

I thought this  
was rather enlightening  
on Canadian problems  
E.S.B.

Return to E.S.B.

11319 65th.

Edmonton, Alta.

March 31, 1921.

Dear Evelina :-

Thank you very much for the ten dollar check. I wouldn't have cashed it if I hadn't been very hard up. I don't see how you can get along on forty dollars a month. It would be impossible to get board ~~along~~ for any less than that here in Edmonton.

Re your suggestion of irrigating Alberta I wish you would write to the government about it. They are getting lots of prodding on the subject from farmer supporters in the dryer parts. Irrigation on a huge scale is something that this generation will see ushered into Alberta. However it is a very big problem indeed. <sup>For one thing</sup> In the first place the amount of irrigable land will have to be determined by land surveys and by measurement of waters available. These surveys alone will cost in the hundreds of thousands of dollars. Then the first expense of damming the rivers and building the ditches will cost millions. The average cost, per acre of irrigating land will likely cost up to \$50 per acre. You can readily see that the farmers who own this dry land debt ridden as they are are bending every effort

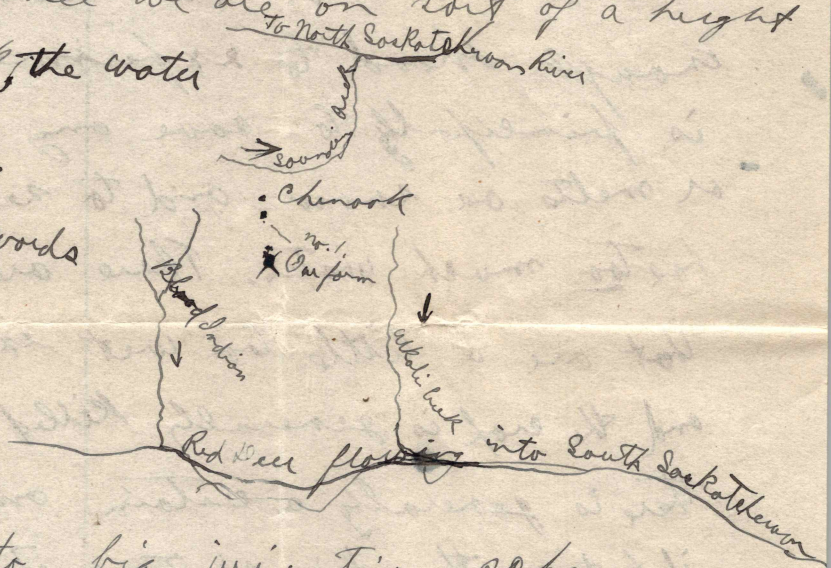
to keep their farms producing all that is possible can not undertake this new expense themselves on any large scale at all. For the government to undertake it means a stupendous problem for a newly settled province whose per capita wealth is mostly in land as yet. You see this isn't the only problem for the government to tackle. Railways are just as important for some new districts have been opened up that are wonderfully fertile where grain has been threshed this year by the thousands of bushels and yet the expense of hauling it to market is so great that ton for ton the grain is not worth as much as ordinary low grade coal at the mine! Then too for fifty dollars an acre or less (just about the same expense as irrigation) there are hundreds of thousands of acres of the most fertile land in the province that could be cleared of brush as in this Edmonton district and would raise immense crops without irrigation.

Two thirds of the province has more or less brush on the land and is very fine soil and fairly level. Then there are some great areas that need to be drained. Some of the very richest lands are subject to flooding making them at present valueless except perhaps for hay. These problems I have mentioned are only a few of the big development problems of the province. Irrigation is being discussed and at

least one sizable project <sup>2.</sup> has had its bonds guaranteed by the province but of course, <sup>when</sup> the government back one scheme they can't refuse to back another and be fair and if they help the south they must aid the north so they are almost in despair how to formulate a policy that will show a little progress from year to year and still not gather enough momentum to overwhelm them.

As to irrigation in the Chinook district, I believe quite a little of our land is above the level of any water that could be brought in. You see we are on sort of a height of land south of Chinook, the water

flowing northwards into the North Saskatchewan and southwards into the south Saskatchewan.



Undoubtedly however there is land fairly near to Chinook that will eventually come into big irrigation schemes if they come up into our country. One part will likely be the last part irrigated as we are not in the extremely dry part.

There are many other problems that enter into irrigation besides getting the water. Some soils do not seem to irrigate very well as the extreme wetting which it is ~~necessary~~ <sup>unavoidable</sup> the land should get ~~at~~ times may turn the land alkaline due to the water washing

out salts and bringing them to the surface where the very rapid evaporation of our dry atmosphere leaves them at the surface. There can be found land in U.S. abandoned because of the bad results of irrigation. Possibly though these dangers and many others can be planned against effectively as soon as much more is known about irrigation than fifteen or twenty years ago.

I have had some little ideas of my own for some small schemes of reclamation on individual farms in our belt and have always been hoping to get far enough ahead to experiment on our own land. My idea is principally to save any water that falls on the land or melts or snow and to see that there is no land that has too much water. There are always spots in our fields that are a little too wet except in extremely dry periods and the crop is generally killed or stunted in these spots. Then there is generally a certain amount of water in sloughs that if put on the dry spots instead of being left for the wind to blow up during the dry weather. It would take quite a little ditching and damming to accomplish these ideas but Selden and I are hoping to experiment some day. You know the slough above the house (in the creek) we have dammed up about breast high and have a fine auto road across the dam. We have a garden below the dam and a top for letting water out. We had soft water all last summer and the slough was always

a reserve ~~in~~ case the pump got out of order and we were short of water for our thirty six head of stock.

I will be through school this coming week. I suppose I will be teaching somewhere in the country for the summer and will get into some town school in the fall. There is to be a big strike of all the teachers in Calgary next week on the question of salary largely. What do you think of that.

What do you think of the educational tests and measurements Binet & Simon, Curtis etc etc? We have been drilled on their good points quite a good deal. I don't believe the old Calvinists were so far wrong when they formulated the doctrines of predestination and ~~and~~ infant damnation. However I can't say that I came to take up this ~~idea~~ since I came to Normal school but only to get it confirmed.

One of our Chinook people has lately gone to Chicago to study. His name is Mr. E. T. Mitchell (It may be A. T. Mitchell) and he is taking some advanced work in ~~pedagogy~~ <sup>pedagogy</sup> (don't know how to spell it). He has been school inspector in the Chinook district. Mrs. Mitchell has an M.A. and is teaching mathematics in the University here this winter. They have a four year old daughter Joyce. If you get any chance to see Mr. Mitchell I'd be glad if you would do so. You won't dis like him but you may not admire him particularly. He really

is quite a fine man but very quiet and probably rather "farmer" looking. As an inspector he seemed to show very good judgment. He ~~was~~ interested in the boy scout work in Chinook. If you meet him don't be disturbed by his ~~apparent~~ lack of aggressiveness, but take the lead yourself and make a good impression on him to be carried back to Alberta. You'll likely find there is considerable more in him than appears at the surface. His wife is English and I believe his parents are English having a farm near Edmonton. The English blood partly explains his disposition or most <sup>educated</sup> English don't seem to stir themselves to either get other people's view point or to impress their own upon any one else.

It makes conversation lag unless the aggressive is taken by some one else. However they don't seem to resent any one's attempting to draw them out or to amuse them, ~~in~~ fact are perhaps quite grateful <sup>through mildly surprised</sup> but they immediately sag back into indifference the moment they are left alone. When you are visiting this class of people it is quite in good form to sit and think <sup>kindly</sup> think that is the real explanation of the tea drinking habit and the universal smoking of Englishmen. Where I for instance might vary the monotony of my own thoughts by a question or an exclamation, an Englishman could accomplish the same purpose by striking a match or dropping a lump of sugar into a cup. W.H.