

THE AMERICAN INVASION OF CANADA

BY J. OLIVER CURWOOD

ONE of the most daring experiments ever made by any people is that by which hundreds of thousands of good American citizens are being drawn away from their own country to settle as farmers upon the free lands of the Canadian Northwest.

In this extraordinary movement, the people of the Dominion are carrying out gladly and with a free hand a policy such as that for which the Boers sacrificed their liberty, their fortunes, and the lives of thousands of their citizens to frustrate. In a word, the Canadian Government seems intent on submerging the native-born population of the Northwest by an absolute flood of American immigration. From the Dakotas, from Nebraska, from Texas to the boundary, thousands of the best farmers in the world and thousands of stockmen are disposing of homes and ranches and leaving for the free grants of the Dominion, and it is estimated that soon 75,000 American citizens will have crossed the border to join the many thousands of other Americans who have preceded them.

So vast has this movement become that some Canadians are beginning to look askance upon the immigration policy of their representatives in Parliament, and to ask if this influx from the republic is not destined to result in the extinction of Canadian individuality. It is recalled that the liberal party, which now rules in the Dominion, has always been suspected of a lack of devotion to the principle of British connection, and it is intimated in some quarters that true patriotism would have suggested a policy different in many respects from that which is now being pursued.

The promoters of the scheme re-

ply to suggestions of this character that it will be long before the American vote in the Northwest will have reached considerable proportions, and by that time they are satisfied that the new citizens and their descendants will have become warmly attached to Canadian and British institutions, and that they may be relied upon to support them, and even fight for them if necessary. To this it is replied that such indeed might have been the case had the Americans been settled more widely and scattered through the Canadian communities, but on the contrary they have been not only permitted, but encouraged, to settle in communities which will preserve all the traditions of American history, and eventually dominate the public sentiment of the entire Northwest.

Meanwhile, the Government is proceeding with its plans, seemingly in the most absolute confidence that only good will result from them. Every move has been studied. The generals of armies could not play their game more shrewdly than the men who watch the invasion from Ottawa. The scope of campaign has been carefully planned. It goes no farther east than Michigan and Ohio, no farther west than the Rockies. Into this great valley, between the coast ranges, into the very heart of producing America, has been thrown an army of 370 men, commissioned to bring under the flag of Canada every substantial American who can be induced to quit his own country.

These men are the only visible forces in the great scheme. But the Canadian Government is behind them. It is their duty to penetrate the farming communities, lecture and distribute literature. Farmers flock to the village meetings to lis-

ten to the glowing description of a rich country, much as they did when the Oregon trail and the wild West was a great unknown. They are offered 160 acres of land free, their own choice in a block a thousand miles square, and railroad fare at a cent a mile if they will live six months each year for three years upon the land. The Government does not say that they must become citizens. The Canadian Government knows that the prospects must be bright to drag a man and his family 3000 miles away. So it makes its offer to entice communities at once. It offers to pay the transportation of the delegates who will spy out the land and bring its glories back to their waiting neighbors.

And this is only one end of the great scheme. At the other, 3000 miles away, scattered over a vast plain, stretching westward from the Red River to the foothills of the Rockies, and from the boundary line to Athabasca, is another army of Government agents. Here the settler is met as he leaves the immigrant train, and for three weeks he and his family are given lodging at the expense of the people, while he roams the country to choose a homestead. The visitors are treated with the utmost kindness and consideration. The agents take them in parties all through the country, and show them the land that is good for wheat and land that is best for grazing. They impress upon them that their taxes will be only \$4 or \$5 a year, and that the Government builds a school in every community where there are at least eight children, no matter if they are all in one family, and that it pays seventy per cent of the teacher's salary. They impress upon them that the Government is more than solicitous for the new colonists, and that these schools are built so that religious services may be held in them, and all at the expense of the Government.

Such is the *modus operandi* in the gigantic colonization scheme that its promoters believe is destined to make the green plains yellow with crops great enough to feed Europe.

And already, as a result, there stretches from the boundary northward through Alberta, Assiniboia, Saskatchewan and Athabasca, a country nearly a thousand miles square, with a people more generally American than the people of the State of New York. In it are 150,000 naturalized and native-born citizens of the United States; 50,000 British; 20,000 Germans; 5,000 foreigners of other nations, and nearly 100,000 Canadians. Than Alberta and Assiniboia, the two richest and most thickly settled of the Northwestern territories, there is no State in the union more Americanized. Following the course of the Canadian Pacific Railroads, the farmers of the Dakotas and Minnesota have settled the farms and ranches of Alberta with 40,000 people. Within two years Calgary has sprung from a settlement into a city of 12,000 inhabitants, and Edmonton, the northern terminus of the Canadian Pacific, has suddenly boomed into a place of 10,000. Between these two places, for 250 miles, are small settlements, towns ranging from 300 to 3,000 people, of which ninety per cent of the inhabitants are from the United States. From Alameda, the easternmost settlement in Assinaboia, to the Alberta line, the country for a score of miles on either side of the railroad, is dotted with typical American homes.

Alameda is a good representative of the new towns springing up in the Northwest. A few months ago nothing much more than a telegraph station, it is now an enterprising place of nearly a thousand people. Around and about it are millions of acres of wheat land, and the first and most important things noticed in it are its two big eleva-

tors, with a capacity of 500,000 bushels of grain. And two years ago this country was a howling wilderness. Like all the towns of the Northwest, Alameda is particularly free of saloons, for the hardy, industrious farmers who go there to make new homes have little time for such things. But politics has followed them, and at the last election, the little Alameda "town hall" was the scene of the first American hand in Canadian politics, when they elected their council and its president. Here, within easy reach of all the settlers in and around Alameda are the great Hazzard coal fields, from which an exceptionally high grade of coal is delivered to Alameda homes for 75 cents a ton. The farmers for miles around and most of the people of the settlements, come with their own wagons, and when they load it themselves are allowed to take away two tons for a dollar.

Heretofore it has been believed that China possessed the largest coal beds in the world, but the fact that one great bed extends for 500 miles along the base of the Rockies in Western Canada, and 200 miles wide, proves that the largest in the Orient, which covers 20,000 square miles, is only a fifth as large as the great anthracite and bituminous bed of the Canadian Northwest.

Besides Alameda, scarcely a year old, either Edmonton or Calgary, in Alberta, is a metropolis. They are hustling Western towns, minus the saloon and gambling elements, because they are agricultural instead of mining, and possess men who are as eagerly hunting their fortunes as were those who went to the American West when it was opened up. From Calgary to the terminus of the road, are three towns, in which the people are, to considerable extent, Americans. All along the line to Winnepeg there is scarcely a town of any size without one American citizen, while in

the smaller settlements the Government has built ordinary school houses, at both Edmonton and Calgary it has instituted a regular high school and grade system. Among other things, in the absence of branch railways, the Government has mapped out an elaborate system of wagon roads, leading for miles back from the C. P. R. across the prairies, and every few miles along the line of the railroad has arranged for the construction of elevators. For almost a thousand miles there is hardly a station but what has its giant building for the storage of grain. They are not Government buildings, but for the most part the capital invested has been secured by the C. P. R. or the land agents.

In making country communication easy, the Government has opened up a territory stretching for 60 miles on each side of the railroad, and this country is now dotted with farms and ranches, some of them miles apart, but the comparative ease of communication by means of smooth roads is rapidly turning Western Canada into a country much like the old South before the Civil War. It resembles the South in that horseback riding and fox hunts are two of the pastimes in which the colonists indulge almost to the exclusion of all others, and especially in Alberta there is hardly a community that has not its "pack." The fox pursued is the real thing, for the country is full of them. It is a novel sight to see Americans out on the prairie playing cricket and polo instead of baseball.

Horses and building material are cheap; because of the climate, horses graze all the year, and the vast stretches of unbroken woods, in which the Government allows the settlers to build sawmills and cut timber free, makes lumber inexpensive; taxes are low; their homes are their own, for they are given to them, and so the moment the set-

tlar has gathered his first crop he finds the proceeds do not go toward the payment of debts, but into his own pockets. He does not have to turn much of it over for fuel for winter, for in the few places where wood is not easily obtainable, coal is very cheap. Probably in no place in the wide world is there a more ideal climate and land to live in than that which is slowly draining the Middle West of her farmers.

Last year the average yield of grain was 30 bushels to the acre,

or 110,000,000 bushels, the greater part of which was wheat. In Alberta alone there are now over 200,000 head of cattle.

In this country, filled with idyllic conditions, thousands of Americans are becoming British subjects every year, and it is the fond hope of the Dominion Government that these people will soon begin to look upon their new homes not as in an adopted country, but in a country which they have made, and for which, if necessary, they would fight.

MY LADYE

By Will G. Taffinder

My dainty, sweet etching in blue;
Not an angel in heaven like you.
Love says with precision.
The whole of life's vision,
Is filled with my etching in blue.

My dearest, sweet etching in blue,
My lone heart beats only for you.
No hell worse than this is,
The lack of your kisses;
My dainty, sweet etching in blue.

My dear, dainty etching in blue,
If you will—I will be true,
And the whole of life's aim
Is to fashion a frame
Of my arms, for my etching in blue.

My saucy, sweet etching in blue,
You are less than half angel, 'tis true.
I paid with my sighs
For the glint of your eyes,
You sweet, earthly etching in blue.

My dainty, sweet etching in blue,
Love me, pray, I beg—nay, I sue.
Life is drear, hath no charms
Away from thine arms,
My pretty, sweet etching in blue.