

enormous financial strength and world-wide trade and possessions, can measure up to every test imposed upon it. Aside from France, the same can hardly be said of the other countries of Europe. Sooner or later their peoples will seek new opportunities and the chance to secure land and other property in their own right, in the New World. And as has been said, the land-hungry in the United States, precluded from ownership by prevailing high prices, will turn their steps toward Canada—the last Great West.

Considering the problem in its national aspects, it is a matter of congratulation that Eastern manufacturers and Western farmers are beginning to find common ground. Mr. Parsons' suggestion that a conference between manufacturers and farmers should take the place of mutual recriminations, is thoroughly sound. Western agricultural leaders have met him more than half-way. Recently Mr. H. W. Wood announced in the Calgary "Albertan" that there was absolutely no reason as to why manufacturing, trade and commerce, on the one hand, and agriculture on the other, should not flourish side by side. The West will be one of the biggest and most profitable markets for Eastern manufacturers in the future; and it therefore behoves them to make that market worth while by making farming worth while. We are inclined to believe with Mr. Wood that nothing is to be gained by shelving our problems for post-war discussion. The tariff and other problems are there; and must be solved by conference, negotiation, fair-dealing and goodwill.

Railway Expansion Not Wholly Bad

It is imperatively essential that Western Canada in particular augment its population after the war. As Mr. Calder has stated, the railway and other equipment in the West is sufficient to serve the needs of a much greater population than at present exists. Contrary to general opinion—at least such opinion as was most in evidence in the days immediately preceding the war—Canada has made no fatal mistake in building railroads beyond immediate requirements. There was no other choice than that between economic stagnation and industrial expansion. Mistakes were made, perhaps, in the duplication of certain lines; but on the whole the war has demonstrated that, in a war crisis at least, the country's railroad equipment was not over extensive. More than that, the railroads were built as colonizing instruments: in a very real sense they were designed both to create, and profit from their own markets. The depression that set in in the year or two immediately prior to the war was occasioned rather by real estate speculation and plunging in financial promotions than by railway building. But for this unfortunate circumstance both the Canadian Northern and the Grand Trunk Pacific might well have been a financial success. However, the past is not our concern, but the future.

All are agreed that the West must receive a great increase in its population if the economic equipment of the country is to be rendered profitable. Good resolutions, however, amount to nothing: the wish-bone cannot take the place of the back-bone. Mr. Calder is determined not to let the matter rest with good resolutions alone, but to back them up with decisive action. His conviction that it is essential to do as much for the country as was done, before the war, for the cities and towns, is sane and sound. To attract population to the land, farming must be made profitable. As Eastern centres will be confronted with the difficulty of providing work for present munition-makers in the post-bellum period, so the West will be faced with the problem of maintaining the present

high level of social and economic well-being for agricultural workers. This raises questions both of production and distribution which will be dealt with in a later article. The immediate problem is to place more settlers upon the land. And a vital aspect of that undertaking is to find the promised land for returning and returned soldiers.

Much Land Still Remains

The Land Settlement Board appears to be confronted with insurmountable obstacles in its search for homestead land, within a reasonable distance from railways, in the West. At the same time enormous tracts of fertile and arable lands are being held idle, in desirable districts, by speculators, the Hudson's Bay Company, and the railroads. All this land is available, in millions of acres,—at a price. It is the price difficulty that raises the problem. It will not do to say that the problem is simple and that the remedy lies at hand in confiscation. That may do in Russia where Bolshevik ideals, and economic justice, appear to coincide. Practically nothing in the way of confiscation is heard of in the West. It is a far cry from feudalistic, reactionary landlordism in Russia to the commercialism that characterizes land-holding in Western Canada. For the most part, the contracts with the railroads and the big corporations in the Canadian West where the outcome of negotiations between the Government and the companies are concerned—negotiations which the average citizen thought, at the time they were carried on, gave the big end of the deal to the people. It was a trite enough saying in the early eighties that the C.P.R. "would not earn enough to cover axle grease." The railroads made a big gamble—and won. Confiscation, therefore, is not to be thought of. Canada is not Russia; neither have Canadians sunk to the level of Helots.

Taxation is not Complete Remedy

Much is heard of what some regard as the only alternative: the taxing of idle lands, now held out of cultivation for speculative purposes, into productive use. But already, the Western provinces levy a surtax upon speculative lands and it has not driven them into cultivation; neither can it do so unless the tax is made heavy enough to confiscate for the use of the State the entire surplus of value. If the entire product of land, in the value sense, whether that land is productively employed or not, is appropriated by the State, the right of private ownership—although not of possession—becomes worthless. It is evident, however, that taxation driven to such extreme limits is virtually equivalent to confiscation.

If, instead of taking the entire economic rent of land, a relatively heavier tax is laid upon land than upon other property, in the attempt to drive it into productive use, great social transformations will be effected. What happened to the New England States, in that event, may well be repeated in the Canadian West. The general property tax in the New England States virtually became a land tax; since land could not be concealed, while intangible wealth in the shape of stocks and bonds could be hidden away. The result was that the burden proved too great for the farming community. The bankrupt who set fire to his property and thus sold out to a fire insurance company, taught the farmer the only method to follow. He "skinned" the land, denuded it of its fertility, neglected its upkeep, and withdrew his capital to where it secured more profitable returns. There being less land in cultivation, the prices of farm products rose in the Eastern States. This merely meant, in the long