

What's the Matter with Canada?



WHEN a country with as good a climate and as great a territorial area as Canada, with people that are law-abiding and industrious, with more miles of railroad in proportion to population than any other country in the world, with natural resources equal to any other nation; that has given away more than fifty million acres of choice land to attract population, whose governments—Dominion, Provincial and Municipal—have spent millions in advertising its advantages, and who have spent millions more in immigration work and payment of travelling expenses of settlers to get them into this country, finds itself at the end of all its efforts and expense with only eight millions of people—the conclusion is inevitable that there is something radically and fundamentally wrong with the administration of it.

As the material progress of any country depends more upon its financial policy and credit facilities than any other one thing, and as agriculture is the main and basic industry in Canada, it is important to examine its banking system as it relates to the farming industry. The initial difficulty with our banking system seems to be that when we imported it from Great Britain we did not get all of it. We left an important and essential part of the machinery behind, and it has never been replaced. Practically all farmers in England and Scotland are tenants and their credit is regulated by the steward of their overlord, who goes among them and ascertains their needs and arranges for such credit as he thinks is justified. When this banking system was set up in Canada there were no overlords and no stewards to arrange the credits, so the bankers, not knowing what else to do, had Parliament pass a law that no farm products could be taken in security by a bank until the title to them had passed into the possession of a dealer. This Act of Parliament put the common