

Preface

A month before the outbreak of war the writer published a treatise on "The Economical Condition and Resources of the Canadian Middle West," the main purpose of which was to indicate some of the chief causes of the high cost of living and the financial stringency then prevailing, and to urge as an obvious remedy against the results of this disorder a general endeavor to increase largely the productiveness of the land by means of more intense and diversified and mixed farming in place of the general practice of a too exclusive wheat growing. And it was advanced that perhaps the best prospect of relief from the unemployment then prevailing in cities and towns — one of the many pernicious effects of the speculation in real estate that had demoralized the whole country and ruined its real business—would be found in the fostering of suitable local industries everywhere throughout the West intermingled with the farms and in close connexion with the farming community. This treatise has been attached by the Dominion Government "Board of Inquiry into the Cost of Living" to their Report to Parliament.

Four months later when some of the effects on us of the war were beginning also to be felt, the writer returned to this subject in a second paper dealing particularly with the new conditions occasioned by the war and their import for us, and this with some additional matter, he now offers for consideration, taking the occasion to propound a plan for action which he believes may prove an effectual remedy for some of the deplorable effects of our past economical errors.

The plan, he thinks, strikes at the root of many other evils that infect us, and if widely adopted, everybody at the same time doing their best, by economy, and, excepting those well able to spend, by the utmost frugality in living, to restore our lost sense of the value of money, while setting to work industriously to produce real wealth instead of the fictitious sort we have just lost, the hard times that afflict, and still more, threaten us, would be alleviated and their recurrence prevented.