

557-20-7

IMM 1518

Vol.

DEPARTMENT OF CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION
- IMMIGRATION BRANCH -

SUBJECT LAND SETTLEMENT &
COLONIZATION IN B.C.
GENERAL FILE

CROSS REFERENCES

966.

11967

TO	FROM	DATE	PA OR T	FROM	DATE	BF RECORD	
						TO	DATE
WFT	RHS	4-4-68	T				
JDB	WFT	4/4/62	T				
RFH	RHS	25-5-62	PA	RHS	25-5-62		
AAE	RPR	29/7/64	T				
LMR	RPR	29/7/64	T				
PEQ	LMR	2/8/66	T				
LMR	RPR	4/8	T				
PEQ	LMR	5/8/66	T				
John Hunter	PEQ	8-8-66	PA	John	10-8-66		
LMR	MRAC	12-7-66	T				
Pool	LMR	15-9-66	Pla	LMR	17/8/66		
LMR	RP	26-9-66	T				
PEQ	LMR	3/10/66	PA	PEQ	5-10-66		
LMR	RPR	31/10/66	Pla	LMR	31/10/66		

RECORDED

RECORDED

RECORDED

ATIP REVIEW SLIP / AIPRP BORDEREAU DE RÉVISION *open*

RG #: 76 Vol.: 872 Box/Boite: _____

Acc.: _____

File/Dossier: 557-20-7

ATIP's Request #: Image Stack#: _____

Digitized by/Numérisé par: _____

Closed / Fermé

Partially open (paper copy not severed; provide digital copy only / Partiellement ouvert (le prélevement n'a pas été fait sur le document papier; fournir une copie numérique seulement)

Partially open (paper copy severed) / Partiellement ouvert (le prélevement a été fait sur le document papier)

Open and declassified / Ouvert et déclassifié

Reviewed by / Révisé par: ds Date: March 8, 17

557-20-7

THIRD NATURAL RESOURCES CONFERENCE

Brief on Problems of Agriculture

Contribution on Land Settlement and Colonization

Personnel of sub-committee:

W. MacGillivray - Chairman

Harry Allam, A/Supt. V.L.A. in B.C.

W.H. Hicks, Supt. Experimental Farm, Agassiz.

C.E. Hopper, Asst. Deputy Minister of Lands,
Victoria.

D. Sutherland, Director, Land Utilization and
Research, Victoria.

J. Martin, Supt. Agriculture and Colonization,
C.N.R., Prince George.

C.F. Cornwall, Supt. Canada Colonization Assn.
Vancouver.

J.E. Beamish, Asst. Director of Land Clearing,
Vancouver.

G. McKay, Supervisor of Placements, Immigration
Br. Dept. of Mines & Resources, Vancouver.

Geo. Challenger, Agricultural Representative,
B.C.E.R., Chilliwack.

S.G. Preston, Supervising Agriculturist, Prince
George.

T.S. Crack, District Agriculturist, Pouce Coupe.

In discussing land settlement in British Columbia, it was considered advisable to obtain the co-operation of individuals who were, and had been for some years, intimately associated with one or more phases of that particular problem. The sub-committee chosen may be criticized for a preponderance of officials and a paucity of practical farmers. This is, to a large extent, offset by the long practical experience of many of the personnel, and by the fact that in the past five months the Chairman had conducted considerable investigational work on settlement in many parts of the Province, including discussions with men now actively engaged in farming.

Following a very satisfactory meeting, to which the not present had sent written observations, your sub-committee the statement that British Columbia cannot develop economically the best advantage without further substantial settlement of the areas of potential agricultural lands still available in the northern parts of the Province.

The following recommendations are made:

A. A definite policy on land settlement and colonization must be established by the Provincial Government.

B. Reconstitution of the Land Settlement Board of the Provincial Department of Lands is necessary on a broad practical basis, thoroughly competent to administer such a policy.

C. Zoning of the Province is essential to ensure selection for settlement only of those areas of Government-owned land suitable, under present day conditions for economic development.

D. Complete co-ordination of all departments and agencies interested in or actively connected with settlement and colonization must be achieved.

E. Governmental assistance - Federal and Provincial - will be necessary to ensure that settlement is practical and likely to be successful.

These recommendations are made after considerable thought and discussion by men who are familiar with agriculture in every part of the Province.

The contention that no land settlement should be encouraged in view of the difficulties now apparent and likely to be further encountered in marketing the entire production of certain farm commodities, is recognized. It is felt, however, that the broad general development of British Columbia's economy justifies the steps which are being advocated. Precautions which will be outlined later may overcome certain objections to the suggestions that are made.

It is proposed to outline as briefly as possible first the basis on which the recommendations are made, and secondly, certain of the mechanics which must be adopted in working towards their efficient implementation.

British Columbia, in terms of population, is the fastest growing province in Canada, and will continue in that position for many years, due to natural increases and the continued large scale movement of people from the rest of the Dominion, and, in fact, all parts of the world who are attracted by our climate and high standard of living. Much of this increase is urban in nature.

At present, B.C. is self-sufficient only in the production of tree fruits, small fruits, eggs, fluid milk, and certain vegetables in season. Beef, veal, lamb, pork, butter, cheese, flour, and other products are imported in large quantities.

The B.C. production is approximately, beef 42%, veal 22%, lamb and mutton 27%, pork products 12%.

Furthermore, much of the wheat and coarse grains necessary to maintain even the present B.C. volume of eggs, poultry, meat, milk, and, to a lesser extent, beef, lamb and pork, is imported from the Prairies Provinces.

Further increases in population will require greater quantities of the commodities indicated and will, of course, presume greater consumption of those now in surplus production.

The Province has 1,100,000 acres of developed agricultural land - approximately one acre per person.

Lord Boyd Orr, former Director of the World Food and Agricultural Organization (F.A.O.), has stated that it requires $2\frac{1}{2}$ acres of producing land to maintain each human being.

It is estimated that there are 6,000,000 additional acres of potential agricultural land in B.C. - most of it in the North Cariboo, Central B.C., and in the Peace River Block.

There are further limited areas suitable for development in the Kootenays, Southern Interior, the lower mainland, Vancouver Island, and possibly on the West Coast, and in the Queen Charlotte Islands.

75% of the people of the Province are concentrated in an area within an eighty mile radius of Vancouver. The great new areas of potential productions are situated North and East, and their development has been hindered by lack of transportation.

The extension of the P.G.E. to Prince George will permit the productions of Central B.C. to move towards the heavily populated areas of the South-west. That of the Peace River must still flow to Edmonton until the P.G.E. is further extended from Prince George to serve that vast inland empire.

Elsewhere in British Columbia we need and will continue to need in increasing measure, the commodities that farmers of the North and North-East now produce, and could produce further in considerable quantities. The P.G.E. must have the freight to justify its existence.

Neither objective can be achieved fully without further land settlement.

Increased population and the desire of many urban

... raise their families in rural surroundings indicate that the subdivision of existing farms into small holdings adjacent to and towns will continue and probably accelerate, with a further increase in the production of such essential commodities as milk, grain, pork and lamb, in the areas concerned. There may be an increase in fruits, vegetables, and poultry production. Markets may be further generalized by the impact of supplies representing surpluses over home requirements of productions planned originally to reduce family living costs. Maintenance of Board designed to effect orderly marketing of high quality merchandise will do much to stabilize distribution.

There is encouragement now for northern settlement, for example, in the potential purchasing power indicated by the construction of a Celanese Plant near Prince Rupert, the projected establishment of an aluminum plant at Kittingmat, a pulp mill at Quesnel. These are, we hope, only tangible evidences of a trend towards decentralization of industry throughout the so-called hinterlands of the Province, and predicted on supplies of raw material, available power, and satisfactory transportation.

There is room for additional settlement in other sections of the Province, to be influenced largely by available lands and in relation to the commodities that can be produced to meet local demand - or those of a specialized nature which the farmer and his land may be capable of producing economically, and for which a definite and satisfactory market exists.

Much of this anticipated expansion will again depend on a decentralization of industry from the coastal area and its development at interior points.

At the present time we lack a proper balance between rural and urban population. This disparity will be the more obvious as urban populations increase, and if land settlement is not encouraged.

The age old movement of people from farms to cities will continue and perhaps be accelerated. Industry must continue to draw on rural people for the labour and personnel necessary for successful development.

This Province cannot develop economically to best advantage with 75% of its population in one small area in the South West, and with only 15% of its potential agricultural land under cultivation.

The normal influx of settlers to new lands will not be sufficient to maintain even the present food ratio for a rapidly increasing urban population.

Above all else, it must be accepted that potential agricultural land is only a Provincial asset when its resources are used to the full, which implies the development of a rugged rural population proper land use, a sound farming programme, purchasing power for the products of industry, and for agricultural commodities other than those grown at home, and the payment of taxes.

all these premises are well founded - and we believe they are -
Government of British Columbia is justified in encouraging further
ent.

Your sub-committee strongly recommends any official policy should
ensure that only those government-owned lands be made available for
settlement that offer a reasonable opportunity for successful development.
The selection of suitable land is of paramount importance. Proper con-
servation of soil and water must be guaranteed. The use of poorer
areas for woodlots and planned afforestation must be encouraged.

Settlement should be by areas, rather than by individual widely-
scattered units. This would imply that certain fairly extensive areas
should be selected and an effort made to establish settlers on suitable
units as closely as possible. Though some individuals or small groups
may be in a position to take up land in more isolated locations, the pre-
vious method would be preferable.

The acreage that can be termed a minimum economic unit in the light
of the type of farming considered most suitable for the area concerned must
be determined and adhered to, unless there are special and practical reasons
for a lower acreage which the particular holding or the prospective
settler appear to warrant.

Referring to lands in Central British Columbia from Terrace to Vale-
mont, and South from Prince George to Quesnel, heavy clearing costs are
a handicap to successful settlement. The day has gone forever when we
can expect the development of large areas of brushland by new settlers
with limited capital. In this age, modern methods involving heavy mech-
anized equipment are necessary to clear sufficient acreage to provide some
income.

There is a difference of opinion as to the course that should be
adopted. Generally, however, there is agreement that a minimum acreage of
cleared land ready for crop on each unit sold in the area under discussion
is essential, with the cost thereof added to the price of the raw land.

On a 160 acre farm, considered generally to be the minimum economic
unit here, the extent of cleared land with which to commence operations was
suggested at from twenty to eighty acres. Forty acres would appear to be
generally acceptable, though considered by some to be too low.

In the Peace River Block it is stated that the minimum unit should
be 320 acres with a minimum of at least 100 acres capable of crop pro-
duction in the initial year.

Unless water for domestic and stock is readily available, a well
should be drilled or a dugout constructed, with the cost again being a
charge on the land.

While it is felt that a limited number of holdings can be sold after
clearing has been effected, there is general agreement that it may be more
desirable to have the clearing carried out after the prospective owner has
made his selection, and is available to decide with officials of the De-
partment of Lands and Agriculture, the particular area which should be de-
veloped first, and which would usually be determined in relation to gen-
eral topography, soil conditions, home site location, water supply, roads,
schools, etc.

struction of a home and building would be a matter for indivi-

Some feel that the Government would be well guided in making no charge for the land itself except perhaps the service charge for sur-
now in effect. The opinion is held that the advantages of having
brought into production are so great as to warrant this encouragement.
such a policy was adopted, certain safeguards to avoid exploitation would
be essential. Others are of the opinion that any policy that would imply
giving something for nothing is basically wrong and should not be
encouraged. The final costs, whether it be for improvements recommended
and the original price of the land if any, or for improvements alone, should
be payable on very easy terms.

The initial payment should be 10% to 15% and the balance amortized
over a twenty year period, with prepayment privileges. Interest would be at
prevailing Government rates, but a strong recommendation is made that these
should not exceed 4%.

When a settler has indicated his ability and desire to further de-
velop his holding, the Department of Agriculture's land clearing policy
should be made available to him. Initial payment for such work should be
25%, with the balance payable over a five year period, with interest already
indicated.

While it is recognized that the assistance outlined is more gen-
erous than that afforded earlier settlers or participants in the land clear-
ing programme, the necessity for a sound, farseeing settlement policy, and
the need to provide worthwhile encouragement to prospective settlers is
ample justification for the recommendations that are being made.

It must be kept in mind that many of those who may become
settlers under such a policy will have but limited funds, and consequently
unable to carry out preliminary work of a necessary nature requiring cash
outlays, while at the same time assuming future obligations that can only
be met normally from farm income. Failure from this cause can be avoided
largely by a practical appreciation of the many problems involved and an
honest effort to ensure that a reasonable opportunity is given to achieve
success.

At no time must the original cost of land, plus initial improve-
ments, be so high that it discourages settlers, or is out of line
relatively with the price at which improved farms with buildings and
cultivated clearings can be purchased in the same area.

It is again urged that settlement be by areas and that thorough
planning precede active land sales.

In addition to the suggestions already made, it would be necessary
that all agencies concerned; Lands, Agriculture, Public Works, Education,

... agree on location, units to be alienated, roads, schools, etc. This should avoid many future difficulties, and ensure a co-ordinated effort.

It is recognized that the economic status of many farmers now operating in Central B.C. leaves much to be desired. This may be traced to many causes - poor selection of land, unsuitability of occupier, lack of capital, inadequate transportation, improper land use, lack of technical guidance, poor marketing practices.

Under the plan outlined, we have shown how some of these could be overcome.

The increased extension staff of the Provincial Department of Agriculture would be available to give guidance in proper land use, providing technical and practical advice on sound farm management practices assisting in organizing more efficient marketing.

Dominion Experimental Farms would initiate illustration stations suitable to each area, or group of areas, if their farming practices were similar, and distances apart not too great. They might also be sources of livestock and seed grain.

In co-operation with the Provincial Department of Agriculture and the University of British Columbia, Experimental Farm Personnel could be available to conduct lectures and short courses. Not the least important of these should be "Citizenship" where foreign-born settlers are concerned.

The Dominion Production Services would assist with sire loaning and other applicable policies.

The Provincial Veterinary Service would undertake establishing disease-free areas.

It is conceivable that a new generation of settlers would be more anxious to take advantage of the many forms of assistance which were not available to as great an extent to the former generation.

Under modern conditions, amenities such as water, light power, roads, railway, or steamship lines, schools, churches, stores, are essential to thoroughly successful land settlement.

The further development of British Columbia and the need for a large balance population on this west coast is a matter that should receive grave consideration from the Federal Government. Some years ago a prominent Federal Minister stated that if we did not populate our vast

ed agricultural areas, some other country with an outlook and an foreign to ours, would. That is still true today. Consequently, participation in the programme advocated should be available. assistance might be forthcoming for transportation, clearing, or water development. There is a responsibility and it should not be shirked.

We welcome the news that a separate Federal Department of Immigration has been created.

We are recommending strongly that the Provincial Land Settlement Board be again established with the authority and the personnel necessary to administer efficiently a programme such as we have outlined.

Available lands should be open for settlement, first to rural residents of British Columbia, next to rural residents from other provinces in Canada, third selected farm settlers from the United States; fourth, selected farm settlers from Great Britain and Ireland; fifth, to selected Dutch, Swiss and Baltic State nationals with rural backgrounds. If sufficient interest was not forthcoming from those, other European sources could be considered.

Where a man is in a position to pay all cash for the purchase, there will be little point in selection. Where, however, he is settling on agreement of sale the condition is different, and the authorities can exercise all necessary precautions to avoid unsuitable occupiers.

→ Settlement of areas by national groups should not be permitted. There were grave doubts that religious groups were entirely satisfactory, but it was felt greater tolerance might be exercised here.

The various agencies now operating in the field of settlement are doing, or are capable of doing, a good job. Railway colonization departments have had many years of practical experience. Certain church organizations are valuable. Embassies of Foreign countries, the Department of Immigration, the Federal Department of Labour representing I.R.O., each have an important place in a broad plan. The essential factors are that those representing any agency should be efficient, practical, responsible individuals, seeking to establish families on their potential value as satisfied citizens of the Province, and of Canada, rather than for the sake of showing a large number of settlers placed.

The experience of V.L.A. authorities can provide much useful information, and the assistance from that source in discussing the whole problem of land settlement is gratefully acknowledged.

There may be criticism that this contribution deals only with the Northern parts of the Province but that is where the areas for

development lie. Available lands elsewhere in the Province settled through normal processes. There is all too great a tendency to move to the Southern Interior and Coast regions.

Recent economic changes may make it necessary to encourage those small fruit growers in the Fraser Valley, who might be suitable, to acquire new holdings in the areas with which we have dealt. A shift in production from small fruits to more profitable crops is not easily possible on a small holding. Many of those men, though, have the necessary background of experience and are young enough to practise mixed farming if given some assistance. Here Federal assistance might be forthcoming to defray costs of moving, etc.

Similarly, some Okanagan fruit growers, more recently established, might be interested in a different economy. However, by and large, we are not too encouraged that families who have enjoyed the various amenities of the Fraser Valley and the Okanagan, will readily become new settlers in an area that, regardless of assistance available now, would be, in effect, semi-pioneer in nature for some little time.

While some response would be expected locally, in the northern and central areas, particularly if the present decline in logging persists, it is expected that settlers would require to be sought elsewhere. Certain sections of the Prairie Provinces have experienced repeated droughts with farmers requiring assistance of the Prairie Farm Assistance Act to offset in some measure disastrous crop failures. It is reported that 12,000 farm families are involved and it appears necessary that they be resettled elsewhere to obviate the continual need for assistance. Those farmers are practical, experienced operators, most of whom will have some equipment and livestock, a number will have some cash.

Already many have moved to more favourable locations, contributing probably to the 2,000 new settlers these past five years in the Peace River Block of British Columbia.

It would seem that satisfactory plan could be worked out between the Dominion Government and that of British Columbia to arrange for the resettlement of a large number of the remaining families on the potential agricultural lands of this Province. We recommend that this be further sincerely explored so that an arrangement mutually and generally satisfactory can be achieved.

There will be opinions contrary to those expressed here, but the Honourable Harry Bowman, Minister of Agriculture, will have much support in this statement that if Central and Northern B.C. had one million more population they would absorb the surplus tree and small fruits now causing concern, as well as providing a market for much industrial production.

The policy recommended will cost money - that is granted. But South Okanagan projects and the Sumas projects cost money - still money - but on a general balance of value and assets, tangible and intangible, those two projects have contributed and will continue to contribute too much to our economy to be anything but an asset which we would ill afford to relinquish.

We predict that the settlement of Central and Northern B.C. on a practical basis, no matter what it may appear to cost, will be a determining factor in developing and maintaining the future economy of this Province at a level higher than most people are capable of appreciating.

Respectfully submitted,

W. MacGillivray, Director,
Development & Extension Branch.