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British Immigration Aid Association

Head Office Montreal, Canada

Organized—November, 1920

JUL. WHAT YOU HAVE BEEN LOOKING FOR THIS TWENTY YEARS

MOTTO:

*"Put the Landless Man on the
Manless Land."*

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"HE GIVES TWICE WHO GIVES ¹CKLY"

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Sir,

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British Immigration Aid Association

In addition to our circular setting forth the objects for which this Association is formed, and the officers chosen to initiate and prosecute the undertaking, it has been thought that an explanatory note may be useful to members desiring to invite others to join, and to those so invited.

First, it has been ascertained that the population of the rural districts of the province of Quebec, as well as the adjoining province of Ontario, has not kept pace with the growth of the cities and towns; and sufficient attention has not been drawn to the advantages of the older settlements as compared with districts more recently opened up. Similar conditions apply to the maritime provinces, all calling for greater energy in making the claims of such regions known to immigrants from the mother country.

In Quebec, during the 40 years preceding the census of 1911, the rural parts of the whole province increased by some 73,000; but large territories had been added to the north where the increase had been 75,000, and south of the St. Lawrence; extensions to the east had added some 95,000 to the population, and these two being set off against the apparent increase, shows an actual loss in the older settlements of 97,000 persons. During this period the urban population increased 800,000.

RURAL PARTS LOSE POPULATION

In Ontario, in like manner, while the urban population increased by a million, there was an

apparent loss in the rural parts of some 111,000; but if extension to the north is taken into consideration, the real loss was 248,000 in the original limits of the Confederation.

These facts do not imply that the land occupied in these rich and favored districts has gone out of cultivation. It is true that many of the occupants have moved to the west or into the cities, but in most cases the farms have been sold or added to adjoining farms, the owners of which found it possible to cultivate a greater area with the same farm implements. However, it does mean that many farm houses have ceased to be occupied, and there has been a shortage of men to assist in the work of operating the farms. It is generally believed now that all these unoccupied houses could be used for farm labourers who could assist in the work of the larger units; and their wives could share the work of the women in the old homesteads, to the mutual advantage of all concerned.

WORK AND HOMES ARE WAITING

The Association aims at facilitating such arrangements, by directing incoming farmers to such places, where they can be usefully employed until they have become accustomed to the conditions of farm life in this country; and they can then either buy in the neighbourhood or move to the west with experience sufficient to give hope of permanent prosperity.

One of the best and richest districts in Western Ontario lost, by the removal of its inhabitants, 1,064 householders in one decade. Hon. Mr. Drury, the Premier of Ontario, states: "In one of the best counties near my home, I counted 14 empty

houses that 20 years ago were occupied. Similar conditions are known to exist in various parts of the province of Quebec. If these houses were again inhabited, it would provide acceptable neighbours who could be called upon to supply labor where needed, their children would fill the schools, and all the advantages of social life in country parts would be increased. Women in the rural districts are the greatest sufferers from the want of assistance to share in the work necessary on the farms. By bringing the needs and advantages of such places to the notice of incoming settlers, the Association hopes to do useful work.

SETTLERS NEED GUIDING HAND

Again, injury is done both to immigrants and to the fair name of the Canadian people, by the unfortunate experiences of settlers of whom advantage is taken for want of a little guidance from disinterested persons having a knowledge of local conditions. Thus, settlers having a limited amount of capital, but sufficient to give them a chance of making a fair start in life in this new country, are induced to invest in land of inferior quality, when, if information could be supplied them by well informed agents as to the relative value of different farm properties offered them, such results could be avoided.

A Canadian pioneer farmer can distinguish between black loam land and sandy soil, and by the use of his judgment and experience, he may obtain a farm that may yield from 20 to 40 bushels of grain to the acre. An honest English settler coming with his family may easily be tempted to buy unproductive or inferior land and may lose all his capital in a vain effort to raise his crops.

MISTAKES OF NEWCOMERS

The writer knows of such a case, where land fit only for pasture or ranching was bought at \$25.00 an acre, in a year in which there was an abundant crop; but it turned out that such a crop could not be expected more than once in seven years. This unfortunate man after struggling along for four years, was completely discouraged, lost all he had invested, and was obliged to leave the country with feelings of resentment and despair, when a little advice at the proper time, such as the officers of this Association could supply, would have enabled such a settler to seek employment from some farmer for a few years, after which time he could select land suitable for cultivation, and likely to yield a steady return.

Another branch of the work is, to meet such cases as the following:—

Men or boys may arrive having qualities fitting them to make good citizens, but with limited means, although able and willing to work if employment could be found for them. To such persons, after careful enquiry, the Association may be able to make slight advances, to be repaid out of the first earnings obtained.

A case of this kind occurred, when a substantial looking farmer arrived at the port with his family of two adult girls and three children in their teens. They had little money, but expected to join the eldest son who had settled in the Peace River country. It was a serious matter to keep such a family in Montreal. But a private citizen took the risk of advancing sufficient funds to make up the shortage in railway fare and for necessary expenses, and they were enabled to continue their journey.

The sum advanced was returned soon after, but great hardship would have resulted if no assistance had been forthcoming. This Association would endeavour to provide for such cases.

WHEN A FELLOW NEEDS A FRIEND

Again, four stowaways arrived in port, two being Jews and two young English boys. All were sentenced to deportation. As for the Jews, the Hebrew Immigration Aid Society came to their rescue, and had the order rescinded; but there was no association to look after the interests of the two English boys. They had no money, but were able to take care of horses and to milk cows. But they were without sufficient clothing and the immigration officer was not inclined to allow them to remain. A kind hearted citizen advanced enough money to buy them socks, boots and some other necessaries, and they were sent to a situation on a farm where they proved acceptable and useful. This Association proposes to keep a close watch on all immigrants, and should have means to deal with such cases.

In other instances, men have been found situations, but pay was delayed till after a fortnight's work had been done, and sufficient to tide them over this period was advanced and repaid later. Risks of that kind should not fall on individuals, but could be managed by trained officials of such an Association as this.

A GOOD CHAIN LETTER

Keep this circular circulating. Don't throw it away. Somebody wants to get the news it gives. Mail it to some one with your next letter.