

greater proportion of the North-west than is actually the case. Misapprehensions upon subjects of this sort are very easily created because of the comparative want of knowledge of the geography of this new region of the earth on the part of people living outside of it, and the readiness of the immigrating classes to believe that which is to the disadvantage of a country seeking for population rather than that which is to its advantage. This view, I may say, was shared by your predecessor in office. I now believe, however, that the grounds for the fear entertained have been to a very great extent removed, for the process by which the subject has been brought into prominence has been a very gradual one, and in the meantime the educational work which is being performed in Great Britain and elsewhere by the immigration agents of the department is tending more and more to impart an accurate idea of the conditions prevailing in the Canadian North-west. The department has also been very careful to explain the full scope of its policy in respect of irrigation, particularly with regard to the extent of territory to which the system can probably be applied.

Largely through Mr. Pearce's representations the necessity for irrigation in the section of the North-west lying adjacent to the Rocky mountains, from Calgary southward to the international boundary, became apparent, and it was recognized by the department that the future of that region was dependent to no small extent upon the early enactment of well defined and comprehensive laws upon the subject of the first apportionment and subsequent use of the water supply available for that purpose. Accordingly at the session of Parliament of 1893 a bill dealing with these questions was presented, and, after being read a first and second time, was printed for distribution among those who were likely to be able to offer intelligent criticism upon, or suggest desirable amendments to, its proposed provisions.

In the early part of this year Mr. J. S. Dennis, Chief Inspector of Surveys, was sent to examine and report upon the irrigation systems and inquire generally into the question in the Western States. The information furnished by Mr. Dennis's report, added to the criticisms and suggestions which had been received from those to whom the proposed bill had been submitted, enabled us to improve upon the bill submitted to Parliament in 1893 in some important particulars, and an amended bill was presented at the last session of Parliament and passed into law under the title of the North-west Irrigation Act. This Act has been so framed as to provide for careful supervision by the government of the first distribution and the subsequent use of the available water supply in the arid region. Some of the provisions under which this control is to be exercised are departures from the methods heretofore adopted on this continent; but those best qualified to judge speak of our system as being calculated to encourage and establish irrigation enterprises upon a sound and permanent basis, and as offering the smallest opportunity for the occurrence of the disputes and litigation which unfortunately have been incident to the use of water in this way in other countries. Some slight amendments may have to be asked for at the forthcoming session of Parliament in the interests of the projectors of small ditches, intended chiefly to irrigate their own lands, and to whom the requirements of the existing law in regard to surveys, publication of notices, &c., have been found to involve an outlay in money which the due protection of the public interest would not seem to demand.

The promotion of the irrigation of extensive areas in the arid district by abandoning the sectional system of survey and closing the road allowances pro-