

Rural Planning

Loan Planning is one of the things which is destined to engage the attention of the world

By J. W. MACMILLAN.

The little library of books which deal with practical social problems in Canada has received a notable addition in the volume just published by the Commission of Conservation on Rural Planning and Development. Canadians who attempt to study social conditions and remedies in immediate application to Canada have been accustomed to read the works written in Britain and the United States, and subject them to a process of accommodation. They have attained a measure of skill in this operation, wherein they figure the proportions of population, access climatic differences, extract the square root of divergent traditions, calculate the co-efficient of the domestic public opinion, and divide by the idiosyncrasies of the national type. It is not a very satisfactory method of discovering truth, especially as there are no logarithms one can use, and the whole thing has to be done by rule of thumb. Such volumes as the two by Mr. James Woodsworth and Dr. Macdougall's book on Rural Life may not attain to great circulation, but they receive an eager welcome from the few who concern themselves with the welfare of the communities of the Dominion. Fortunately there are many public reports, issued by the several governments, which are valuable. The civil servants manifestly care more for such things than the parliamentarians do. Perhaps, now that partisanship has been somewhat checked, Canada may swing into line with the civilized world in the matter of social legislation.

The volume before us is the production of Mr. Thomas Adams, who came a few years ago from Britain with the endorsement of a successful career in the very thick of old-country town-planning achievements. He had been Town Planning Inspector to the Local Government Board of England and Wales. He had been Secretary and Manager of Letchworth Garden City. He had received honors at the hands of his associates which showed that they held him in high esteem. And now, after ten years or so in Canada, during all of which time he has justified his appointment as Town Planning Adviser to the Commission of Conservation, he has given us this book as the best of his deeds so far. Looking over the table of contents of the latest annual report of the Commission of Conservation one could not fail to be struck by the pervading materialistic tone of the subjects considered. It was all woods, and waters, and minerals. Men and women seemed to have been forgotten. The reason for this apparent omission is shown in the publication of Mr. Adams' work. The Commission is justified. It did not forget the human side of its work. In fact, it counted it of such superior importance that it made a special publication to deal with it.

It is reported that as Bismarck drove through the streets of London he remarked, "What a city to plunder!" Mr. Adams' reflection on Canada evidently is, "What a country to develop!" He has planned three books, of which this is the first. The second is to deal with urban problems of planning and development. The third will treat in detail the solutions of both country and city problems, and the legislative and administrative reforms needed in connection with the planning and development of land. To those who are not familiar with the current use of the term "town-planning" it might seem that the subject of this book was nothing more than the running of streets. As a matter of fact, it has become the name of a well-recognized department of public service. It may be said to include all that goes to provide proper living conditions for a population. Its reach extends over housing, and has important relations with production and transportation. It has meaning and force for the economics, the health, and the social enjoyments of the people.

It is impossible, of course, to tell in a few paragraphs all that lies between the covers of a large cloth-bound volume. Nor would the titles of the chapters give a complete idea of the matter to be found in it. If any one is interested, he should write to the Commission of Conservation asking for a copy. I understand that he will be supplied, up to the point of exhaustion of the edition.

One of the early topics discussed is the relation between rural and urban populations. There has been much heart searching since the disclosure of the census of 1911. There we learned that the cities were growing much more rapidly than the rural districts

were increasing in population. Indeed in Ontario and the Maritime Provinces the farming regions lost population during the decade 1901-1911. And this in the face of an immense swelling of the cities! Mr. Adams discusses the question with much fairness and insight. He would draw the line between the urban and rural districts at a town population of 1,500, and not at the figure of 5,000 as the census does. This, of course, augments the spread between the two classes. But he allays our alarm by calling attention to the need of maintaining a balance between town and country, rather than adopting any policy which set the one against the other. The solution lies in a harmonization of farmers and factory-workers, not in conflict between them. Their interests, up to a certain point, are the same. And there is further encouragement in some of the suggestions made as to possible ways of solving the problem.

There are strong sentences in the book as to the evils of land speculation. But there is no noisy clamor of denunciation, nor any proposals to confiscate property. The picture of prairie settlement is well set forth, with its conditions of isolation and loneliness. One sees that the vast wheat lands might have been handled with more wisdom. But all is not yet lost. Instead of our rich heritage of fertile soil in the west having been irretrievably spoilt, as some maintain, we are shown that there are ways in which the errors can be remedied, and that, after all, we are just at the morning hour of our national existence and there are many things not yet begun, which we may expend our sagacity upon in beginning right.

There are some earnest and honest paragraphs about land taxation. For taxation can rarely be used to advantage as a means of punishing some economic

Canada's War Position

Mighty as are the blows which have been dealt the enemy, there is as yet no justification for slackening in the national effort to strengthen the battle line. In the production of supplies for this purpose, nature has been more than usually helpful, and has favored us with good weather for harvesting and threshing. It is, therefore, possible to increase the assistance we have been giving to the United Kingdom and to our Allies in carrying the growing burden of the war, as the exportable surplus of this year's crops is very much greater, and our facilities for producing essential war material have become more efficient than they were a year ago. In the fiscal year ending 31st March last, we supplied the United Kingdom with merchandise amounting in value to \$742,000,000, by far the larger part of our total exports of \$1,151,000,000, and for the five months ending August her purchases from us were on a still larger scale. Last year, according to the Government estimates, the value of our field products was \$820,000,000, while present indications are that this year the value will be \$1,100,000,000, which will account for the increase in our exportable surplus. For the same five months, the exports of manufactured goods had a value of \$289,716,536, as compared with \$153,022,063 in the corresponding period a year ago. These, too, were to a large extent exported to the United Kingdom.

After three years of stress and strain, the United Kingdom has regulated her imports in such a drastic manner that only the most essential are now admitted. We should consider it a privilege to be in a position to supply so great a volume of these essential imports and should exercise it to the fullest extent in such a manner as to relieve, as far as possible, the strain upon the financial resources of the Imperial authorities. This can be done by extending further credit, the measure of which is not determined by the banks, or by the Government, but by the sacrifices of luxuries and non-essentials which Canadians as a whole are prepared to make, and by their readiness to place at the disposal of the Government the savings thereby effected. It does not indicate either a high or sincere resolve to render the utmost aid in winning the war if we live as in time of peace, demanding our customary enjoyments and conducting our affairs so as to oblige our Allies to draw upon their stores of gold in order to pay for their purchases from us. Failure to put at the disposal of the Government every possible dollar will

offender, or as a method of making some one else pay for the expense of government. Taxation is for revenue, and requires to come out of the individual revenues of those who are taxed. Some of the statesmen who are daily and hourly harassed by enthusiasts who propose to regenerate the earth by ingenious schemes of taxation would enjoy the calm wisdom of the chapter on taxation in this volume.

The returned soldier problem is also considered. So much has been said about putting him on the land, and it is so apparent that he is not over keen to go on the land, that the subject is very timely. The distribution of scrip and land grants to veterans of earlier wars has not resulted in any large number of them taking up farming, either. Mr. Adams points out that this question is essentially part of the whole question of land settlement and cultivation. The returned soldier is just like all other men in his capacity to farm successfully. And the considerations which make it desirable to place him on the land differ only in emphasis from those which apply to another man. The land needs to be tilled, and we want men to till it. That is the real and whole problem, of which the settlement of returned soldiers is a part.

Town-planning, using the term in the large and technical sense, is one of the things which is destined to engage the attention of the world. It has already won its place in Europe. Very little of the land of England is altered in respect to roads or buildings without having come under the administration of the town-planning legislation. In France every town and village is required to lay out its future developments according to the principles of modern town planning. It is certain that the areas which the war has wrecked will be reconstructed under the direction of expert town-planners. Thus one subordinate good will result from all the evil and savagery which has raged and raged in Belgium and northeastern France. The United States government organized the camps for its soldiers after this fashion. We in Canada cannot remain forever so far behind the procession of nations that we are lost in the distance.

add substantially to the difficulty of financing our part in the war and the sale of our crops.

The gold resources of the United Kingdom available to meet the enormous balances against her are not inexhaustible. Since the outbreak of the war they have been subjected to an extraordinary drain, as is indicated by the gold movement to the United States, which for the twelve months ending June last reached \$977,176,026, of which \$950,000,000 came from British sources. This large sum did not suffice to meet her adverse balances in the United States and to protect exchange, and as is so well known, it was necessary to arrange very large credits for this purpose. Her adverse balances in Canada are proportionately as large. Our total exports of merchandise in the last three fiscal years amounted to \$2,419,953,679, and imports to \$1,808,485,635, the difference being \$611,468,044, which is about equal to the total of our obligations abroad during the same period for current interest and other indebtedness. Trade balances alone, therefore, would not necessitate abnormal gold shipments, and the moderate increase in the holdings of the metal in Canada may be attributed to borrowing in the United States. As that country is now engaged in the war, and is faced with no small problem in financing its preparations, borrowing there is becoming more difficult, as is made evident by the terms of the last Canadian loan. It remains for Canada to turn to her own resources, which have not yet been drawn upon to the extent of causing her people to make any financial sacrifice.—Bank of Commerce "Bulletin."

Harry Lauder tells the following story about a funeral in Glasgow and a well-dressed stranger who took a seat in one of the mourning coaches. The other three occupants of the carriage were rather curious to know who he was, and at last one of them began to question him. The dialogue went like this: "Ye'll be a brither o' the corp?" "No, I'm o' a brither o' the corp." "Weel, ye'll be his cousin?" "No, I'm no' a cousin." "At ony rate ye'll be a frien' o' the corp?" "No, I'm not that either. Ye see, I've no' been very weel masel," the stranger explained complacently, "an' my doctor has ordered me carriage exercise, so I thocht this would be the cheapest way to tak' it."

From an account of an Oregon wedding: "The can offer it. We cannot return to a primitive sys- bridegroom's present to the bride was a handsome diamond brooch, together with many other beautiful things in cut glass."