

Unproductive Land in Ontario

Previous to the war, owing to a variety of causes, there was a strong exodus from the rural to the urban centres and large areas in the Eastern Provinces have been depleted of their population. The extensively advertised attractions of the cheap lands in the Western Provinces and in Northern Ontario have intensified this depletion. There are, I believe, thousands of farms, especially in the Province of Ontario, either in grass or occupied merely by elderly people. These farms are at best indifferently cultivated because of the absence of enterprise and efficient labour. Such conditions are proving a severe handicap not only in the production of food, but in the industrial and commercial development of the whole country.

Opportunity To Repopulate Rural Districts

Canada is primarily an agricultural country and it is essential to her future prosperity that all tillable land, especially in the long settled communities where churches, schools, roads, railways, etc., are established, should be kept in a high state of fertility and thoroughly and systematically cultivated. To do this requires a vigorous, numerous and contented rural population. Therefore, any economic or social tendencies which help to develop large industrial centres at the expense of the rural districts should be checked, as they are not conducive to permanence in agricultural progress or to industrial balance or national stability. Fortunately at this time farming is attractive as a business enterprise because of the prevailing high prices for food stuffs. While grain may become cheaper, it is improbable that agricultural conditions will be materially changed for several years. The reason for this is that there was a world shortage of meat, wool and other animal products before the war. During the last four years, notwithstanding the efforts to increase production, it has been impossible to maintain these commodities at the pre-war levels. If, in the years to come, facilities are given to distribute agricultural products and it is possible to avoid erecting or maintaining artificial barriers against the ebb and flow of the markets, there is certain to be a widely extended and intensified interest in agriculture. No country in the world is better situated than Canada to enjoy to the full the results of increased enterprise in cultivating her farm lands. The opportunity to repopulate the rural districts under extremely favorable conditions presents itself and should be grappled.

Suitable for Soldiers' Settlement

The soldier is pre-disposed to settle on the land. Having experienced the health and vigor that comes from living in the open, it is only natural that he should plan to make his permanent home in a rural community. The