

(December 16, 1929)

The Human and Natural Resources of Saskatchewan

BY DR. J. M. ANDERSON, PREMIER OF SASKATCHEWAN

VICE-PRESIDENT T. D'ARCY LEONARD:—Gentlemen, we are privileged to have as our guest today the Hon. Dr. J. T. M. Anderson, Premier of Saskatchewan. We are glad to have this opportunity of welcoming him back to his native city and at the same time of congratulating him on the honor he has recently attained at becoming Premier of his adopted Province. While he is best known to us through his political career he has also attained great distinction through his work of the past twenty years or more in the education and development of the children of the foreign born population of Saskatchewan. We are indeed indebted to him that amidst many duties that must have fallen on his shoulders he should find time to come to the Canadian Club of Toronto and address us on the subject on which he is so well qualified to speak, "The Human and Natural Resources of Saskatchewan."

HON. DR. ANDERSON:—Mr. President and fellow Canadians, I would like first of all to express my sincere thanks and appreciation, in view of the very cordial reception given me by your executive and the members of your Toronto Canadian Club. When one drifts back to the east from the west, one of the pleasures that usually awaits one is the hearty welcome you receive in coming back to the scene of your boyhood days. It was my happy privilege to be born in Toronto as a great many people who are living in the west were, and it is always a great pleasure indeed to come back and meet the familiar faces and discuss old times. Now, during the short time I am going to speak to you today I thought perhaps I could do nothing better than

give you some idea, that possibly some of you may not have, of the resources that we have in our province.

I am convinced as a school teacher and one engaged in educational work for a great many years that one of the troubles we have to face in this great Dominion, if you call it a trouble, is that we are not acquainted with each other. There are thousands of people in the Province of Ontario who know very little about the western part of this Dominion. There are thousands, I would venture to say, in the Province of Ontario who know very little about the Province of Quebec, and the same might apply in the case of the Maritime Provinces. I know I have never been in the Maritimes. Any knowledge I have of that great people there has been gained from the meager details contained in the school geographies, said geographies not giving very much in detail. Then we have that great natural barrier separating the east from the west which perhaps makes it rather difficult for us to get acquainted one with the other, and perhaps no greater contribution can be made by any public man from one section of the country visiting another than to tell that part of the country which he is visiting something of the problems that are being dealt with by the people in the section from which he comes.

I think if we asked the average graduate of our secondary schools or our teachers' training schools to give us some idea of the extent of this great Dominion, we would find that a great many of the men and women who are being trained to prepare our future citizens know very little about this country. That was my experience as a teacher in normal school work, and as a school inspector, to find that the knowledge of our teachers of the history and geography of this great Dominion is altogether too limited, and I am hoping that as the years go by the various provinces will get together more than has been the case in the past to discuss ways and means of extending the knowledge of our country.

I think perhaps you will pardon me if I again express my great pleasure and appreciation of the work done by one of your members whom I met here today, Mr. Frank Yeigh, in preparing that little book, "*Five Thousand Facts About Canada*." I find that the information obtained from

that book is most valuable indeed, and I know of no other source that provides it in such compact form.

Very few of our children who graduate from our schools realize that Canada is larger in area than the United States: that it is eighteen times as large as Germany and eighteen times as large as France; that it represents 28 per cent of the area of the British Empire. It is as large as thirty United Kingdoms; twice the size of British India; almost as large as the continent of Europe; thirty-three times the size of Italy. It is the largest overseas Dominion of Britain.

I recall teaching a lesson in a night school in the town of Yorkton some years ago to a class of new arrivals from several eastern countries. I had a map of Europe on the blackboard alongside of a map of the Dominion of Canada and I remember when I tried to emphasize to these new arrivals the size of Canada, one Russian woman opened her mouth in amazement when she found that Canada was as large as the whole of the continent of Europe. It conveyed to her an idea of this country that possibly could not be conveyed in any other way.

Since coming down to Ontario I have been approached by some of my friends asking if we were becoming Communistic in Saskatchewan, if we were advocates of Sovietism, and perhaps you will pardon me if I just for a short time discuss something of the human material we have in Saskatchewan. About fifty per cent of our population is non-English in origin; scores and scores of different racial origins are represented in our population. We have a great body of Slavic people, the Ruthenians, or Ukrainians, the Poles, and other Slavic races as well as Hungarians; and in order to give you some idea of the progress that is undoubtedly being made by many of these people from foreign countries, may I tell you something of my own experience when, as a school teacher away back in 1908, I took charge of a little country school in a foreign section. I was the first teacher in the settlement that spring and I had about sixty children in the school, of whom forty could not speak a single word of English. This was a problem that other teachers have met with in the prairies, the problem of teaching these children of foreign parentage to read,

write and speak the English language. I found they made very rapid progress and in the course of a few months we were able to carry on a conversation in English. In that class of forty there were some very bright children, a good many of them got as far as the entrance class; two of them became University graduates, one from the University of British Columbia and the other from the University of Saskatchewan. In the fall of 1908 we had a Christmas entertainment in this little rural school. It was their first experience of celebrating Christmas after the Canadian fashion, if you like to put it that way. We had a Christmas tree and we secured some donations from merchants in the neighboring town some twenty-five miles away, and I shall never forget how the school-house was filled to the doors with the fathers and mothers of these children, anxious to have their sons and daughters get to know something about this new country. There is no doubt at all that in the vast majority of cases people who come to us from other countries are very anxious that their children should get to know something of this new country in order that they may become good citizens of the country. That may seem surprising to some but there is no doubt about it. We have certain exceptions which perhaps I shall refer to later on. But we had this entertainment in the fall of 1908. Just sixteen years later I visited that same school-house and there again it was filled to the doors but there was quite a difference. Sixteen years later you did not hear anything but English spoken in a gathering such as that. The older people, most of them, had crossed the valley. The younger people had grown up with this new country, had married and were there in the school-house with their children, and altogether a very fine type of people they were.

We are having a little trouble with these people you call Doukhobors, at least one section, a section known as the Sons of Freedom. Why they chose to call themselves that perhaps you can imagine. The vast majority of the Doukhobors are very fine types of Slavic people. We have in our high schools and in our University some very fine students whose parents were Doukhobors. One of the brilliant young professional men of Saskatoon is of

Doukhobor origin. He is practising law there and is regarded very highly indeed by the people of the city of Saskatoon. I could name other examples of young men and women of Doukhobor faith—because it is more a religious faith than a nationality—who are school teachers or in the business world, and the majority of them, as I say, are making very good contributions to Canada indeed.

Then we have large numbers of Poles and Hungarians. I think these people are undoubtedly making good in very many cases. We are taking the stand as a government, and I think as a people, that we should not have the gates thrown wide open as they have been in the past for some years. We perhaps have been criticized in Saskatchewan because we refused to sanction the bringing in of a large number of destitute Mennonites who were supposed to be suffering in Russia outside the gates of Moscow. When we took that stand it was not because we were not prepared to recognize the contributions made by many of the Mennonite people towards building up the Prairie provinces. We have many thousands of Mennonites who are making very good citizens. But with the unemployment situation as we have it, not only in the west but in the east, with the problems that are associated with bringing in large numbers of people not familiar with our language and our customs, we felt that the proper stand to take under present conditions was not to allow these people to be brought in. The Mennonites represent some twelve or fourteen different religious sects, and possibly the only one of these that is causing any serious trouble or concern is that sect known as the old colonization Mennonites. They are absolutely opposed to having their children educated to speak English. They are opposed to our public schools, and in the west we have had to use compulsion of various kinds in order to insist on these people sending their children to school. The problem has not been solved altogether up to the present time. There are possibly several hundred children in the province who are not getting the public school education they could because of the attitude of their parents toward our public schools. We are hoping we shall persuade these people to send their children to the public schools and have them educated. If they are not to be persuaded and if we cannot

deport those who are opposing our institutions, then it may be necessary in the interests of this country that their children be educated at the expense of the state. It seems to me we must be prepared in any section of Canada to take a stand along that line, provided the parents are not ready to comply with our laws insofar as education is concerned.

Now with reference to our other natural resources. In southern Saskatchewan we have one of the largest deposits of lignite coal in the world. It is estimated we have over sixty million tons. Scarcely anything has been done by way of development. There are seven mines operating, selling quantities of coal largely in Manitoba, but I think those who have studied the situation in other countries where they have large deposits of brown or lignite coal will agree, we have tremendous possibilities when this natural resource is utilized in Western Canada. We have visions of utilizing it in connection with power development and possibly in the coming year a power plant will be erected at the Estaven coal fields that will provide a great deal of power for the southern part of our province. In addition to the lignite coals in the south we have great valuable deposits of clays of various kind. I haven't time to go into them in detail, but one factory has just begun operations in the town of Estevan and we expect different kinds of pottery to be manufactured in the southern half of our province in the next year or so.

In the north we have great resources in our water powers and practically nothing has been done to develop them up to the present time. At Island Falls on the Churchill River we have the only development, and some of you gentlemen may be interested in knowing what is going on at that particular point. As you know the idea is to produce fifty or sixty thousand horse power in order to provide electrical energy for the Flin Flon and other mining developments of the north. The Flin Flon mining area on the Hudson Bay Railway is showing signs of great development. Some twenty millions of dollars will be expended when the buildings they have outlined now or arranged for are completed. About \$8,000,000 have been spent already and enough has been done to warrant us in saying that there will be simply marvellous development there during the years that lie

ahead. The ore body so far located is at the southeast corner of the Flin Flon lake, through which the boundary of Saskatchewan and Manitoba passes. The ore body mapped out at the present time is 80 per cent in Manitoba and 20 per cent in Saskatchewan. The buildings will be 16 per cent in Saskatchewan and 84 per cent in Manitoba but the claims of the company are 73 per cent in Saskatchewan and 27 per cent in Manitoba. To give you an idea how complications may arise, I might point out that just a few months ago there was a fatal accident. A man was working on a building and he fell out of Manitoba and was killed in Saskatchewan. The boundary line runs through the center of the building. The ore located scientifically so far is eighteen million tons, with a valuation of two hundred and twenty million dollars. There are fourteen or fifteen hundred men employed in the Flin Flon and it is expected the plant will be completed and ready for operation in 1931. At Island Falls some forty or fifty thousand horse power is being developed, but the dam that is being erected will have a head of water fifty or sixty feet capable of producing one hundred and ten thousand horse power. There is a power line consisting of steel towers running along a right of way one hundred and ten feet wide from the Island Falls project to the Flin Flon mining area. It is a distance of sixty-nine miles, twenty-three miles by land and the balance by water. There are nine hundred men employed at Island Falls at the present time and those who have visited Island Falls come back very much surprised indeed to find the modern methods used in connection with that camp or that townsite at Island Falls. Five hundred men are employed and living in houses. It is all laid out as a modern town, with a sewage disposal system as in a modern village or town. They have good picture shows and community halls and it is very interesting to find that all the cooking for these nine hundred people is done by electricity. In order to give you some idea of the possibilities, when our northern development goes ahead as we expect from a home and family standpoint, it is very interesting to note these supplies were taken into Island Falls townsite last winter, some twelve trucks being used. In ninety days during last winter they hauled 24,000 tons of

freight into that point; 14,500 tons of cement were taken in; and to give you some idea of the food required, it is very interesting to note that ten tons of beef were taken in; twenty-one tons of pork, twenty-five tons of bacon; ten and a half tons of sausage; twenty-five thousand dozen eggs; three thousand boxes of flour; nineteen thousand boxes of sugar; three thousand bushels of potatoes, and so on. This will give some idea of the possibilities for providing markets for our prairie farmers.