

EIGHT

MAJOR MURPHY TELLS HIS PLANS TO GET SETTLERS

Soo Line Immigration Agent Will Strive For More Farmers Tillers of Soil, He Says, Have Been Leaving For Towns Will Begin Work by Listing Unoccupied Farm Lands

Since Major J. S. Murphy of Minot was appointed immigration agent for the Soo Line, a great campaign has been under way to secure new settlers who will make actual farmers all through that part of North Dakota traversed by the Soo road. To set forth the plan the major has started, the Tribune reproduces an open letter issued just recently. In a personal letter to the Tribune Mr. Murphy states:

"I am, as you likely know, the Immigration Agent for the Soo Line. You know conditions existing in three-fourths of the state today. We actually have less people on the farms than we had four years ago. For instance, 57 per cent of the people in Ward county live in Minot, Kenmare and the other incorporated towns and villages of the county.

"The chief reason for this, as you know, is that 'butchers and bakers and candlestick makers,' servant girls, school teachers, ministers of the Gospel, superannuated business men and everyone else to whom a beneficent government gave a 'right' fled on land, with a result that, not being farmers, they could not and did not succeed.

"So history is repeating itself. We are now going to try and bring in the actual farmer. For the next three months, I am going to devote my time and energy to getting a list of the unoccupied and idle lands in the counties of Burleigh, McLean, Foster, Sheridan, Wells, McHenry, Ward, Burke, Divide, Renville and Bottineau counties. In other words, I am not going to spread myself out too much territory at the beginning. Beginning about March 1, next, we are going to make a rate of probably \$10 from Chicago and points in Indiana and Illinois, etc. to points on the Soo Line in North Dakota.

There is probably no man in the state who has studied farming conditions in North Dakota any closer than has Major Murphy. He has lived here for years, and has been actively engaged in farming, is a forceful writer and public speaker. The Soo Line made a wise choice in selecting him for this great undertaking, and no one doubts but successful results will follow. His plan is set forth, as follows:

"No argument is needed to convince the thinking man that the prime need in practically all North Dakota is actually all North Dakota is a better class of soil. It is obvious that an agricultural region cannot possibly attain the highest measure of its development unless the great bulk of its tillable and idle

and unimproved with its borders. Ninety per cent of our land is plowable and ready for the plow. Our soil is the best, the meteorological atmospheric conditions are excellent, transportation facilities are adequate and rates cheap. With the same workmanship, this land will produce more dollars per acre, year after year, as the \$15 an acre land of Iowa. Our school system is one of the best in the world, accumulating endowment fund that will, in time, amount to fifty million dollars.

"Notwithstanding these and many other advantages not possessed by other states, there are literally millions of acres in all the western two-thirds of North Dakota that can be bought at prices ranging from \$20 to \$40 per acre. Undoubtedly the chief reason for this is that practically all of this land could be acquired in one way only, viz. through home steading. Now, a beneficial government gave almost every person a 'right' to enter land, and the result was that people of every occupation and no profession—many of them with no knowledge whatever of either plowing or seeding—took up land.

"We are just beginning to realize that farming is a business, in which, to be successful, one must have specific knowledge, industry and adaptability, requirements not possessed by the average homesteader—and the result is that fifty per cent of the homesteads taken not more than 12 per cent of the original homesteaders remain on the land. In this connection, I might also mention that the history of homesteading, from and including Iowa, west, also shows that those of the original settlers who are still on the land are always well to do.

"Briefly, without going into the economic aspects of this condition, which is apparent to every business man in the state, the result is that nearly half of the tillable land has gone into the hands of speculators and is being held idle for the most part, it is either badly farmed or idle and unimproved. For instance, there were forty-four thousand acres of land in Ward county in 1913 that there was 1,191,000. There were 19,000 acres in Renville, 11,000 in Burke, and 21,000 less in Bottineau, in 1913 than there were in 1910.

"In a region where practically the only industry is farming, the population should live largely on farms, and more lands should be cultivated each year was cultivated the year before, but such is not the case. In Ward county, where conditions are probably more accentuated, but not more so, the third largest city in the state is here located, 56 per cent of the people live in the cities and villages.

"It would be foolish to close our eyes to the fact that there are less actual farmers in the region under discussion than there were four years ago. It is, of course, to be argued with a degree of truth that the short crop years—1909, 1910, 1911, 1912, and 1913—means depletion of moisture, abnormal weed growth and adverse conditions generally—were the factors mainly responsible for bringing about the conditions we are now called upon to face. The thinking man, however, knows that history is simply repeating itself in what was originally a small grain country—the slip shod fellow, the typical homesteader, and the man who insists on growing small grains indefinitely to the exclusion of real farming—corn, hogs, cattle, dairying—all of which the real farmer, who is prospering, is bringing the country is splendidly adapted to—is being frozen out. In other words, the typical original settlers, many of whom could not make a living in the Garden of Eden, fled a want for a brief space, and helped bring production out of desolation and wealth out of waste, but some of them could not change their method of farming and mother nature, as well as the ultimate and economic destiny of the country, demanded their elimination—and that is what the short crop years has done.

"Mr. Pennington, head of the Soo railway, who is recognized as one of the great practical foreseeing builders of the west, fully realizes the proposition we are now up against. Having had full confidence in the potential possibilities of this state, and the ability to inspire financiers with that confidence, and having built the Soo line compact and contiguous—running through or touching thirty of the forty-eight counties of the state and bringing the people of more than 160 cities, villages and stations, he has now authorized the inauguration of a systematic and well thought out plan to bring real farmers from the middle west to purchase, occupy and till our idle land.

"The Soo is not in this movement of which I am writing purely for philanthropic motives; it is in it primarily to increase its business, but it is a mutual proposition, and it expects the co-operation of every business organization, every banker, every business man, and every farmer—in short every land owner in the territory served by its lines.

"While the idle parts of the middle west in the past experienced practically the same conditions we are now facing, and while the natural conditions there are no better than they are here, those regions have long passed the 'homestead' era and the 'ham and land' era. Most of those sections is such that it is today selling at prices from \$100 to \$200 per acre and takes a comparatively wealthy man to buy a farm of any size.

"North Dakota in contradistinction to the states west of us, and as near to our northern border, has never advertised—never inaugurated or put into effect any systematic or sustained effort in placing before the country our great resources and possibilities.

"After the homestead period, the railroads did little advertising, and today the other great roads traversing North Dakota are doing nothing to bring the west and ignoring this region. This result is that the people of the middle west where our most desirable immigration should come from, has little actual knowledge of our resources, and the only immigration we are getting comes from two sources—those who come of their own violation and those brought here by the real estate agents.

those east of us who want good land—and there are tens of thousands who would come if they knew the conditions and could buy the land on reasonable terms and its real value. This object the Soo railway is going to undertake to achieve in its territory in North Dakota. Not as a real estate agent—it will not enter that field—it has other work to do, besides such action might be actual.

"Briefly, the plan decided upon, and to be put into effect by the Land Industrial and Immigration Department of the Soo is this: We purpose to obtain an actual settler to purchase every quarter or half section tributary to the Soo line, that is, not farmed by the owner. This, we realize, cannot be done in a day. We purpose first to get the consent of the owner of as many vacant farms as possible to let us bring them purchasing for their lands. In doing this we expect the hearty co-operation of every community in Soo territory. We expect to get the names of many non-resident owners of land direct, we expect to get the names of owners of idle lands from many and different sources as well as from the public records, and we hope and expect that farmers and business men will send us the description of all vacant lands of which they know, with the names and addresses of the owners, when known. When the names are obtained, we will write the owners a letter and explain our plan fully. Some of the owners will want a small amount of cash and a reasonable rate of interest on deferred payments, some will sell at a low figure for cash. We have no large enough lists to supply the demands of any kind of a customer.

"The work of obtaining customers will seem a difficult one to the man living here—and we realize that it will take a lot of work, advertising and other expense. At the present time the Soo line has a lot of land which it owns in Wisconsin. Engaged in selling this land it has hundreds of agents at various points in the east, who are looking for purchasers. These agents and hundreds of others will be enlisted in this propaganda for North Dakota. Those agents will work right in the field where actual, desirable farmers, and high class renters, and their sons, are desirous of having land if it can be bought right. In those regions land rarely changes hands unless the owner dies. To all those agents and to all inquirers, whether agents or not, we will send advertising matter prepared by the company, describing this region. This literature will contain a full description of North Dakota, generally, and particularly the portion covered by the Soo lines. Each county and each section will be written up. Farm journals and newspapers will be used. This matter, explaining our plan in full, will be put in the hands of land buyers. Purchases by speculators will be discouraged, and they will be advised to purchase farm loans from reliable bankers in our territory, so far as we can make it do so, answer all the usual questions that a

prudent, prospective land buyer would ask before coming into the state. All our eastern agents will be furnished with a complete description of each tract of land that can be purchased and the terms in detail. This will be the owner's description taken from his contract with the railway company, but we will insist that this description be honest and accurate, that bad points, as mentioned as well as good ones, if the full truth be told the prospective settler, it is good enough for us, we do not want him. We believe that the man who expects this country, or a tract of land in it, to do more than it will do, is a poor man to get into the country, and the only way to gain the confidence of the eastern settler is to be frankly honest with him, and have him understand that we are telling the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. This will bring him, or if it does not, we do not want him. We are convinced that we have the best country in the world for the man of moderate means who wants to start real farming in a reasonable way but we have no bonanzas to offer him. We know our lands will not produce without work—physical and mental—and we want settlers who will realize that fact.

"The Soo line will charge for its services and expenses in the premises one dollar for each quarter section listed for sale. This is done primarily to insure the listing of all lands by the owners at reasonable prices, and so that we can know definitely that the owner is acting in good faith. It is obvious that this amount will not in any way compensate for the money paid out in advertising and other expenses.

"Past experience demonstrates that it is difficult to get prompt and satisfactory results among prospective land buyers without, some actual, personal work, and this must be paid for in some way. We therefore purpose paying our eastern agents a commission of \$1.00 per acre and no more. This commission will be paid by the owner listing the land for sale, when the sale is made.

"While the eastern agent at the present time demands and is paid a larger commission than this by the North Dakota real estate agent, we feel that we can help to such extent in making sales that this commission will be attractive to the middle west land man. We realize that this adds \$1.00 per acre to the price of the land, but it is only a reasonable broker's commission, and we do not believe that either the buyer or the seller, both of whom will be the full facts, will object on this point.

"In listing lands for sale, the contract will run for an indefinite period, with the privilege of the owner of withdrawing the land any time upon sixty days notice such period of time to begin on the first day of the month following the receipt of such notice by the railway company. This enables us to notify all our territory of the land for sale and stop useless expense in advertising. However, ours is not an exclusive

agency. Our contract with the owner permits him to sell to his own customer, or through any other agent, without a cent of commission to us, but we must be promptly notified when the land is sold. Our object is not to collect commissions, and not to sell lands, but to get settlers for the country. We want prosperous farmers on all lands tributary to our lines. We want to help them, advise them, and assist them in all ways possible, consistent with our mutual interests. We want the incoming settler to realize that people in Soo territory will get the best service from our company just as those here now get the best of service.

"We maintain that when it becomes generally known in the regions where prospective settlers for our idle lands are available, that the big commission now insisted upon are eliminated, and that everything is on the square and above board, and a closer scrutiny of our plan invited—when this is shown—we believe the first long step in getting actual, desirable settlers will have been taken.

"We reiterate, the Soo is inaugurating this scheme to bring settlers—the railway company will be out much for the time being—our cost will be later. Your share will come before ours.

"Are you a merchant? If so, you want us to help you get more customers; the same if you are a banker. Are you a farmer living in our territory? How many neighbors do you have? What would be the increase in the value of your land if a good farmer were living on the farm? Think of the increased facilities you would have—more phones, better roads, better mail facilities, central schools, more churches, more and better farmer's clubs, more co-operation.

"We can help you. You can make our initial work easier by sending it the legal description and name and address of the owner of the idle lands in your township, if it is tributary to Soo territory. We do not work in other territory and we will have to decide on the lines outside of which we will not go.

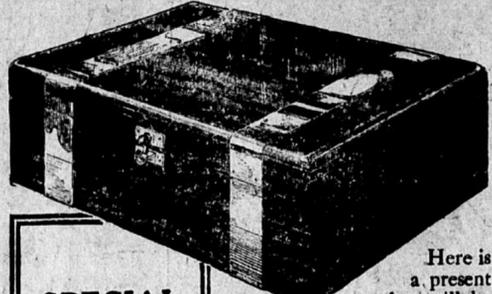
"If you are a farmer and cannot properly own all the land you now own, and would sell part of it, send for our literature, and let us get it going. Now is the time to get this thing started. The farmers and renters who are able to live in Wisconsin, Illinois and elsewhere will have plenty of time during the winter to road and talk over our literature, and write out letters of inquiry on the subject.

"We want to get them so interested that they will come to see your land and possibly buy next spring or summer. Your interests and ours are identical. Have your friend back east who might be interested in this country? If so, send us his name and address and we will write him, sending him our descriptive literature and literature of the territory.

"If you have information or advice pertaining to this subject, we are ready and glad to receive it. Write us at Minot, North Dakota. Get busy—ask questions. We can do things you cannot, but you can help. We want co-operation. In short help us to get this landless man on the landless land.

"Very truly yours,
J. S. MURPHY,
Immigration and Agricultural Agent, Minot, N. D.,
St. P. & S. M. Ry. Co., Minot, N. D."

DISCREDIT STORY.
Mandan, N. D., Dec. 17.—The story circulated here some time ago that Axel and Adolph Soderstrom, former residents



Here is a present that will be appreciated by any man. A Magnificent Humidor Mahogany finished, bound with metal bands, and containing A Box of 50 Smokerraff Segars (10 cent straight size) for only \$5.25 complete. Where can you get such an exquisite Holiday Gift for so little money! Also Boxes of 25, at popular prices. At all dealers

and glad to receive it. Write us at Minot, North Dakota. Get busy—ask questions. We can do things you cannot, but you can help. We want co-operation. In short help us to get this landless man on the landless land.

Santa Claus Says: You Should Buy Useful Gifts

Our hardware store is just the place to buy sensible, useful Christmas gifts. Silverware, carving sets, table cutlery, pocket knives, shaving sets, little wagons and a thousand and one other things will make presents every member of your family and your friends will like. Don't throw your money away buying some trashy present, but come to us and buy a sensible gift

You can shop with pleasure at our store. Suitable articles for any member of the family are here and we reserve delivery until Christmas if desired.

Let us help you choose a suitable gift



Excursion Fares to the East via the Chicago and North Western Line

Table with 2 columns: City and Round Trip fare. Cities include Chicago, Milwaukee, Buffalo, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Columbus, Council Bluffs, Detroit, Evansville, Indianapolis, Kansas City, Louisville, Omaha, Pittsburg, St. Paul, Springfield, St. Joseph, St. Louis, Toledo.

Tickets on sale daily December 1 to 31, 1913; return limit three months from date of sale. Liberal stopovers.

Through Train to Chicago North Coast Limited, Northern Pacific, Chicago and North Western Lines, via Minneapolis and St. Paul, across Wisconsin to Milwaukee, along the shores of Lake Michigan to Chicago.

Table with 2 columns: City and Time. Cities include St. Paul, Minneapolis, Milwaukee, Chicago.

For travel information call upon or address E. A. WHITAKER, Trav. Pass. Agent, C. T. PETERSON, Trav. Pass. Agent, Brokerage Bldg., ST. PAUL G. W. MACRAE, Gen. Pass. Agent, ST. PAUL, MINN.

Chafing Dishes. A useful gift. Our line of chafing dishes is varied in styles and patterns, ranging from \$3.50 to \$17.00.

Serving Dishes. Serving dishes are always appreciated as a gift. A complete line ranging in price from \$2.50 to \$7.00.

Asbestos Sad Irons. A full line of asbestos sad irons, priced from 15c to \$2.50.

Safety Razors. The well-known Gillette safety razor, is found in our varied line of safety razors. All kinds and makes priced from 10c to \$6.50. A thoughtful present.

Pleasure Gifts. The girls and boys will enjoy a Christmas gift such as a pair of skates, a sled or a pair of skis. A complete line of air rifles and "twenty-twos."

Gifts for Men. You will find here a large variety of gifts for men. Safety razors and blade razors, with mugs brushes and strops; the best display of knives in town. Carving sets in cloth and leather cases; tools of every conceivable kind and description; rifles, guns and pistols.

Sure Edge Cutlery. Carving knives, pocket knives and other edged articles are found in their varied styles at our store, among which many useful presents can be selected.

Electric Irons. One of the handy and work saving devices of these modern times; we guarantee the line of electric irons we handle for five years. A thoughtful Christmas gift, \$3.75.

Tool Boxes. With complete set of carpentering tools for practical farm use, at home or for the boy in manual training. A set of these tools will keep your boy home with real enjoyment and permit him making many useful things. Priced from \$1.50 to \$35 per set.

Community Silver. Silverware is always useful as well as an appreciated Christmas present. Our line of Community silver is unequalled for quality and style. In fact, everything in the silverware line from which to choose a useful Christmas present. Guaranteed for 50 years.

Rogers' Silverware. We handle the full line of Rogers Bros. silverware—a serviceable and standard line from which to select a Christmas gift.

Carving Sets. We handle the famous Zenith and Sure Edge carving sets. A carving set is one of the usual Christmas gifts and we take pride in our large line, too. All styles and prices. Every piece guaranteed.

Flexible Flyers. We have prepared for the boys with a big line of fine sleds, with steering devices, in all sizes. You may reserve any article for Christmas delivery, if you wish.

FRENCH & WELCH HARDWARE CO. Bismarck, N. D. Phone 141 Main Street