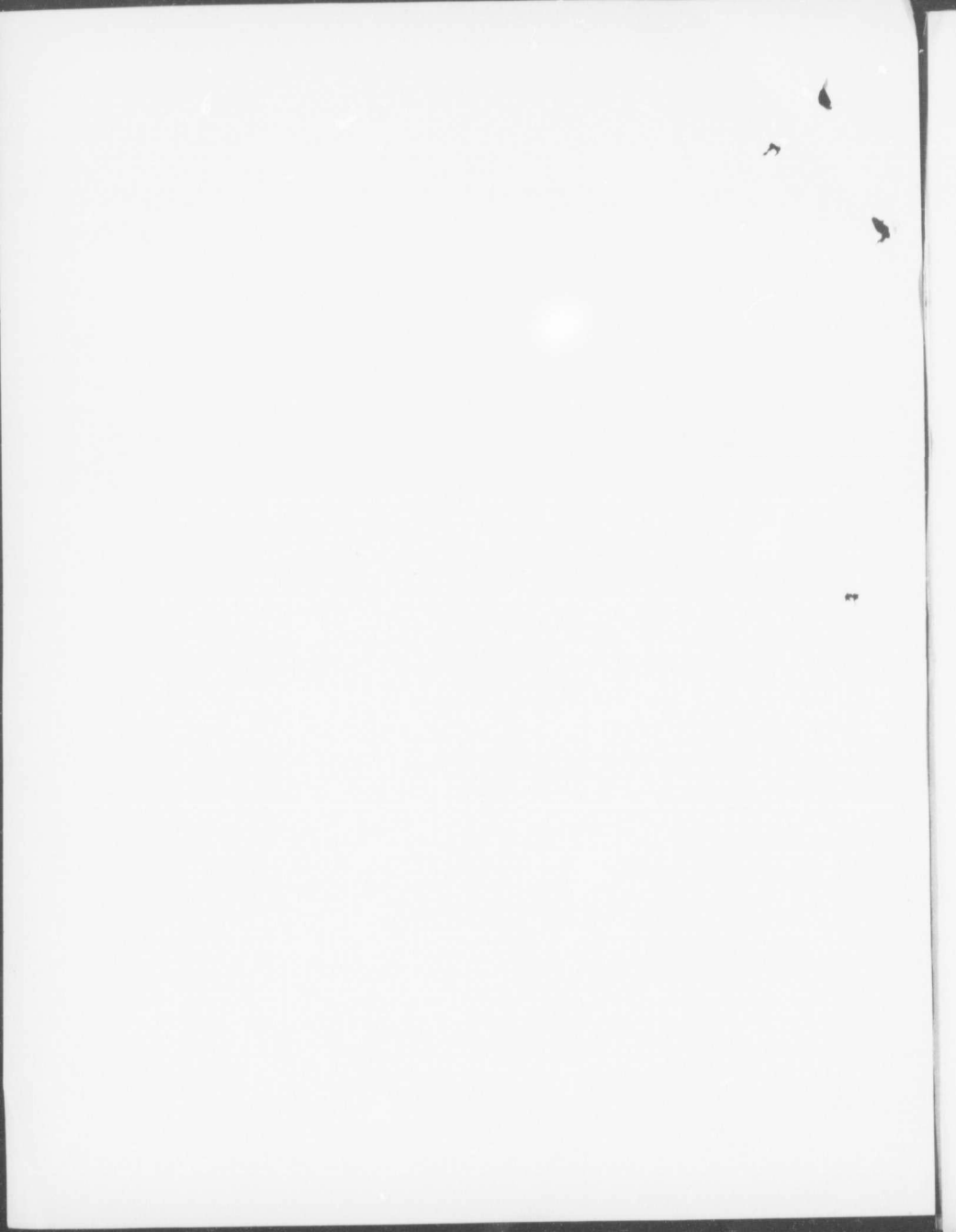


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Influx of
Britishers Into Canada
After the War



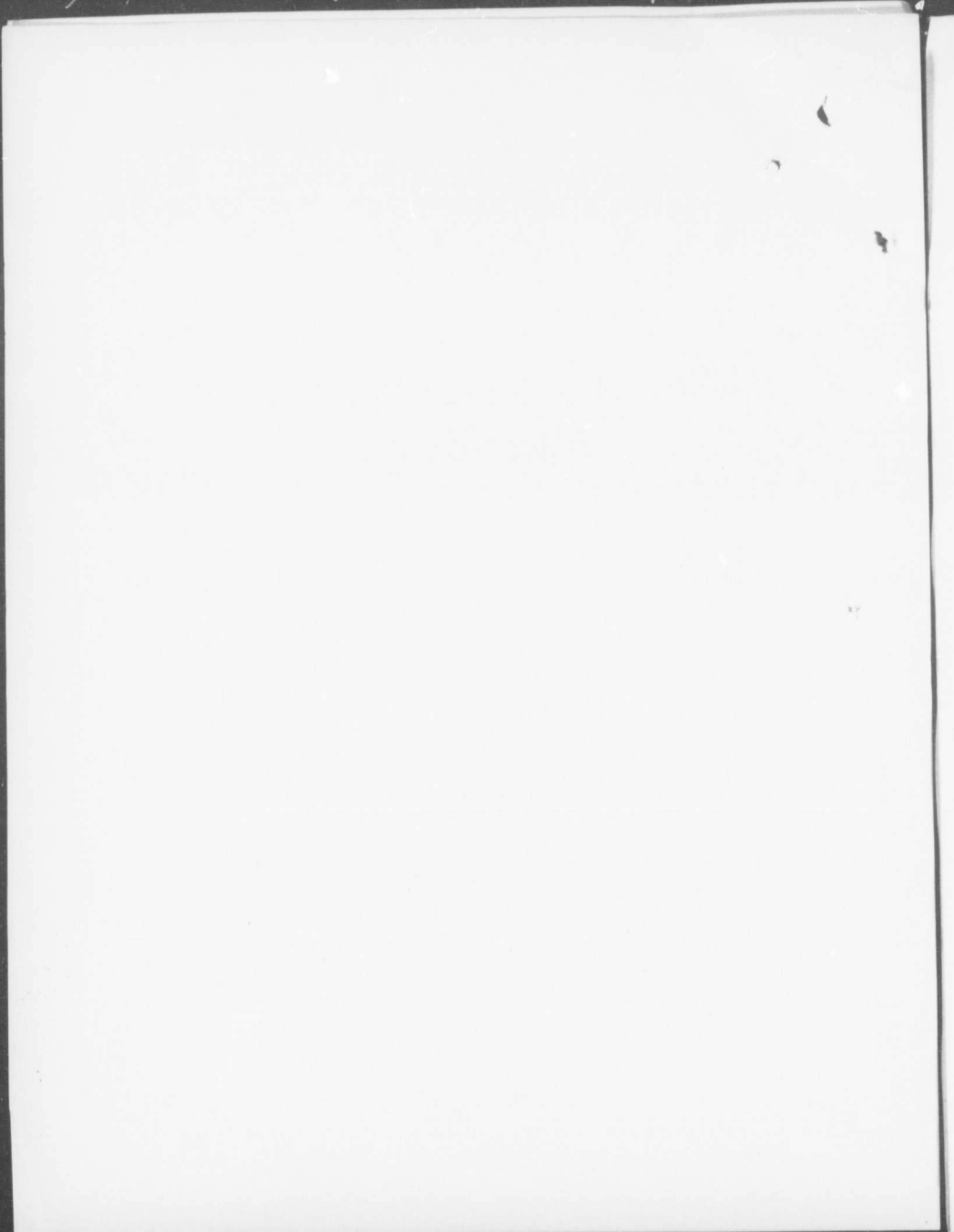
English
1912
No. 27

Influx of Britishers Into Canada After the War.

The writer of this memorandum believes that the current of immigration to Canada from Britain will be largely increased in the first few years after this war. This opinion is based on actual experience in South Africa during and after the Boer War. For some years the country was flooded with immigrants from Britain, whom, owing partly to the presence of negro labor, and partly to want of adequate preparation, it was quite unable to absorb. A serious condition of unemployment was the result. Thousands left South Africa impoverished and embittered against the country. Finally the coast colonies closed their ports to all who were not possessed of a certain sum (£20 or £25 in cash, I think). In Britain the working class felt that the country upon which £250,000,000 and 50,000 lives had been spent was closed to the poor. It was from this failure to absorb the tide of British immigration that the disfavor with which South Africa is still viewed largely dates.

The cause of such migration is moral rather than economic. War, in accustoming large masses of men to a life of adventure in the open air, so changes their habits that they shrink from returning to the office and factory. Clerks who have been to the front in this war have told me that they will never be able to return to the desk. Inevitably they will look to Canada as the nearest and easiest country in which to settle.

For obvious reasons Britain will do its best to retain this population. In many cases, however, nothing short of a prohibition to leave the country will avail to stop the emigration of discharged soldiers. In countries like Austria and Germany such



measures will, I have no doubt, be taken. In a country like England they are quite impossible. Where popular government prevails you cannot, except under conditions of war, forbid emigration. It is most important that the widespread misapprehension on this subject which I find in Canada should be removed. The British Government can neither forbid nor restrain by law the emigration of its own voters to Canada.

For some years after this war the tide of emigration from Britain to Canada will be limited only by the shipping available. Unless timely preparations are made to absorb them a serious state of congestion and unemployment in the larger Canadian towns will result. Canada may be driven to close its ports against men who have fought for the Empire. Worse still, soldiers who have landed and failed to find employment may drift south to the U. S. A., and so be lost not only to Canada, but to the Empire, at a period when to retain its depleted stock of manhood will be of vital importance.

These dangers can be easily forestalled here, because Canada, unlike South Africa, has a much higher capacity for absorption, given the necessary time. In fact, the country is over-equipped for its present population. All that is needed is sufficient provision—

(1) For housing and feeding the immigrant soldier until work can be found for him.

(2) For such training as will fit him for the work which most needs to be done in Canada, i.e., agricultural labor.

The proper handling of the problem depends upon adequate co-operation between three Governments :—

(1) The British Government, from whose territory the immigrant will come.

(2) The Dominion Government, which alone can be responsible—(a) for admitting the immigrant; (b) for directing him to the Province in which he is to start his new life.

(3) The Provincial Government, which alone can train him for employment in its own area, and then find him an employer.

Of these three Governments the pivotal authority is the Dominion Government, which alone by its initiative can co-ordinate the action of the other two Governments.

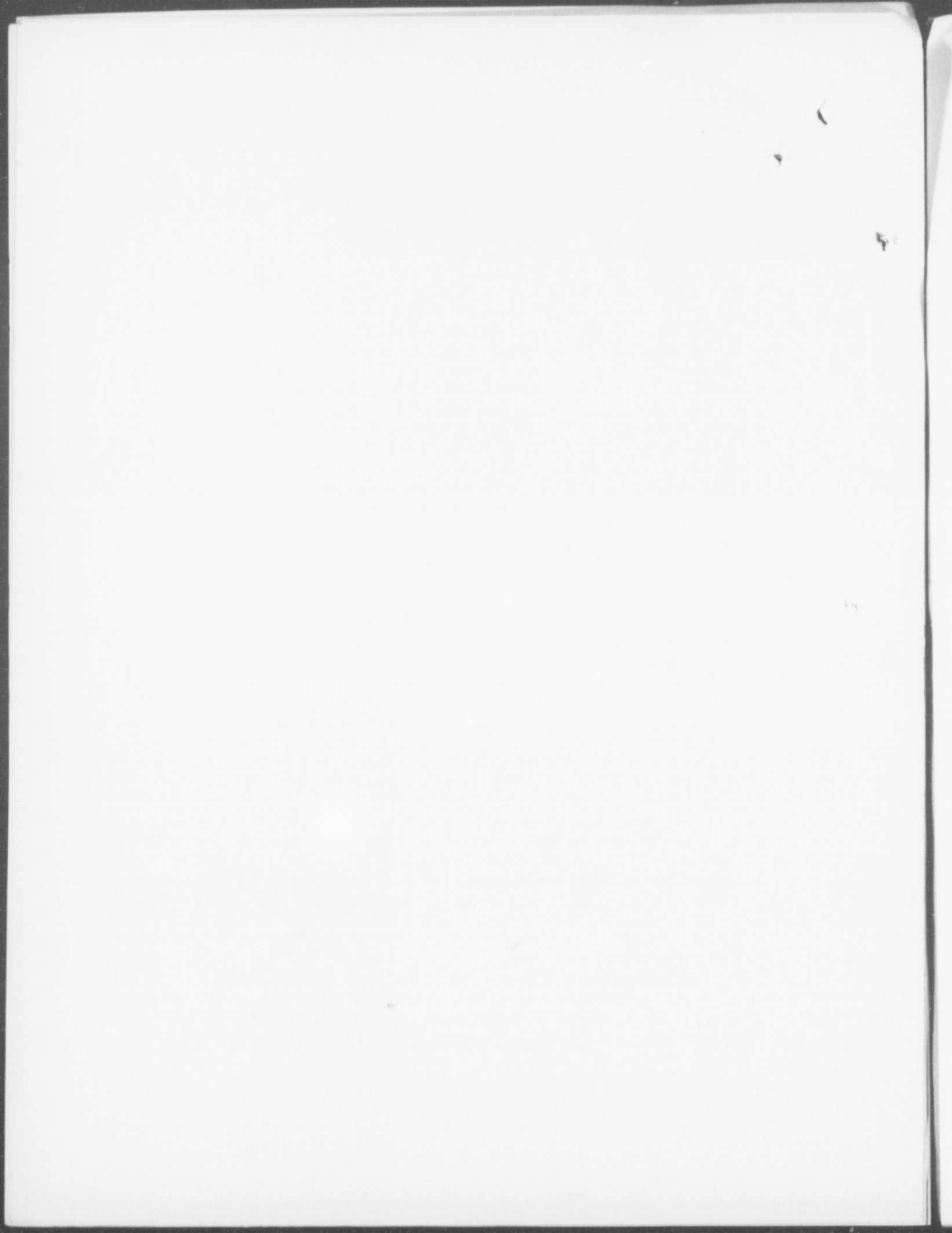
The Dominion Government, for instance, will have to inform the British Government of the terms upon which it is prepared



to open Canadian ports to migration after the war. It will of necessity declare that the reabsorption of its own men from the front constitutes the first claim on Canadian resources. The Dominion Government, however, would be standing upon strong ground if it went on to declare that British soldiers willing to begin life in Canada as agricultural laborers on lines prescribed by the Dominion Government would rank as the second claim on Canadian resources after the war. Such a policy would represent the truest kindness towards soldiers desirous of settling in Canada. There is in the Old Country no more dangerous superstition than this, that a man can come to a new country, take up land and start farming right away. The Dominion Government might justly and wisely require a considerable money qualification before admitting anyone (even men who have fought in the trenches) unless they were prepared first to earn their apprenticeship as hired laborers under a practical farmer. My hope would be that the Dominion Government would, after providing for its own men, undertake to receive any man who had fought for the Empire in a Government depot from the moment of landing, where he could be kept for a few days under some sort of mild military discipline. I venture to suggest that in any case the Dominion Government will be forced to institute such depots.

From six to twelve months after peace the whole available shipping will be required for repatriating the Canadian soldiers at the front. The reabsorption of these men is obviously a first claim on Canadian resources. The majority, perhaps, will return straight from the port of landing to their previous homes and occupations. A considerable minority, however, say anything from 50,000 to 100,000 men, will have no places to which to go, and will have to be found new jobs. These masses of homeless and unemployed men cannot be turned adrift as they land on the wharves of Halifax, St. John or Montreal, at the mercy of all the sharks and harpies who notoriously crowd at ports for the purpose of preying upon such men when they land with their pockets full of money. Surely the Dominion Government will provide depots in which to house and feed them until they can find employment.

My suggestion is that the Dominion Government should inform the British Government that it declines to be responsible for admitting any man without a monetary qualification unless he is prepared to begin life as an agricultural laborer and entrust

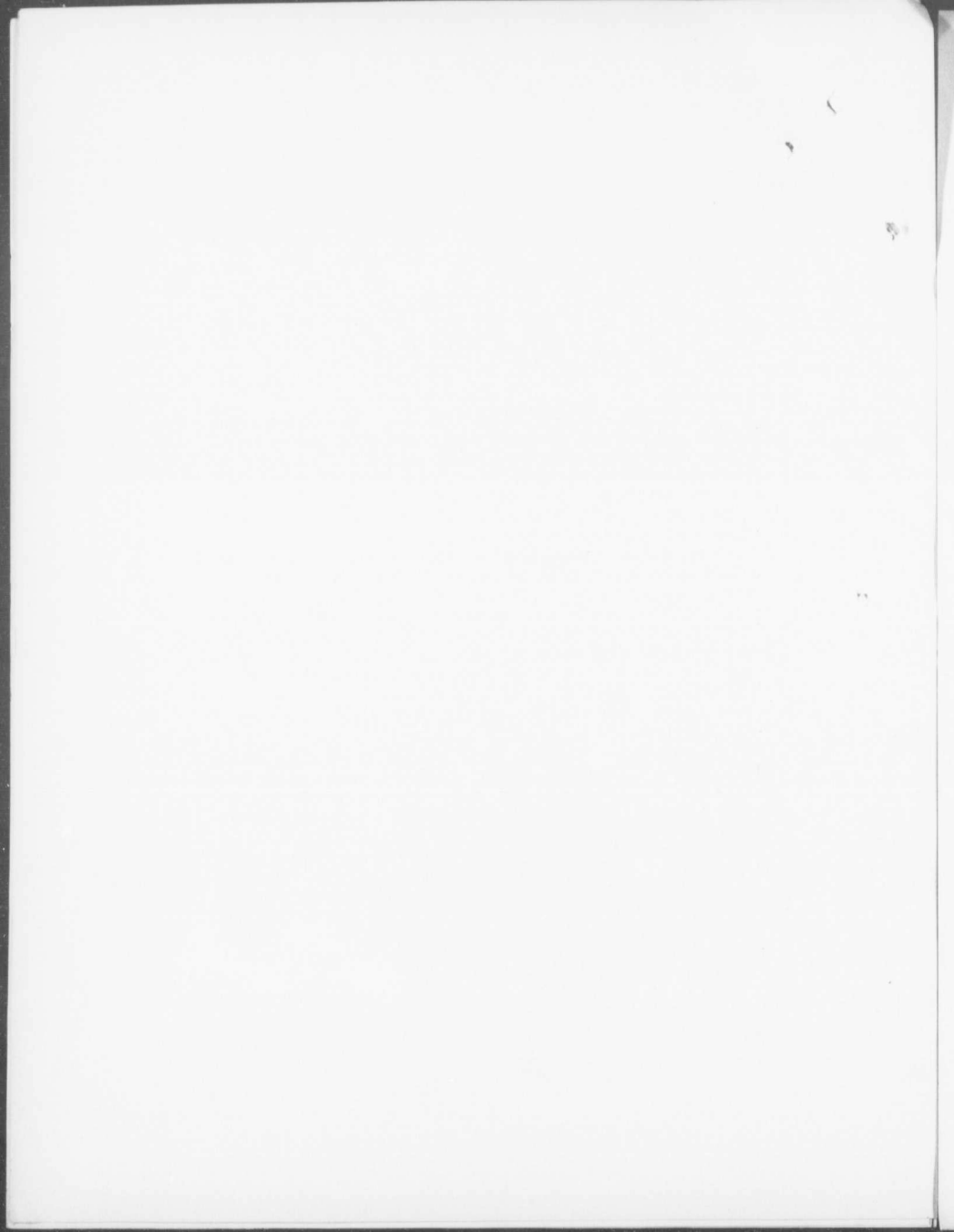


himself to Government direction in Canada for any period up to six months after landing. The British Government would then have to organize an official agency of its own through which time-expired soldiers would be passed to the depots of the Dominion Government in Canada. The handling of the question in England ought not to be left to a chaos of competing emigration societies. The British Government should be required to deal with its own societies and pass the emigrants out through one recognized agency of its own into the hands of the Canadian Government.

Having made these terms with the British Government, the Dominion Government could then turn to the Provincial Governments and ask whether any or all of them would undertake to organize depots to which the immigrants could be distributed from the Dominion depots at the ports of landing. The Provincial depot would be of the nature of a barrack on farm land, where the soldier could be housed and fed for a few months and be given meanwhile training in the elements, **not of farming**, but of farm labor. Such an institution in New South Wales has met with conspicuous success. It was found that if a farmer hired a raw laborer soon after landing the farmer had not time to teach him how to harness the horses or the other elementary duties of a farm laborer. The result was often a quarrel, the man drifting back into town life. A farmer cannot be expected to teach an immigrant the alphabet of his business when there is no guarantee that the man will not leave him as soon as he has learned enough to be useful.

To meet this difficulty a depot was created in New South Wales at which raw immigrants are taught the rudiments of agricultural labor. Experience has proved that the farmers eagerly compete to secure the services of the immigrants handled at this depot when they have had no more than three months' training. When a laborer knows the alphabet of farm labor he gives a farmer some value for his hire straight away. The moment a man is willing and qualified to earn his living as a farm laborer he will pick up the grammar and syntax of the business for himself. In a country with the boundless opportunities of Canada all but the morally deficient will ripen into farmers able and competent to employ laborers of their own.

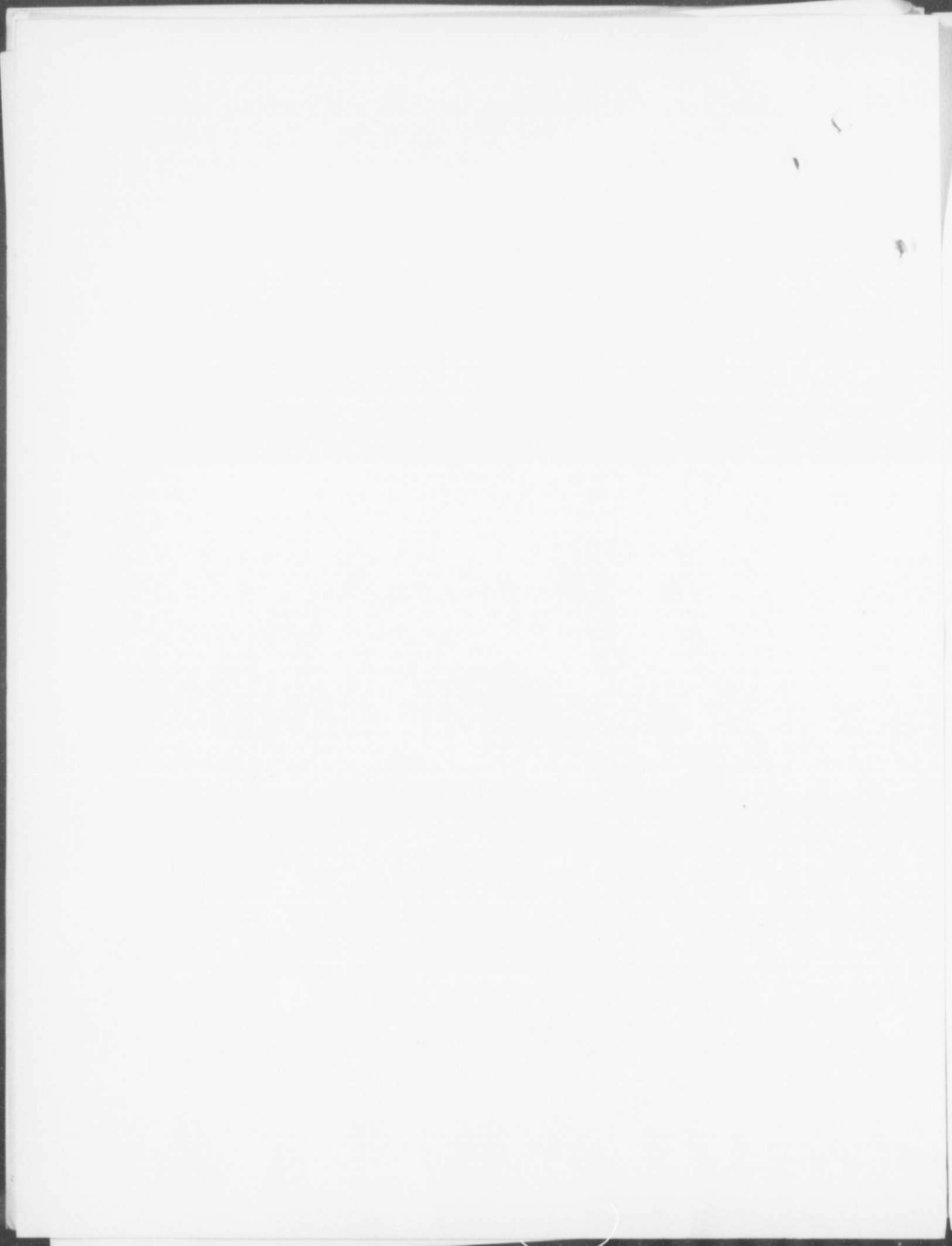
I suggest, therefore, that the Dominion Government should invite the Provincial Governments to establish on suitable agricultural land depots on the lines of that instituted in New South



Wales. The Dominion Government might share the cost of erecting such rude buildings as would be required, and give a capitation grant upon every immigrant received at the Provincial depot. The immigrant soldier could thus be transferred without delay from the Dominion depot at the port of landing to the Provincial depot in which he would be trained. In your agricultural experts and farmers you should be able to find plenty of qualified instructors. Many such instructors could be found amongst young farmers who come back from the front. The men, as trained for service, could then be found places under the farmers of the Province, who would thus obtain an invaluable supply of hired labor.

You will never again have such a fund of immigrants from which to build up your population here as that which is now being prepared in the trenches. Dr. Grenfell reports that their physique is developed to an incredible extent by the training and open-air life. He saw town-bred boys whom he had known with hollow chests and shoulders like champagne bottles turned into upstanding, full-chested, square-shouldered men. They are all learning the use of pick and shovel. Many are being trained to understand the intricate machinery of modern artillery and machine guns—an excellent grounding for learning how to handle a self-binding harvester. How far you can take and keep these men for Canada when they offer to come here will simply depend upon what you do in advance to get ready for receiving them.

Within limits the immigrant might be allowed to choose his own Province in which to start his Canadian career. I venture to submit, however, that the Dominion Government should not abandon its inherent right to direct the stream of immigration in accordance with the best interests of the country. As an outsider, may I venture to say that you cannot go on pouring the main stream of oversea immigration into Western Canada without serious danger to your National Unity, and this is true even of that part of the stream which is British. The real link which binds West to East is the Western settler who was born and bred in Eastern Canada. The Englishman, and still more the radical Scotchman, who goes straight to Western Canada has no opportunity of acquiring a knowledge of or sympathy with the older part of this great country. The majority are free traders by tradition. They acquire only the prejudice of the West against the East, and these prejudices are not counter-balanced by any knowledge of the Eastern society, with its great national traditions. I would plead most earnestly that British immigrants



should at least be encouraged to take their training and make their start in the Eastern Provinces. Some of them, at any rate, will save their wages, buy farms ready equipped, and so leave the Canadian-born settlers free to go West. Surely the statesmanlike policy is to encourage your native-born farmers to go West and bind the West to you, filling in the places they leave vacant with British immigrants from overseas.

The recommendations of this paper may be summarized as follows :—

I. That the Dominion Government should notify the British Government that as soon as its own soldiers are repatriated it is willing to receive any British soldier desirous of settling in Canada on the following terms :

(1) That he will remain for a period not exceeding six months in a Government depot, receiving instruction in agricultural labor.

(2) That during that period he will be subject to repatriation in the event of misconduct.

(3) That when discharged from the depot he will accept one month's engagement to a farmer at wages approved by the Government.

II. That the Dominion Government establish depots in which to receive the immigrant on landing.

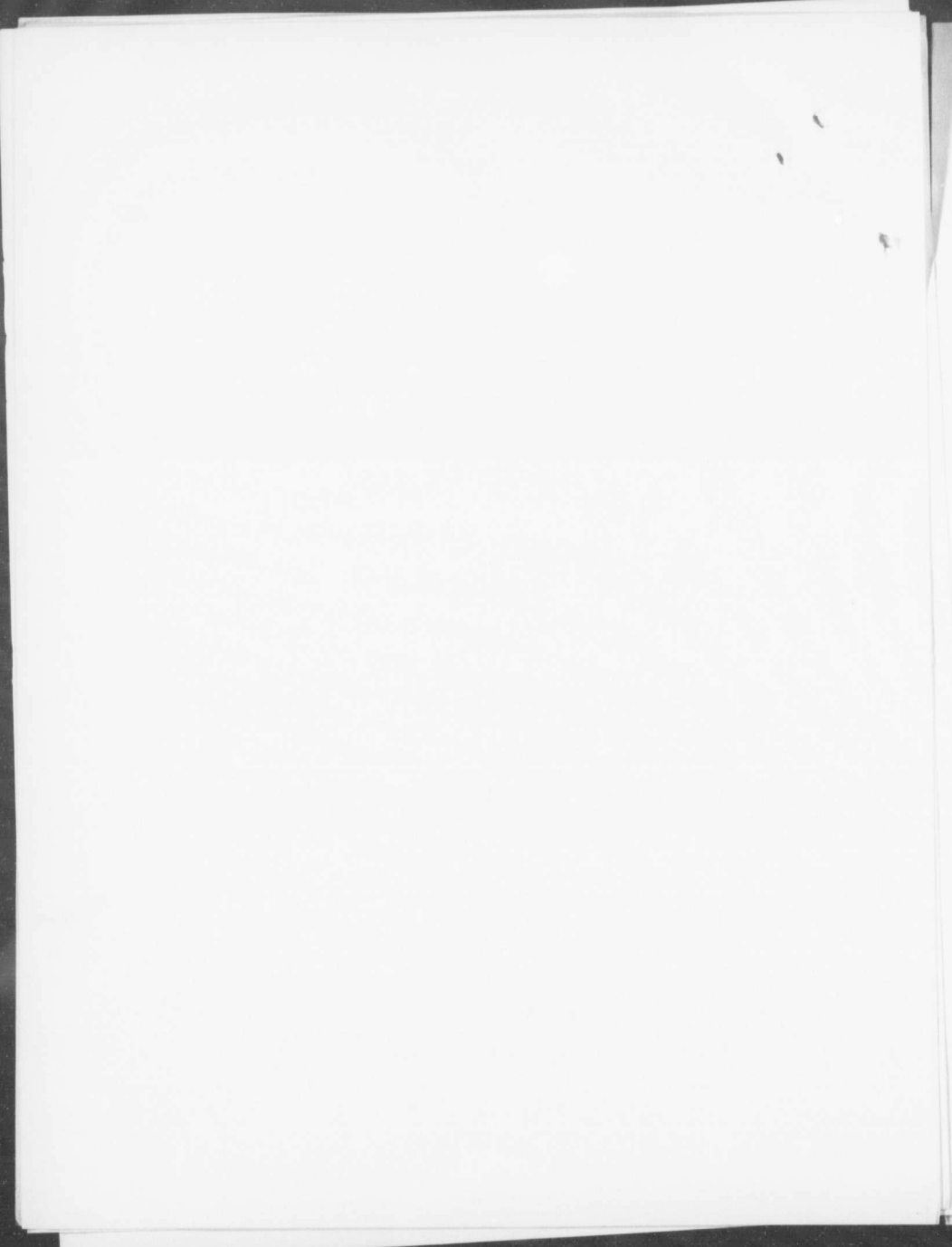
III. That the Dominion Government invite the Provincial Governments to establish the depots in which the immigrants can be trained for agricultural labor.

IV. That the Provincial Government should also undertake to place the immigrant when trained at approved wages for one month in the service of a practical farmer.

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Confidential

May I venture to add another warning, based upon my own experience in South Africa. We spent, if I remember right, £3,000,000 in putting British settlers, for the most part soldiers, on the land. This expenditure was in great part wasted by reason of the fact that so many of the settlers remained unmarried. This was simply due to the fact that there were no women in the



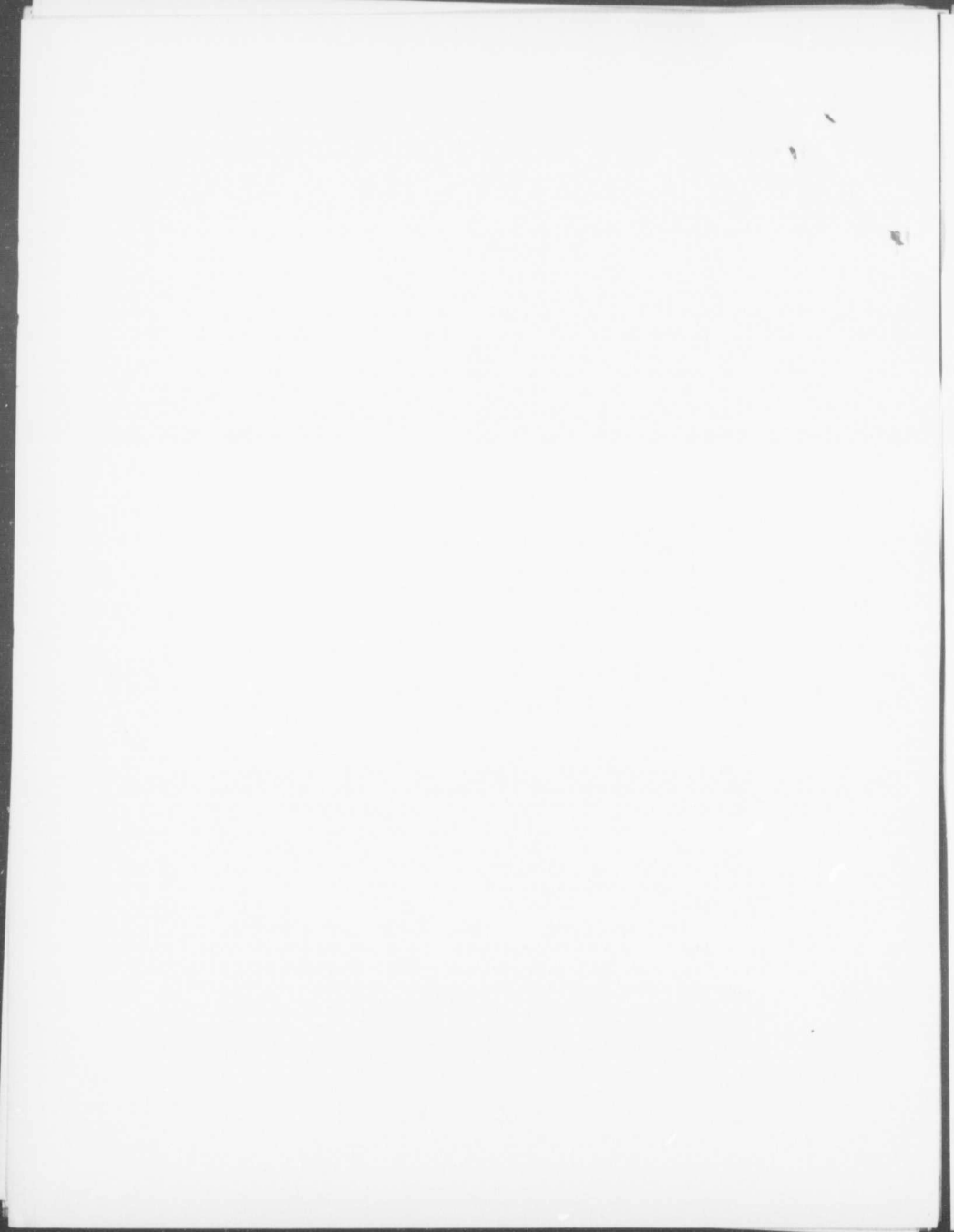
neighborhood with whom they could make friends, and so fall in love in the way natural and proper to young men. Having lived in a South African community in which there were two bachelors to every spinster, I find it difficult to exaggerate the social as well as the political evils of such conditions.

Female immigration is a much more difficult and delicate thing to foster than male immigration, and for that reason requires more attention and care on the part of Governments, whose first duty is not to increase wealth, but to build up a decent human society. It is, however, of vital importance not to mention the question of marriage in public. By doing so you estrange the very class of girls you most need at the outset. Nice girls are not going to expose themselves to the suspicion of husband-hunting. The women you want in this country are the best you can get, and the best are to be got by offering them a genuine opportunity of social service. In your farming districts you have such opportunities calling out to be filled. I submit that a woman when she is sick, and still more when she is about to give her country a Canadian-born child, is as much entitled to the service of a trained nurse as of a doctor. Is it not reasonable, therefore, that Canadian Governments should accept the principle that a farmer's wife is entitled, on payment of the necessary fees, to the service of a trained mid-wife in the hour of her need? And this, I believe, can be done almost without cost, if Dominion and Provincial Governments will take the necessary steps.

A Provincial Government might map out its farming community into districts of a suitable size, and undertake to establish in the centre of each district a community of nurses, in telephone connection with farms and doctors. By contract with a local garage, arrangements could be made to deliver a properly equipped nurse at any house in the district in a few hours. In cases of childbirth, approximate notice can, of course, be given, and arrangements be made in advance to secure that a nurse is available.

Through Government machinery and by passing the necessary legislation, effective arrangements could be made to recover the fees necessary to pay the cost of the nurse, calculated to cover the cost of the whole establishment.

By private benevolence, funds could be created to aid the exceptional cases in which families are too poor to pay all the fees. The question, however, is not, in a country like this, one

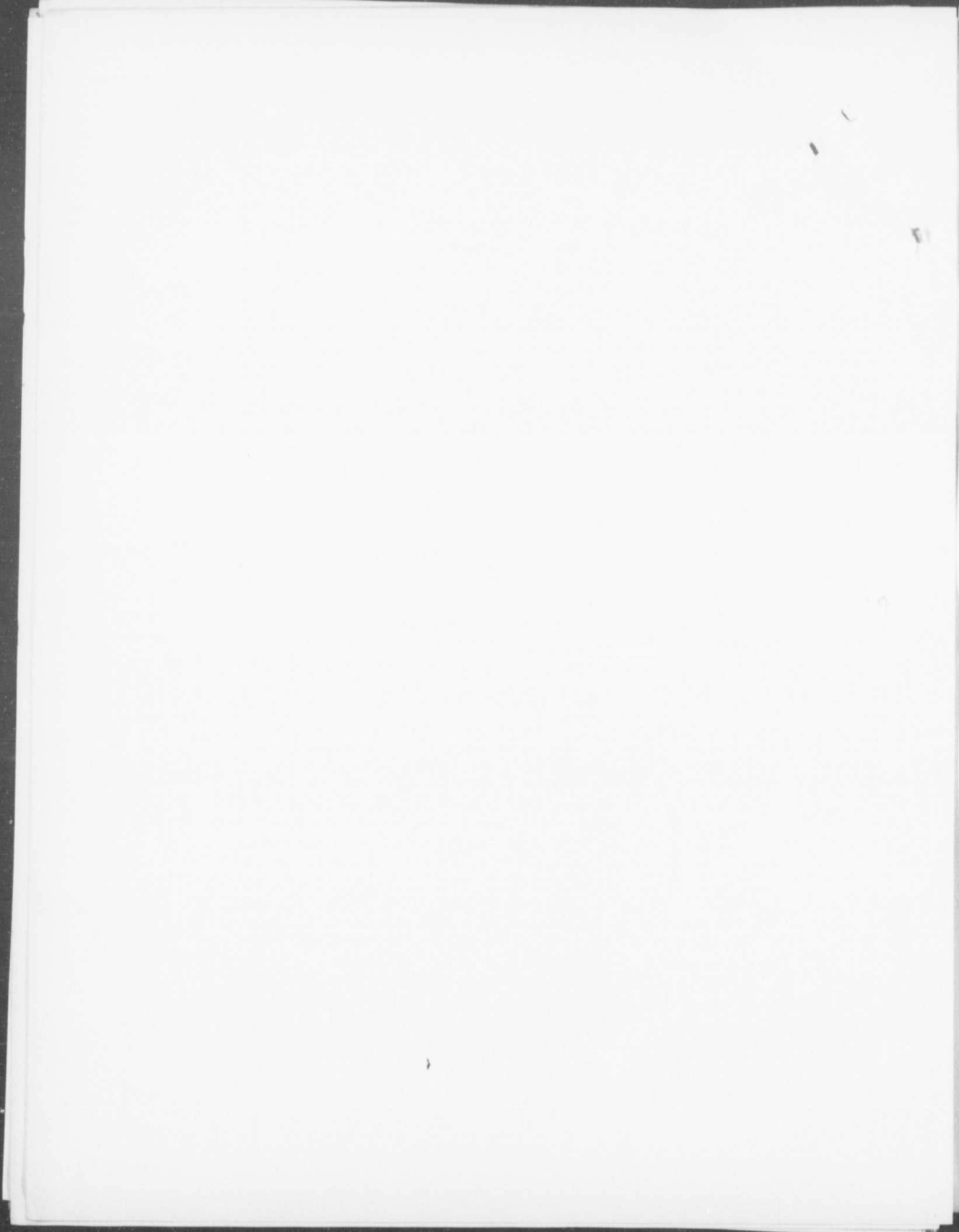


of means, but merely one of rendering the nurses available, and this after the war will be exceptionally easy.

The pick of our English girls are nursing the wounded. Many of them have earned their experience close behind the lines in France and Serbia. When peace is made, you have only to appeal to these women to continue their splendid work on the frontiers of the Empire, and you will secure the pick of them. They would, of course, have to take up a course in midwifery before coming here.

The recruiting agency should be the Dominion Government, aided by voluntary agencies of public-spirited women to aid in the selection here and in Britain. I suggest that the Dominion Government should adopt the principle that it means to have in Canada a corps of nurses, who can be called up and sent to the front to nurse its soldiers in the event of war. In view of this, it should undertake to pay the Provincial Government a capitation grant on every nurse employed by it on nursing in agricultural districts. Such a provision will attract the best girls who have taken to nursing in this war. The appeal could be made by a recognized voluntary agency, of British and Canadian women, presided over by some personage common to both countries, like the Duchess of Connaught or the Princess Patricia.

The nurses so selected could be handed over to the Provincial Governments and drafted into the District Nursing Settlements. At the head of each should, of course, be placed an elderly and responsible matron—if possible a Canadian who knows the ways of the country. I lay stress upon this because an elderly Englishwoman can scarcely appreciate the freedom of intercourse between young people, which is one of the best and most wholesome features of Canadian life. I have been in no part of the world in which the relations of young men and women are simpler, freer or more wholesome than in Canada, and that is one reason why I am so anxious that the best of our girls should be encouraged to follow the boys who come to this country. As nurses trained for service in a farming community they will have the finest possible preparation for making the best of wives here. Your difficulty will be to fill their places at the nursing settlements as quickly as they will be emptied by marriage with the young farmers. This must be the task of the Dominion Government, acting through its auxiliary agency. That agency should call for recruits, select the candidates and put them out for a year as probationers in an English hospital. In the course of this year



they should be hand-picked, for perhaps not one in five girls offering is suitable for nursing. But when handpicked they should, if possible, be sent to Canada for training. Above all, they should be trained to the idea that they are not only to nurse the sick mother, but run the house for her and feed the children and husband till she is about again. They will be glad enough of similar help when their turn comes. They must get right away from the first from the tradition of the nursing profession that the nurse must not touch housework. You can, as this war shows, get girls to do anything, if you make the right appeal and put the claims you make on their spirit for service high enough.

By such a scheme you will remove the greatest impediment which now exists to the freer immigration of women into Canadian country life. It is the prospect of helplessness in sickness or child-birth which more than anything else deters them from coming. If once Canada can make it understood that every woman in the country district can get a qualified nurse to help her through, women will come of themselves from Britain much more readily than they do at present.

I have marked this part of my memorandum as confidential for the reason given above. One of your objects is to get the right sort of girls to come here for your young men to pick their wives from. But you **must** leave that in the background. You cannot mention it in public without alienating all but the class of women that you least want to bring here.

The recommendations in this annexure may be summarized as follows:—

I. That the Provincial Governments recognize the equipment of each agricultural district with a staff of nurses trained to midwifery as an obligation resting on themselves.

II. That the cost be defrayed by fees charged to patients, to be collected by the Provincial Government.

III. That the Dominion Government undertake to pay a capitation grant on each nurse, on condition that she is available for military service in time of war.

IV. That the Dominion Government undertake the recruitment of nurses in England, through an organization of ladies in Canada and Britain, under the presidency of some Lady of the highest position.

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