SILHOUETTES OF THE WEST

THE WORLD'S LAST BEST WEST

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From The Globe of September 4th, 1909.

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The man on the street, to whom the West is but a vast, vague piece of geography, does not care much for general descriptions of its scenery, of its fertility or the opportunity it offers to the industrious settler with or without capital. But he can be startled out of his complacency by "particulars," and in a brief series of shadow pictures from the West an attempt will be made to show why the tide of settlement is rolling over the plains of Canada as it rolled over the prairies of the mid-western states a generation ago. It is estimated that 80,000 settlers from the United States, men and women accustomed to farm life, will come into Canada to stay this year. Why do they come? Here is one answer:

Ten days ago the writer and some friends, in the course of an auto ride south from Lethbridge toward the Montana boundary in a region that it was good form two years ago to refer to as the northerly end of the Great American Desert, encountered a rubicund, smiling grey-bearded old fellow who told this story:

"I'm an Ontario man from Orangeville, William Cromble by name. I came to Alberta by way of Minnesota, where I learned to grow wheat. Last year I took a run up here, looked over the country and decided I would like to farm a bit of it. I bought two sections (1,280 acres), paying twenty-two fifty per acre. We came in here and began operations on April 12th

this year. We first broke with a gasoline ten-gang plough 400 acres, half of which were sown in spring wheat and half in oats. When we had that in the ground I made preparations to build my house. 'This is the result,'" said Mr. Cromble waving his hand toward a building not quite finished, but that with its ample rooms and wide verandahs would do credit to a Rosedale Crescent, although, of course, constructed entirely of wood.

"Our next step was to put a double shift at work with the gasoline plough to break the balance of the land. We have just finished, breaking, packing, discing and seeding 870 acres in winter wheat. You can see the green shoots coming up on the parts sown earliest. As you will notice, we have our first 400 acres of wheat and oats in stook, and when we thrash next week we will put the drills on the land and plant winter wheat on the stubble. Next August we will reap 1,270 acres of winter wheat. All the work needed for that crop and the 400 acres we cropped this season will have been done in the 140 days between April 12th and September 1st. I will raise as much wheat next year as I got in all my early years while I was wrestling with the stumps of Dufferin. If you have any stories in the east to beat this, I would like to hear them," and Mr. Cromble, his eyes twinkling a merry defiance of our slow Ontario ways, began to talk of his neighbors from Kentucky, who are aiding him in turning a track of this vast plain, whose last occupants were the buffalo, into a part of the world's granary.

Here is the financial side of Mr. Cromble's summer's work, as compiled by one of his visitors with a bent for figures: Expenditure, 1,280 acres of land, $28,000; breaking and seeding 1,270 acres, $4.00 per acre, $5,080; seed, $2,000; house, $5,000; barn, $1,500. Total investment account, $42,420. Estimated value of this year's crop, $6,000. Estimated value of next season's crop, at 30 bushels per acre, $31,000. Mr. Cromble, himself, puts the figures higher, and says one good crop will re-pay his entire outlay.

As the man from Orangeville said when we left: "Can you beat it?"

From The Globe of September 6th, 1909.

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The man from Iowa began to talk land before the train was well out of the C.N.R. depot in Winnipeg. The talk began in rather wide circles. The rush to the land, the bumper crop, the system of summer-fallowing pursued in the semi-arid districts, were all discussed, and then, with a sort of apologetic smile, the Iowa man said: "I'm a bit interested in this country myself. Some of the men down home got a few sections up here along this line, and I'm going to have a look at them. Never been up in Canady before"—(It is curious how these mid-western Americans pronounce the name of the Dominion as if it was "Can'dy")—"but if it looks good we will be up to stay next fall."

"You see, it's like this," said the man from Iowa—quite manifestly continuing an argument that had been going on his mind for some time. "Back in our State land has become dear. Anybody wanting to sell can get $70 or $80 an acre for it, and every farm that's offered is snapped up. In Saskatchewan we have just as good land that cost us $11 and $12, so that a man can take up five or six times as much there as in Iowa on the same investment of money.

"It isn't the money, though, that brings most of us up from Iowa. I'm not sure that money would be enough. The 'invasion' is a family affair. We have no chance of keeping our sons around us back home. They have to leave the farm and go into the big cities of the neighboring States to get work. To keep them on the farm and in touch with us, we come up here and make little colonies with the children round us, on homesteads or bought land. This makes it easier for the farmers back there in Iowa to get land for the stay-at-homes. The families that come to Canady are kept together and the families that buy the farms they leave are kept together, too. There won't be any slackening of the rush, either, for they still raise big families back in Iowa."

One could almost see the mental process of this typical

American farmer in defending a step that meant a new flag, a new allegiance, a new land, and new associates. To abandon Old Glory and the Declaration of Independence for a good thing in cheap land would hardly be playing the game, but to go out into Saskatchewan to "keep the family together" was another and a quite higher motive.

Why seek too closely to analyze the reasons for the greatest land trek in the history of America? It is enough to know that the sons of the frontiersmen of Iowa, and Kansas, and Minnesota—the best blood of the mid-west—are pouring into the Canadian west in an ever-increasing stream, and are learning that "God Save the King" and "My Country, 'Tis of Thee," are sung to the same tune.

From The Globe of September 7th, 1909.

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The Princess Victoria, one of the speedy C.P.R. steamers that bring Victoria within four hours' reach of Vancouver, was rounding Point Grey and heading for "The Narrows," and the American tourists, who crowded the vessel en route home from the Seattle Exhibition, were speculating as to whether there really was an opening in the cliffs through which a ship could pass, when a big, upstanding man, whose vigor of speech made his white hair seem out of character, remarked:—"It is just fifty years since I first came in around that point and passed through 'The Narrows.' Frank Moberley was with me, and when we got in we found Col. Moody sinking a shaft for coal down in the bay now known as Coal Harbor. There was nothing here then but a great solitude and towering trees that came down to the water's edge. Now there are almost a hundred thousand people. Vancouver is going to be one of the great cities of the Pacific."

"It is curious how natural advantages count in the making of cities," I remarked as the Old Timer paused. "We were up at Saskatoon the other day, and came down afterwards to

Regina. The people there are still annoyed at the location of the University of Saskatchewan at Saskatoon, but future generations of students will bless the men who chose that wide, airy space, with the majestic Saskatchewan in the foreground. Regina had no such site to offer, and—"

"You must not say too much against Regina," broke in the Old Timer. "You see, I laid out that townsite, and Regina is going to have a place among the great railway centres of the West as well as its prestige as the Provincial capital."

Then we knew. The Old Timer was one of the chief among the Makers of the West. Hon. Edgar Dewdney, who just fifty years ago came out from his native Devon to help Douglas and Moody to hew another Britain out in the North Pacific. He was a young engineer of four and twenty then, and the colony consisted of a few thousand people. The rush to the Cariboo gold fields was in progress, and Mr. Dewdney, after laying out the townsite of New Westminster, went on foot up the Canyon of the Fraser along the path where in a few months the six-horse coaches of the Cariboo trail dashed along in defiance of ever-present danger. He cut what is still known as the Dewdney Trail through southern British Columbia. A fellow-passenger a few days later pointed it out to us at Fort Steele, hundreds of miles across the mountains from Vancouver.

What a life of romance has fallen to the lot of that young Devonshire engineer. And how calmly now he speaks of it, as if it were some bit of impersonal history. One would hardly imagine that this man came to Ottawa in 1872 as one of the first British Columbia members after Confederation. He was Governor of the Northwest Territories during Riel's second rebellion, then Minister of the Interior, and later Lieutenant-Governor of British Columbia.

Now, in the evening of life, he sees great cities rising from amid the trackless forests where as a youth he rough-hewed the first paths of civilization, and passes the ships of many nations anchored in the harbor that fifty years ago was as solitary as a Spitzbergen fiord.

On the colors of one of the historic regiments of Britain is a proud legend, which means "First in India." Probably of living men Edgar Dewdney alone can say truthfully: "Primus in Columbia Brittanica."

From The Globe of September 8th, 1909.

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A few years ago among men who knew the West well there was the fear that immigration from continental Europe would increase to the proportions of a flood and submerge the Anglo-Saxon and Teutonic elements of the population beneath a wave of pan-Slavism. To educationalists especially, who knew how tenacious the Slav is of his language and traditions, the outlook seemed especially unpromising for upon the teacher's shoulders must be laid the task of making English-speaking Canadians out of the peoples of South Eastern Europe.

During last month's tour I made many inquiries and find that this fear of the Slavonic inundation is no longer entertained. The immigrants from the United States and Great Britain and migrants from Eastern Canada so outnumber the settlers from continental Europe that the West is to-day definitely Anglo-Saxon.

Not only is the West Anglo-Saxon, but it is becoming more and more akin to Ontario in its every day life and in its ideals and aspirations. This is almost inevitable, for the West is "run" by Ontario people and a sprinkling of men from the Maritime provinces and Britain. The legislators, teachers, lawyers, ministers, doctors and newspaper men are almost invariably from the East, and at this formative period, the West, is to them as clay in the hands of a potter. The American and continental European settlers are beginning to take an interest in public life, but there is no probability that they will control the pulpit, the press, the school rooms and the legislators until the formative period is passed.

As a newspaper man especially interested in the work the press is doing in Western Canada, everywhere I found that the ideals of the newspaper men were high, and that they were deliberately striving toward the establishment of Canadian nationality; with order, education, morality and equal opportunity to all as its foundation stones.

These young journalists of the West have a place in their communities that they may well be proud of, and that they should strive by the most faithful service to maintain. To the newspaper man in the East who in the process of years climbs slowly and painfully up to a salary of two or three thousand dollars their careers seem meteoric. Here are two by way of example. Four years ago a reporter of *The Globe*, with a very modest salary, went West to write some crop letters, saw a chance to secure a little weekly in a Saskatchewan town, and grasped at it. He was practically without capital other than brains and pluck. To-day he controls a fine daily, with an up-to-date office plant, has wide influence in a fast-growing district, a beautiful house, and, to crown all, a charming wife and a healthy baby. It is possible that the last two items might have been his in Toronto, but before he could have the other his face would have been care-lined and his hair grey.

The other was formerly editor of a small Ontario daily. He deliberately went out West to look for an opening and bought a share of a little southern Alberta weekly. In four short years it has become an influential daily, the editor has won a seat in the legislature, and has secured a controlling interest in his paper; he is building a fine office block and lives with his family in a quiet delightful home.

In that Western country there will be opportunities such as these two men grasped at for the next quarter century, and it will be to the mutual benefit of the people of the plains and to the newspaper men of the East if they are laid hold of by the young men who, not so long ago, had to take the road to New York or Chicago if they desired to climb to the editor's chair.

From The Globe of September 11th, 1909.

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"It is the Portage Plains over again."

The speaker was Superintendent Foley, of the C.N.R. He was explaining to a party of American newspapermen the features of the Goose Lake country. They had just passed across the Portage Plains, that great fertile tract of wheat land south of Lake Winnipeg, and knew that the simile was meant to convey the idea that the Goose Lake district was fertile to an unusual degree. The probability is that nine-tenths of readers of *The Globe* have never even heard of the Goose Lake district. Let this brief reference to it serve as an illustration of the fact that only the man who visits every corner of the West every year can at all hope to keep pace with its developments. The Goose Lake district lies to the south-west of Saskatoon, and rails have been run into it for some sixty miles. The track was laid last fall in a big hurry to carry out the first important crop of the settlers, who before that time had to haul the little wheat they grew out to Saskatoon or some other point of the Prince Albert-Regina line. It is the intention of the C.N.R. to push the road clear through from Saskatoon to Calgary, the entire distance being some 350 miles, and make it their principal east and west line in mid-Saskatchewan and Alberta.

Talking over the possibilities of the valley of the South Saskatchewan for wheat-growing, Mr. Foley said: "There is no finer land out-of-doors than the territory through which our road will pass. I have made a careful estimate of the crop along Goose Lake extension, and I believe 4,500,000 bushels of wheat will be produced this year along these sixty miles of railroad. Just a few days ago I was talking with a man who, with a knapsack on his back, had travelled across the plains from Calgary to the point at which Goose Lake extension now ends. The distance is close upon 300 miles, and he says that that in all the stretch there are only about twenty miles of sage brush land unsuitable for wheat growing. Now, you can figure out yourself what that means."

Superintendent Foley is not a relative of Col. Mulberry Sellers. He is a shrewd railway man who knows the West as you and I know the shop fronts of Yonge Street. He says, in fact, that one small branch of the C.N.R. System, if it produced wheat merely at the rate already reached by a handful of scattered pioneers, would grow more than the whole of Ontario does to-day. He suggests possibilities of aggregate crops that are simply staggering in their immensity, and explains the view held by many Western business men, that the settlement of the West will progress only as fast as the world's consumption of wheat increases.

The Goose Lake district is but a striking illustration of what is going on all over the country. Special trains laden with Goose Lakers came into Saskatoon Exhibition this year from a region that even four years ago was almost as untraversed as the Arctic wastes. This fall the people will send out 4,500 carloads of wheat, and get back hundreds of carloads of agricultural implements and stoves, and pianos, and furniture from Eastern factories.

When you see the "overtime" lights twinkling in a factory quarter you will understand that Goose Lake and fifty districts like it have sold the season's crop.

From The Globe of September 13*th*, 1909.

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If I were Czar in Canada I'd refuse the franchise to every man in the treeless portions of the West who could not show a record of 500 trees planted on either public or private land. If I were Czar I would instruct the churches to make tree-planting a test of church membership in all that vast plain of over 100,000 square miles in southern Saskatchewan and Alberta. More than anything else the country needs trees and birds, and the conservation of water. In the rush of its first settlement, while land values are increasing rapidly and large profits are being made by the speculative, the West does not quite realize

how much it will miss the trees when it comes to settle down to the steady business of raising crops year after year, year after year through the long vista of time. Nature has her own ways of forcing these things upon our attention, and while the West may be coldly unresponsive as yet to the appeal of the prophet of tree-planting, the time will come when the response will be eager and effective. Our race emerges into history from the shade of the Druids' sacrificial oak. The ancient Briton launched his coracle on the waters around his sea-girt isle long before Julius Caesar saw him. Always it has been trees and water for him. His sons, who forced their way into the great central treeless plains of America, have not been suddenly and miraculously changed in their basic characteristics. The instinctive desire for the racial habitat may be overlaid for a time by the excitement of a great migration, but it will come to the surface again. It is coming to the surface already. I have been trying to find out why so many well-to-do people from Manitoba and Saskatchewan have been making their homes in Vancouver lately. "Better climate," is usually the reply, but when we get down to particulars the cold of winter on the prairie seems to have little to do with the western movement. The trees, the ocean, the mountains make an irresistible appeal to many who have for years been dwellers on the plains.

The early settlers in Manitoba must have been inveterate tree-planters, for over large portions of that Province the farm houses are embowered in groves of Manitoba maples. There is not much evidence yet of a general campaign in southern Saskatchewan and Alberta, although cities like Regina, Saskatoon, Moose Jaw, Medicine Hat and Lethbridge make a brave show, and prove that trees will grow if they get half a chance. The Governments—National and Provincial—are doing everything humanly possible, short of the "If-I-were-Czar" method, to induce the planting of trees, and last year from the station of the Forestry Branch at Indian Head over two and a half million seedlings and cuttings were sent out. It will take a generation of this work to make even a decent showing, but the men who

lead the crusade know that "He who planteth a tree planteth Hope," and that the birds will yet have their habitation and warble their matins in the forests of Southern Alberta.

From The Globe of November 15th, 1909.

SILHOUETTES OF THE WEST.

Sometimes one may hear old Ontario pioneers—of the generation which made rail fences out of walnut and oak—say, "No wonder people rush to the West; there is nothing to do up there but put in the plough and reap a crop the first year. It took a lifetime to clear an Ontario farm."

While it is true that over great areas of the West there is no need for the axe in clearing the land, it must not be supposed that this is true of all the homesteads to which even Ontario men are going. The fact is that the pioneers of the northern portions of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta have to hew their homes out of a scrub country that may not be quite so hard to clear as was old Ontario, but that retards for years the tilling of the soil on any extensive scale. After a somewhat keen cross-examination of a number of Ontario people in the Gilbert Plains district of Manitoba and the region north of Invermay in Saskatchewan, I am quite certain that thousands of the people on the scrub lands could have got rich quick on the bald prairie, but took to the scrub for sentimental reasons because they wanted farms like those of their boyhood days "back home."

I recall one prematurely old man, grey and stooping from the labor of cutting and burning out a hundred and forty acres of brush ten miles north of Gilbert Plains. It has taken him thirteen years to do it, but he has a home at the end of it all. There are little clumps of poplar here and there along the stream that sings its way through the land, where almost a hundred acres of wheat and barley lie gleaming in the August sun. The log house is hewn out of the timber that formerly stood where now it stands—and is hid among the trees. The settler tells us

proudly that when people are lost in the blizzards of the open plains, he and his family only hear the moan of the wind in the tree-tops. Their stock are far safer behind the wind-breaks than the plainsman's cattle in their corral.

The clearing of the northern portions of the three mid-western provinces will be a slow and laborious process, but it has been well begun, and will go forward with ever-increasing speed. It is no disparagement of the fat lands of the open prairie to say that twenty years from now the scrub farms, with their ponds and streams and belts of poplar, will be far more to be desired by the "homeseeker" than the more southerly lands.

And the men who clear the scrub, and their children, and their children's children, will have more of the iron of resolute purpose in their blood than the sons of the men who break their land with a gasoline plough and crop it all the second year after they homestead.

Below is a list of Canadian Government Agents, any of whom will be pleased to supply you with further information about Western Canada and the free grant lands:

M. V. McInnes, 176 Jefferson Ave., Detroit, Mich.

Jas. N. Grieve, Auditorium Building, Spokane, Wash.

Geo. A. Hall, Enterprise Block, 125 Second St., Milwaukee, Wis.

J. M. MacLachlan, Box 626, Watertown, S.D.

Chas. Pilling, Clifford Block, Grand Forks, N.D.

E. T. Holmes, 315 Jackson St., St. Paul, Minn.

W. V. Bennett, Room 4, Bee Bldg., Omaha, Nebr.

J. S. Crawford, 125 West 9th St., Kansas City, Mo.

H. M. Williams, 413 Gardner Bldg., Toledo, Ohio.

C. J. Broughton, Room 412, Merchants' Loan & Trust Bldg., Chicago, Ill.

Benj. Davies, Room 6, Dunn Block, Great Falls, Mont.

W. H. Rogers, 316 Traction-Terminal Bldg., Indianapolis, Ind.

Thos. Duncan, Room 30, Syracuse Savings Bank Bldg., Syracuse, N.Y.

Thos. Hetherington, Room 202, 73 Tremont St., Boston, Mass.

Geo. Aird, 2nd Floor, 210 House Bldg., Pittsburg, Pa.

Write to your nearest Agent, or to W. D. Scott, Superintendent of Immigration, Ottawa, Canada.