

B. C. Farmers and Life Insurance

By Howard Farrant

The municipal area of the thirty-five cities and twenty-eight towns of British Columbia embraces 96,588 acres and contains a population of 374,980. This area is less than one-half of one per cent. of the total surface of the province, but it contains approximately eighty-six per cent. of the whole population. The remaining ninety-nine and one-half per cent. of area comprises the organized territory administered by the provincial government and the remaining fourteen per cent. of the population living within this area includes the Indians of the province.

It will thus be seen that farming has not as yet taken its rightful place as an occupation for the people of this province. Unfortunately there seems no immediate likelihood of much improvement in this particular. The most noticeable agricultural development, and particularly nearest the cities, is by Orientals who in alarming numbers are taking hold of land on Vancouver Island, the Fraser Valley and in the Okanagan. These thrifty, hard-working people make progress where the white man throws up his hands in despair.

As in most new agricultural countries, farms in British Columbia are generally mortgaged. This furnishes the first and strongest argument for Life Insurance. The small farmer, and in British Columbia the holdings of the fruit and poultry farmers run from five to twenty-five acres, usually has his all in his lands and buildings. Until his crop comes, he has little or no money to spare, and if no crop comes the ensuing twelve months is a time of hardship.

If ever a man needed insurance, these small farmers do. They are often intelligent, educated men, many of them from the Old Country. Some of them are retired from prairie holdings, putting into practice for the first time intensive measures of cultivation.

In the Okanagan Valley are some of the finest type of Old Country people located on small holdings, keenly interested in their orchards and taking, with typical British philosophy, the set-backs of early frost, blight and low prices. People of the same class are found to the east in the Kootenay district.

Scattered throughout the province, on Vancouver Island, in the Fraser Valley and in the northern Okanagan are old mixed farms, many of them over twenty-five years of age and often owned by old Ontario residents who came through with the C. P. R. in its early years. These men picked out homes in the valleys where the clearing was easiest and the bottom lands the richest.

In the Cariboo, famous for its gold rush in the early days, are vast tracts of grazing lands, thousands of acres to a single holding, and roamed over by great herds of cattle. Closer in to Nicola and Merritt are also some of these extensive holdings.

On my first trip through the Cariboo we looked forward with interest to seeing some of these cattle kings, "regular guys" my companion described them. We found that the Cariboo rancher was in calibre very little different from the original small farmer in other parts of the province.

It must be remembered the farmer has all his savings tied up in his farm. It is his first aim and object to clear up the farm and equipment, and usually he keeps only enough ready money by him to see him through to his next crop. This is his life work. A premature death will cut short his plans, but a Life Insurance policy will enable him to complete them whether he lives or dies. In selling the farmer a policy to cover a mortgage one can show him how small a

yearly payment will take care of a large indebtedness. When the mortgage is small the average farmer will take a policy to cover the entire mortgage; but when the mortgage is a large one, he often hesitates to take a policy to cover more than one-half or two-thirds. The writer believes that when one can show the farmer, how, by adding two and one-half per cent. to his mortgage interest, the small added interest in case of his premature death will pay off the mortgage in full, insurance will be arranged. Banks, Mortgage and Loan Companies of various kinds advise, and in some cases insist, that a Life Insurance policy be placed behind every loan.

Life Insurance should not be held off in the case of a farmer struggling with a mortgage. The money of Life Insurance companies is coming back as fast as it can into the hands of the men who pay the premiums. They pay the premiums; the companies lend it back to them and take the risk of their premature death. It is a circulating life blood. This is true of all Life Insurance investments. It makes Canada the place that people can live in, it unites East and West, it carries on the work of government, it builds places for men to do business in. It enables the East to get the grain of the West. It builds up manufactures and provides the way to sell them. It turns grain into food. It is the circulating life blood of Canada this investment of Life Insurance.

There is no other agency that compares with Life Insurance and its system in carrying on and developing the welfare of the Dominion. When agents realize this, it gives a steadying influence and a clearer idea of the importance of the work. Life Insurance business is not merely looking for prospects, writing policies, collecting premiums or paying death claims. These are only the vehicles by which is carried on the great system which lies at the foundation of the welfare of the country.

The average farmer today has as much at stake in each year's crop as the average business man in the city. The loan values of the contract can be made very attractive to him as a sinking fund. The records of the probate courts prove that reductions from farmer's estates exceed those from other lines of business. And this is due to the fact that the average farmer has very little cash on hand at the time of his death. As a rule his entire estate is wrapped up in his farm and the equipment of it.

As in most other cases, Life Insurance will put the farmer's estate in order, and accomplish the plans which he would have carried out if he had lived.

THIS SPACE IS NOT SUFFICIENT

even to mention the additions to and improvements in the B. C. M. that we hope to make as British Columbia Homes and Business Firms give us more evidence that they are awake to the fact that MAGAZINE INTEREST BEGINS AT HOME.

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