

THE COMMERCIAL

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ALIENATE NO MORE LAND.

After the ample experiences which we have had in Canada of the evils of granting blocks of land to corporations, it does seem strange that the government should again contemplate alienating large areas of land in the West to private corporations. Such strong objections have been raised to further grants of land to railways that the admission has at last been made in official quarters that this policy will or has been discontinued, but after the evil of granting lands to railway corporations has been recognized, another plan has been found for getting rid of the land. It is to be handed over in immense blocks to irrigation companies, who will secure possession of our valuable public domain at a merely nominal value, and thereafter for all time have the settlers upon these lands at their mercy. When the railway companies sell the land, it passes entirely from their hands, and they have nothing more to do with it. Not so with the irrigation companies. The settler upon irrigated land must continue to depend upon the irrigation company for his supply of water. The settler who buys irrigated land is doing with the irrigation company as soon as his land is paid for, but the settler upon irrigated land must continue to pay tribute to the irrigation company all his days. It is therefore seen what power the irrigation corporation has to tax the settler. The company control the supply of water which is necessary to render the land productive, and can make the settler pay therefore all that the land will stand. Irrigation is an enterprise which cannot be carried by individual and owners. It can as a rule only be made profitable when large blocks of land are irrigated under one system. It is therefore necessary that the parties who undertake a system of irrigation, should have a large area of land in one solid block. The government should be able to do this work as just as good advantage as a private corporation, and there would be additional advantages, that the settler upon irrigated land would not be compelled to pay a high price for the water in order to make dividends for the corporation. This land now belongs to the people, and the water belongs to the people also. Why should these be handed

over to a corporation, for the purpose of enabling the corporation to make a profit out of the heritage of the people? Through its control of the water, the irrigation company is virtually empowered to tax the land of the settler for all time. The sale of the water is virtually a tax on the land. The power of taxation should only belong to the government.

The announcement came from Ottawa last Saturday that a company had applied for half a million acres of land in Alberta for irrigation purposes, and it was said that the minister of the Interior had approved of the proposal. The price for the land is named at \$3 per acre, but the company is to get a rebate of two-thirds of this amount for carrying out the irrigation work. The company will expect to make a large profit on the land, and also a profit on the water which will be sold to the settlers. Thus what now belongs to the people will be handed over to a corporation for the purpose of enriching private individuals. If money is to be made out of these lands and the water which is necessary to render the land fruitful, why should not the profit go to the people?

The government should be able to carry out the necessary irrigation

opened up by the railways, therefore give it to the railways. This is very poor reasoning, as time has shown. It is to be hoped this question of alienating the public domain to irrigation corporations will receive full publicity in the press, and careful attention from the people, and that the mistake of creating more land corporations will not be made.

RECIPROCITY IN COAL.

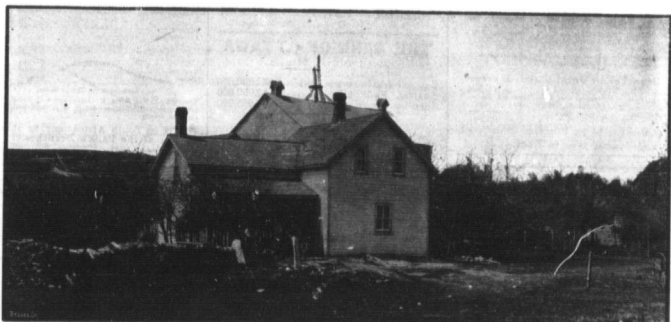
Under strong pressure of public opinion, growing out of the remarkable fuel situation in the United States, Congress has declared for free coal. A bill which provides for a rebate of the duties on coal, for one year, was passed by the House on Wednesday by practically a unanimous vote. There were only five votes against the bill. The only votes against the measure were by men from coal districts. The bill virtually places anthracite coal on the free list, an amendment having been made in the Senate and concurred in by the House, providing that paragraph 415 of the Dingley Act shall not hereafter be construed to authorize the imposition of any duty on anthracite coal. This makes anthracite coal free, while on other coals the duty will be rebated during the period of one year.

United States anthracite coal. Reciprocity in coal would suit the interests of both countries. It would be a fair exchange of products. If our government would place coal on the free list so long as the United States continues to receive our coals free of duty, it would help to make the present temporary situation a permanent one. When the year for free bituminous coal in the United States expires, there would no doubt be a strong popular demand for a continuance of the benefit of free coal.

New Trust Company.

A meeting of the shareholders of the Standard Trust Co. was held in Winnipeg this week, at the office of Mulock & Roberts. Those present were: J. T. Gordon, William Whyte, William Harvey, John Arbuthnot, N. Bawlf, Dr. Blanchard, M. Bull, A. M. Praser, W. Georstone, Thos. Gilroy, J. A. Girvin, F. C. McIntyre, James McDougall, W. C. Mulock, John Parise, Dr. Popham, John Russell, G. F. Stephenson, D. Forrester, Jas. G. Harvey, Dr. Nelson, F. Poole, Mark Fortune, T. S. Gonnell, J. R. L. Watt, Geo. H. Greg, W. L. Ordie, Thos. Thompson, H. Sanderson, Robert Bourne, F. Morton Morse, H. Byrnes, F. H. Schofield, Dr. Corbett, E. H. Taylor, Wm. Clark, G. F. Carruthers, N. T. Walker.

The first eighteen of the above were elected as directors, and immediately



MANITOBA FARM HOMES—RESIDENCE OF F. NOBLE, WAWANAWA.

work to better advantage than a corporation, or at least to the greater advantage of the country. The corporation will think only of its own particular plot of ground, and will make the system to suit the plot only. The government, which controls the whole of the land, would naturally take a broader view of the case. A more comprehensive government system could be adopted; one which would serve a larger area of territory, and which would utilize the water to the best possible advantage. In a region needing irrigation, water is usually of great value. Generally the available supply of water is not nearly equal to serve the total amount of land. The water supply is the first consideration. This should be kept in the hands of the government, used with every economy possible, and made to cover the largest possible area of land.

The argument advanced in favor of handing the land over to irrigation corporations is that the land is of little value unless it is irrigated. That is the same old argument as applied to the railway companies, that the land was of no value unless it was

While there has been a great popular demand for this legislation, it cannot be expected that it will give immediate relief to the people of the United States who are suffering for fuel. The duty on bituminous coal was 47 cents per ton of 28 bushels, 80 pounds to the bushel. The removal of the duty will facilitate the importation of coal at the United States seaports. Coal from the British Columbia mines on Vancouver Island, and from Nova Scotia will also now pass more freely into the United States, but this will not be sufficient to relieve the situation in that country. Many parts of the United States are in worse shape for fuel this winter, owing to the prolonged strike in Pennsylvania, than we are in Canada.

The most interesting phase of the present move regarding the coal duties is the influence it will have on future tariff legislation. It would be in the interest of both Canada and the United States to have reciprocity in coal. The New England States want Nova Scotia coal. The Pacific coast States want British Columbia coal. Ontario and Manitoba, particularly, and other parts of Canada want

after the shareholders' meeting adjourned, the meeting of the directors was held, at which J. T. Gordon, M. P., was elected president; William Whyte, M. P., vice-president; Mr. John Russell was elected managing director, and Messrs. Mulock & Roberts general solicitors.

The Standard Trust is a new local company, incorporated by special act of the Manitoba legislature at the last session. The authorized capital is \$200,000, of which \$100,000 had to be subscribed before business could be commenced. This amount was easily secured and more besides, the amount already subscribed being over \$100,000. This makes a strong local company, the object of the company is to carry on the business usually undertaken by such companies in all its branches, that is, to wills, estates, receiver, assignee, trustee, etc. Much of the work done in connection with the establishing of this company was done by John Russell, who has had considerable experience in trust business.

The Wm. Mueller Co. of Chicago, which has a claim of \$25 against the Sault Ste. Marie Co-operative Company, of Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, is asking the court for a winding-up order. The Co-operative Company had a capital of \$25,000, and recently assigned.