinary methods are practically exhausted, and it will not be many months before they are completely exhausted. All the vacant lands in all the States east of the arid region