

# **BACK TO THE LAND**

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## **A National and Imperial Policy**

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- ¶ Canada Must Assist the British Empire to her Utmost.
- ¶ The Dominion can treble her Agricultural Area and thus Furnish Happy Homes for the Unemployed.
- ¶ Increased Quantity of Food-stuffs for Army and Empire.
- ¶ More remunerative traffic for our Transportation Lines.
- Larger Markets for our Industries.
- ¶ Prosperity for the whole Dominion of Canada and Most Effective Assistance to the Empire.

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ISSUED BY

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**THE BOARD OF TRADE OF THE CITY OF PORT ARTHUR**

# Back to the Land

A NATIONAL AND  
IMPERIAL POLICY

Issued by the Board of Trade  
of the City of Port Arthur

Nineteen Hundred and Fourteen

1914

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# BACK TO THE LAND

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Canada has an area of over 2,386,985,000 acres of land almost equal to that of Europe, which has a population of over 400,000,000.

In 1912 Canada had a population of less than 8,000,000 and had only 32,440,420 acres under field crops, but the yield therefrom was worth more than \$510,000,000. In addition to this, animal and other farm products produced in Canada amounted to \$300,000,000 and the value of our mineral, fishery and forest products amounted to \$244,000,000, making a total of \$1,055,000,000.

There is in the different provinces land available for cultivation as follows:

	Acres
Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island	20,000,000
Quebec	50,000,000
<b>Ontario</b>	<b>56,500,000</b>
Manitoba	29,500,000
Saskatchewan	93,000,000
Alberta	96,400,000
British Columbia	24,000,000
 Total	 369,400,000

From the above it will be seen that ninety per cent. of these available lands have not been brought under cultivation.

## HIGH PRICES ASSURED

With the low rate of wages and the high price of wheat and all farm products will command during the next number of years, very handsome profits are assured for the industrious farmer.

## OUR IMPERATIVE DUTY

Major-General Sir William Otter, in his message to the Canadian people, said: "Above all, measures should be taken to stimulate the production of food stuffs. One of the greatest services which the

Canadian people can render to the Empire at the present is to increase our supply of food for the British people. This is at once our duty and our opportunity."

The Toronto Daily Globe said editorially: "We have had enough exploitations, mergers, promotions, and real estate speculation. We must now get to work and justify the vast expenditures undertaken to open the country and provide machinery for production and distribution. Every economist of note who has written on our financial problems during the past year has given us the sound advice, 'Get to work, produce things the world needs: grain, cattle, lumber, paper, fish, metals and minerals.' "

In 1911 our rural population was 3,925,679 and our urban population 3,289,965. During the preceding ten years, while the rural population only increased 516,163, the population in our towns and cities increased 1,250,165 and while the annual production of our farms, mines, fisheries and forests totals \$1,055,000,000, the product of our factories in 1913 is said to amount to \$1,500,000,000.

In 1900 we had 17,657 miles of railway and in 1913 we had 29,304 miles, representing an investment of over \$1,500,000,000, of which nearly fifty per cent. lies west of the City of Port Arthur. There are millions of acres of good arable lands in proximity to the lines of railway and it is imperative that Canada should give every possible assistance to secure the development of our extensive agricultural and mineral resources to furnish remunerative traffic for our railways and an increased home market for our extensive industries.

#### **OPPORTUNE TIME TO SECURE SOME OF THE WORLD'S BEST FARMERS**

We all admire the noble men and women of the Kingdom of Belgium and the brave defence made by them against the ruthless aggressor. The Belgian authorities have suggested that the fertile lands of Canada would furnish a good opportunity for the Belgian farmers to homestead, as in many cases their farms are ruined. The Belgian farmer has for many generations followed intensive farming and is one of the best farmers in the world, and with a little assistance could soon make an excellent living in Northern Ontario, and also help the fatherless Belgian families to make a living on farms in their community.

The Dominion Government should lend \$50,000,000 to the various township municipalities throughout Canada on their municipal

debentures—repayable in five years with interest at five per cent. payable each year—such sums to be advanced only for the clearing of land or the bringing of same under cultivation or to increase very materially the area used for intensive farming and market gardening, the money to be advanced to the owner of the land under a frontage improvement bylaw whereby the sum advanced and interest thereon should become a first lien on such land in the same way as money expended for frontage improvement or for drainage purposes; the annual payment to be collected as a frontage or drainage tax each year and in the event of default the land could be sold at a tax sale in the usual way; such improvement bylaw to be passed when petition and covenant of the owner to repay such amount, not exceeding one thousand dollars to any one ratepayer, is filed and the money to be advanced as the improvements are actually made. If desirable, the advance might be limited to sixty per cent. of the value of such improvements, and it could be made by the Dominion Government direct to the farmers on first mortgage security, as is done in New Zealand.

Substantial amounts might also be lent out of such a fund to towns and cities on their debentures to lend to those desiring to engage in market gardening and other intensive farming within or in the proximity of such towns and cities so as to furnish remunerative work for the unemployed next year and all succeeding years and thereby increase materially the local supply of vegetables at reasonable prices.

#### **SECURITIES WOULD BE BOUGHT**

To secure the rapid development of the agricultural resources of Canada a similar sum of \$50,000,000 should be lent during each of the succeeding four years to secure additional areas to be brought under cultivation and thereafter the repayments of principal by the municipalities to the Dominion would furnish an annual loan fund of \$50,000,000 for each and every succeeding year.

The British capitalists who now hold most of our railway, municipal and government securities, aggregating over \$2,000,000,000, would gladly buy these securities to strengthen their present holdings and secure comfortable homes for the Belgian refugees and for thousands from Great Britain and France.

Under such a policy it is confidently believed that thousands of our unemployed men could be profitably engaged in Northern Ontario and in most of the provinces of Canada during the coming

winter in underbrushing and chopping trees into cordwood and other valuable products and during the spring time in burning the brush off and planting the new land with potatoes, turnips, and other valuable crops. The average yield of potatoes in Northern Ontario per acre is about eighty per cent. greater than that of Old Ontario.

Extensive operations could be carried on during most of the year in breaking up prairie land or in clearing and cultivating our wooded land so as to furnish amply remunerative work for our own citizens and at the same time furnish comfortable farm homes for thousands of the brave Belgian refugees and our fellow citizens out of work in Great Britain.

#### WHAT MINNESOTA DOES

The State of Minnesota, under Chapter 367 of its general laws for 1911, has cleared some ten or fifteen acres on each homestead and is now offering same to settlers, terms fifteen per cent. cash and balance at end of forty years with interest at four per cent. per annum.

In Great Britain some of the golf links are now being cultivated so as to increase the output of food stuffs for 1915.

During the present depression in Europe, which will probably continue for many years after the war, we can, under such a policy, secure many of the best farmers in Belgium and France, who have been ruined by the present war, to settle in Canada.

At the close of the war many of the brave soldiers now fighting the battles of the Empire would be glad to take up farms in Canada if this assistance were rendered to them by the Dominion of Canada.

The larger rural population we have in Canada, the better chance there will be for our soldiers to return to their former occupations if they prefer same to farming.

This policy would secure the clearing and cultivating of thousands of acres for market gardening and dairying in the vicinity of our towns and cities in Northern Ontario, and would enable the owners to have the work done at a very low cost and also furnish remunerative employment for thousands of our unemployed in the cities at the present time, and for all succeeding years in market gardening and other intensive farming.

Capital is now so scarce that every possible dollar should be spent on reproductive improvements. Every dollar spent on clearing land will probably each and every year thereafter bring back a dollar's worth of farm product.

## OTHER COUNTRIES HAVE ADVANCED MILLIONS TO THEIR FARMERS AT FIVE PER CENT. WITH UNQUALIFIED SUCCESS

In about 1883 the Argentine Republic gave 250 acres to their pioneer settlers and advanced to them \$1000 each in improvements and machinery, aggregating about \$50,000,000, repayable in ten years, with interest at five per cent. In six years they secured 1,200,000 immigrants and over \$750,000,000 British gold, to be invested in their republic.

In 1895 New Zealand lent about \$15,000,000 at five per cent. to its farmers as the farmers alleged that, owing to the low price paid for farm products, they were unable to pay the current rate of eight per cent.

In 1899 there was fifty-five per cent. more land under cultivation than in 1890 and an increase of over twenty-two per cent. in its population. So successful has the policy been that the state has now lent about \$65,000,000 and it has suffered no loss and has a surplus profit of \$1,500,000.

## TRANSFORMATION OF IRELAND

Mr. Charles McIntyre, in the Canadian Courier of March 22nd, 1912, stated: "But the best illustration for our purpose may be found in Ireland. There the British government has not only advanced money to tenants for the purpose of acquiring their land, in fee simple, but it has also advanced money for the erection of cottages in the country districts.

As a result of this policy in Ireland, the number of tenant purchasers in 1911 was 198,000, representing advances made to the enormous sum of \$331,000,000 and covering an area of 6,000,000 acres. Already, by one form or another of government credit, not less than 34,000 cottages have been constructed in the country districts of Ireland.

"At the present time over 5000 more are under construction. For the erection of such buildings the enormous sum of \$25,000,000 has been sanctioned. There the government has not sold the cottages but has rented them at a very small cost, and an agricultural laborer can rent a fairly good house with an acre of land for twenty-six cents a week.

"So far as I am aware, the peasants of Ireland have universally kept up their payments to the government and very soon the greater

portion of the farmers in Ireland will be the absolute owners of their land in fee simple. The effect upon the country has been extremely encouraging, and Ireland today is enjoying a prosperity which she has never known in all her history."

#### **AUSTRALIA HAS ADVANCED OVER \$82,000,000 TO HER FARMERS**

During the year 1908-1911 The Australian Commonwealth advanced to her farmers over \$82,000,000 and is endeavoring to secure the best class of farmers to settle on her homestead lands.

#### **UNITED STATES ASSISTS SETTLERS**

To assist the Salvation Army in their work of placing reclaimed unfortunates on irrigated farms in Colorado and other states, the United States' Government some years ago authorized the loaning of \$50,000,000 to such homestead settlers and the policy has proved to be an unqualified success.

#### **FRANCE**

In 1910 a law was passed in France providing for the acquisition and development of small rural properties through long term individual loans.

#### **DENMARK**

Little Denmark by her system of small holdings and co-operation has actually changed the current of migration from the cities back to the country and about five-sixths of her property is owned by small freeholders.

#### **ENGLAND**

Power has been given freely to the cities of England and Germany to acquire land and to loan money to associations and to individuals for the erection of buildings.

#### **MANY LEADING STATESMEN AND NEWSPAPERS SUPPORT THIS POLICY**

Sir George Paish, the leading economist in the British Empire and the former editor of the London Statist, in his letter to that paper,

in effect stated : "For years millions of dollars have been poured out on new railway lines and other necessary undertakings. It is very desirable that abundance of capital should now be provided for farming and mining in order for one thing that the great sum of capital spent in Canada in recent years may become productive and for another that the world's supplies of food may be largely increased.

There should be a three-fold increase in the present decade in the output of our farms, forests, mines, fisheries and manufacturing industries."

Railways, banks, traders, investors, the people themselves, must all co-operate.

But upon the Dominion Government and upon the several Governments rests the special duty of doing all they can to stimulate the production.

**THE EXTENSION OF LIBERAL CREDITS TO AGRICULTURISTS TO ENABLE THEM TO EXPAND THEIR OPERATIONS IS ONE OF THE MOST PRESSING NEEDS OF THE MOMENT AND NO TIME SHOULD BE LOST IN PROVIDING SUCH ACCOMMODATION."**

The Financial Saturday Night, Toronto, stated : "The most effective means for production of wealth in Canada is through agriculture. Never before did the country as a whole recognize the value of the farmer and the broad acres awaiting cultivation.

"There is a more general recognition that the country would have been better off had the agricultural interests been given first place until the natural development brought about the building up of industries of a self-sustaining character instead of stimulating the industries at the expense of agriculture."

The Hamilton Herald editorially endorses the plan of the Port Arthur Board of Trade for the stimulation of Canada's agricultural development. The Herald says :

"Grow more Wheat," is the advice, official and unofficial, which has been offered to Canadian farmers. Of course the advice is sound, but it is quite probable that the average Canadian farmer does not need it. He is shrewd enough to see for himself that the world's supply of wheat next year will be short because millions of men who ought to be growing grain or preparing to grow it are engaged in slaughtering each other and that in consequence there will be a great demand for wheat at high prices. BUT IT IS EASIER FOR THE FARMER TO PERCEIVE THIS THAN IT IS TO INCREASE HIS ACREAGE SOWN TO WHEAT. MUCH AS HE WOULD LIKE TO

DO IT, HE MAY BE UNABLE TO BECAUSE HE LACKS THE NECESSARY CAPITAL AND CANNOT RAISE IT.

### THE PORT ARTHUR PLAN

"TO MEET THIS DIFFICULTY THE PORT ARTHUR BOARD OF TRADE PROPOSES A PLAN OF ACTION. ITS PLAN IS THAT THE DOMINION GOVERNMENT SHALL LOAN, SAY, \$50,000,000 TO THE TOWNSHIP MUNICIPALITIES OF CANADA ON THEIR MUNICIPAL DEBENTURES FOR FIVE YEARS WITH INTEREST AT FIVE PER CENT., REPAYABLE ANNUALLY ON CONDITION that the municipalities lend the money to ratepayers to be expended in clearing and bringing under cultivation additional land ; the loan to be a first lien against the land ; the advance to any one farmer not to exceed \$1,000 ; the loans to the municipalities to be advanced as the improvements are made.

### BUSINESSLIKE SCHEME

"IT IS A BUSINESS LIKE SCHEME AND WE SEE NO REASON WHY IT SHOULD NOT BE WORKABLE IF THERE WERE EFFICIENT GOVERNMENT INSPECTORS TO MAKE SURE THAT THE PLAN WAS BEING PROPERLY CARRIED OUT. Very probably it would produce immediate returns, and in the five years would add to the country much more wealth than the total amount of the loans.

### AN OBJECTION ANSWERED

"The plan might be objected to as savoring of "paternalism," or even a state of socialism. But it is no more paternal or socialistic in principle than is the distribution of seed grain to farmers who have had hard luck, or than the Ontario Hydro-Electric project, of which Sir Robert Borden has spoken in terms of high appreciation."

Mr. Edward Kyle in the Canadian Courier stated : "Farms can be cleared in the clay belt by the unemployed and houses built for them to which their families can be removed from the towns and cities. The majority of the settlers once given a start in the way of house and machinery can be relied upon to discharge their obligations. We have to get through a difficult season to preserve the credit of Canada with working men and women no less than with capitalists and to keep as many good citizens as possible within our borders."

The Montreal Herald and The Daily Telegraph of Oct. 7th endorses the Port Arthur policy as follows :

### HOW TO RESTORE CANADIAN PROSPERITY

"THE SCHEME IS A TRULY STATESMANLIKE ONE and we have no hesitation whatever in joining our Port Arthur contemporary in earnestly recommending it to the consideration alike of those practical business men who constitute our Boards of Trade and of the Politicians who represent us in Parliament. Every one is wondering how the war is going to affect Canada.

"In regard to many schemes of development it is difficult to foresee the outcome. But the future in regard to the industry of agriculture is plain for all to see. The war will cause an enormous shortage in the wheat crops of Europe and the great Russian Empire. That shortage will cause an increase in the demand for foodstuffs and an increase also in the price of them.

"Canada has the land to produce a far bigger crop of wheat than she does now, she has also the men. What is lacking is the capital to finance the ploughing and cropping of large areas. Given assistance in this direction, the wheat crop of Canada could easily be increased fifty or even a hundred per cent.

"If we prepare now for such a big crop, next year by far the largest amount of gold that has ever come to Canada will flow into this country—and it will flow here not in the form of loans but as payment for products.

"Nobody needs to be told what a stimulating effect this would have on every form of business activity. **Canada has a plain duty to herself and to the Empire in this matter.**

### "NOW IS THE TIME TO ACT."

The policy of the government lending necessary money to the pioneer settler has been heartily approved of some years ago by The Toronto Daily News, The Globe, The Mail and Empire, The Canadian Courier, The Canadian Magazine, The Monetary Times and many other leading newspapers. Some extracts from such editorials in such newspapers are reproduced hereunder :

### THE CHEAPEST AND BEST METHOD OF PHILANTHROPY

"The organization of farm colonies under the auspices of the Salvation Army is one of the most promising movements for the relief of

modern poverty that has yet been conceived."

"To take a man who has gone down in the struggle for subsistence in a great city, transport him to the irrigated plains of Colorado and lend him a sum sufficient to keep the wolf from the door, until by his own exertions he has produced sufficient for the primary needs of his family, is to reclaim at least two generations from poverty or perhaps worse.

"To assist the movement, the United States Government has created a colonization bureau and provided for the issue of bonds to the amount of \$5,000,000 a year for ten years, a total of fifty million. This money is used to establish bona fide worthy families on farms. These loans must not exceed \$1,500, and the money is to be used for the purpose of erecting houses, purchasing implements, stock and supplies."

The testimony of Dr. Albert Shaw as to the effectiveness of the farm colonies is quite unqualified.

In an article in the Review of Reviews he said : "One of the chief advantages of the colony is that there can be supplied to each uninstructed comer the necessary oversight and guidance. Where there is industry, fair intelligence, energy and a determination to get on, the chance of failure is reduced to a minimum. May these happy and wholesome farm colonies be multiplied by the thousands and may they take hundreds of thousands of unfortunate town-dwellers to the busy but serene and wholesome life of the irrigated farm."—The Daily News, Toronto.

#### **SECURE BRITISH SETTLERS AND STRENGTHEN THE BONDS OF THE EMPIRE**

There are at present thousands of prospective immigrants in the British Isles, and with a little assistance these ready-made citizens could be installed each on a farm in Alberta or Saskatchewan. Some scheme could be devised whereby intending immigrants could be assisted by loans of money, stock and implements in founding new homes in the west. The help would be only temporary, as the money advanced could be returned when the new settler was able, so that the expense of the scheme would be small indeed and insignificant compared with the enormous advantages which would accrue to Canada.—The Mail and Empire, Toronto.

#### **THE BEST SETTLERS ARE OF PRICELESS VALUE**

There is no doubt that the rapid settling of Northern Ontario

will be of vital importance to the future commercial of Old Ontario. Almost anything in reason, therefore, is likely to be taken into favor that promises ready means for the carrying out of that project. Some plan to bring the land and the settler together will meet with ready sympathy, for it is becoming understood what an enormous deal depends upon populating Canada with the right sort of men and women.

—**Monetary Times, Toronto.**

### **THE ONLY SANE METHOD**

The proper method for America is to decide to accept only such colonists as have been "selected." These should be taken in hand and distributed where they will do best for themselves and best for the country. Moreover, their initial efforts should be directed and guided by the government, capital being advanced where necessary. This is the only sane and successful method.—**The Canadian Magazine.**

### **NORTHERN ONTARIO**

If Ontario wishes to retain within its borders the sons and daughters who now migrate to the west in ever-increasing numbers the system of opening the Northland must be changed. The settlers must be given roads and they must be given aid in making the initial clearings. The Government must make provision by which the settler as he clears the land can obtain by loan repayable on easy terms part of the value that the clearing gives to his holding. The soil is rich, the climate is favorable, the markets in the mining and lumbering camps are nearby and profitable. What the country needs is a little first aid as the clearings extend. The settler will be abundantly able to take care of himself. Ontario must go to the rescue of the heroic pioneers of the north.—**Toronto Globe.**

### **BRING MEN TO CANADA**

The meeting to be addressed by Madame Vandervelde, of Belgium in Massey hall, on Saturday night, will beyond doubt respond most generally to the appeal for aid to the unfortunate Belgian refugees. That will be as it should be, but is there nothing more to be done ? We venture to think that the meeting should not adjourn without passing a resolution calling upon the Dominion government to invite the homeless and heroic Belgians to come and cast their lot in with us in Canada. It would be quite feasible for the government to bring a thousand settlers with their families from Belgium and settle them in

the west. They would help to build up the country, make devoted citizens and soon acquire a competence. Let us give twice by giving quickly to the relief fund, but let us also do something that will permanently benefit our allies and at the same time strengthen Canada.—  
**Toronto World.**

#### **BACK TO THE LAND**

**Mr. Norman Lambert** in the **Toronto Globe** of Sept. 26th stated : “A war in six weeks has brought the people of Western Canada to a realization of the true value of their country which ten years of progress and development could not impress upon them.”

It is rather interesting now to find a policy of “back to the land” being championed on all sides in a country which has less than ten per cent. of agricultural areas under cultivation. During the past month every Board of Trade in the west that has a voice, has been discussing ways and means of placing the large number of unemployed people now burdening the towns and cities on the land, where they would be able to support themselves and in time become contributors to the food of the Dominion.

“The Closer Community Settlement Plan” has been launched by the **Regina business men**. The scheme provides for the securing of large tracts of land to be disposed of and furnished to the settler on long terms of payment and for the financing of the settler until such time as he would be in a position to keep himself.

**Mr. W. Swanson** in the **Canadian Courier** March 8th, 1913, stated “It has been widely advocated that the farmers should be encouraged to form co-operative credit societies through Dominion legislation. This method has attained wide dimensions in France, Belgium, Italy, Austria and Germany.”

But little is to be expected by the farmer in the west at present from any such organization. A relatively numerous population is essential for the functioning of such a bank.

It appears to be perfectly plain that the required help must come through government loans to farmers somewhat along the lines followed by Australia.

Aristotle said : “In order to live nobly we must first have the means to live.”

#### **RURAL SETTLEMENTS A NATIONAL SAFEGUARD**

The following extracts are taken from the report of the Commiss-

sioner, Sir H. Rider Haggard, on the Salvation Army Colonies, to the British Parliament June, 1905 :

"I believe that in the majority of cases village-born folk go to the cities and in many cases remain in them because they can find no prospect of opportunity on the land and subsequently, because they have not the means of escape with their wives and children from the web of town life in which they are entangled. Given that prospect and opportunity and given those means such folk will avail themselves of them with eagerness. These are the views which my recent investigations confirm me. If my opinions are still thought visionary or optimistic I can only point out that broadly speaking I am delighted to find that they are shared by such men as Roosevelt, the enlightened and far-seeing President of the United States, the Honourable Mr. Wilson who was born a Scotchman, but is Secretary for Agriculture in the same country, a man of vast experience, by Earl Grey, the (late) Governor-General of Canada, and by General Booth of the Salvation Army, who perhaps is better acquainted with the condition of our poor men than any other living man. I will state my profound conviction that the future welfare of our country depends whether or not it is possible to retain or settle upon the soil a fair proportion practical account the public credit and the waste force of benevolence."

**Mr. J. J. Hill, President of the Great Northern Railway, some years ago said :** "A good farm of 160 or 320 acres is a comfortable, happy home. A man can be a prince on such a farm. Keep your children on the farm and make intelligent men and women of them and the nation will be better off when the young men remain on the farm.

"The farmer, if he knows it, is the most independent man in the world. It is the farm that is the stay and support of our foreign trade as well as our domestic prosperity. The country wants farm homes. Always in peace and in war they have been the national reliance."

#### AMERICAN OPINION

We quote the following from the New York Literary Digest of Sept. 7th, 1912 : "One thing that helps to make the cost of living ten per cent. higher in the United States than in Europe is an undue interest tax of \$210,000,000 a year on the American farmer. Cheaper money for the small farmer is the first of our agricultural problems.

As things stand, this class of citizen, the fundamental wealth producer of the country, is given poorer service by our banks than almost any other man in American industry." Although he has the finest security for current loans there is in the world, namely, products that go into immediate consumption and that sell in all the markets of the world every hour of the day yet he pays double the rate paid by manufacturers of industrial products that have to be marketed with great skill on a treacherous and delicate market.

In **The World's Work** for September, 1912, President Yoakum of the St. Louis and San Francisco Railway, stated : "The work of re-organizing the farm finance of the United States is sure to come. The rapidity of its realization depends upon the farmers of the United States. They are the first to receive the benefits. If they do not arouse themselves to wipe out this terrific annual tax upon their industry no other man can accomplish the purpose for them. If on the contrary they through their organizations and through their representatives in Congress demand legislation to accomplish this purpose, I have no hesitation in saying that the annual interest saved ten years from now will be enough to pay the ruling rate at that time on more than \$4,000,000,000 of additional money—enough to open and cultivate every section of the country to its full capacity."

For land the starving city worker cries  
And land untilled awaiting labor lies,  
Yet wealth and power are blind and cannot see  
That wealth would grow and still more staple be  
If all the city's strong but idle hands  
Were taught to sow and reap the idle lands  
For wealth is not in truth the golden spoil  
'Tis but the product of the workers' toil.

—Donald McGregor.