Dry farming promotion in eastern Montana (1907-1916)

Charles A. Dalich
The University of Montana

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Dry Farming Promotion in Eastern Montana (1907-1916)

By

Charles A. Dalich

B.A., University of Montana, 1966

Presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts University of Montana 1968

Approved by:

[Signatures ofExaminers]

Chairman, Board of Examiners

Dean, Graduate School

July 5, 1968

Date
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INTRODUCTION

The homestead or "honyocker" era in Montana extended roughly from 1909 to 1925. During this relatively brief period thousands upon thousands of people flooded into eastern and central Montana to engage in dryland farming. The factors which conspired to bring them to the area were complex; the factors that led to their precipitous departure were less so.

This limited study of the early period is confined largely to the promotional campaign and to the related circumstances which led to the influx. The emphasis, therefore, is on the period from 1909 to 1916 and not on the ultimate catastrophe of the late teens and early twenties. Yet to chronicle the reasons for the influx and ignore the overall consequence would leave the reader hanging in mid-air. Therefore, the first chapter is an overall view of the drouth and of the sudden onset of severe agricultural depression in Montana. The chapters which follow narrow the scope of the study to an analysis of why and how the "boom" developed. A thorough-going study of the entire period must await further research. Such a study was too broad for the purposes of this thesis.

Montana historians have concentrated so heavily on the territorial period and have been so preoccupied with mining, the cattleman's frontier and the "War of the Copper Kings"
that the agricultural frontier has received little attention. Only Joseph Kinsey Howard in *Montana: High, Wide and Handsome* and K. Ross Toole in *Montana: An Uncommon Land* refer to the traumatic "Honyocker" period at all. Howard oversimplifies the causes both for the "boom" and the "bust," saddling James J. Hill of the Great Northern Railroad with primary responsibility for the boom and the activities of the Federal Reserve Board with primary responsibility for the "bust." Neither argument is based on adequate evidence. Toole's account is more balanced but his emphasis is more social than economic and his treatment, in any event, is cursory.

In spite of the lack of attention given to this period there is evidence that in the larger context of Montana's effective history the "honyocker" period constitutes as great a trauma as the War of the Copper Kings. Indeed, its deleterious effects were probably longer lasting and the long range cost of the disaster, while still an imponderable, was enormous.

This thesis does not presume to cover the entire period nor to exhaust the period it does cover. It examines one facet of a complex and interrelated series of events. Further study and as yet uncollected source material would be required for a broader focus.

Charles Dalich
August, 1968
CHAPTER I
THE HONYCKER AND THE DROUGHT

During the winter months of 1916, the eastern Montana farmer was buying automobiles and farm equipment. A Chevrolet agency in northern Montana sold 500 cars in December and placed 7,000 cars on order for 1917.\(^1\) The Havre Plaindealer commented "cars are selling at Christmas for the first time since they have been put on the market...in the middle west the honyocker brought his sweetheart a box of embroidered handkerchiefs, but now he is ordering a runabout for her...."\(^2\)

Farm tractors were becoming common in many areas of the state. For every team of horses in Sheridan county, there were ten tractors in operation.\(^3\) James Cheetam, an implement dealer in the Dutton area, reported a large increase in the sales of seed drills, disc harrows and farm wagons.\(^4\) Even though the farmers paid Cheetam with a note on the local bank, the Havre Plaindealer optimistically stated, "the people of northern Montana have more money than they know what to do with."\(^5\)

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\(^1\) Havre Plaindealer, December 8, 1916.


\(^3\) Havre Plaindealer, April 4, 1917.

\(^4\) In 1916 98 per cent of the implement dealers business was done through bank notes. Wagons were the largest sales item. The Company did not settle some accounts until 1940. Interview with James Cheetam, June 15, 1967.

\(^5\) Havre Plaindealer, December 8, 1916.
During the early months of 1917, a prosperous year was assured for the eastern Montana farmer. Since 1905, rainfall had averaged nearly 16.44 inches a year, and the price of wheat had been rising rapidly. By 1917 the United States had entered World War I, and needed wheat to supply its troops. Samuel V. Stewart, Governor of Montana, urged eastern Montana farmers to plant every available acre. He labeled this proposition not only good business for the farmers because of the high price of wheat, but also the patriotic duty of every farmer who wished to render service to his country. Eastern Montana farmers responded to Stewart's urging, and increased their acreage by more than 100 per cent in most dry farming districts. Honyockers were using not just one tractor to plant their increased acreage, but as many as two to four. Many hoped to make a profit of at least $100 for each addi-


<table>
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<td>1916</td>
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<td>.79</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1914</td>
<td>.97</td>
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<td>2.05</td>
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<tr>
<td>1915</td>
<td>.96</td>
<td>1920</td>
<td>1.82</td>
</tr>
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</table>


7 Havre Plaindealer, April 13, 1917.
8 Havre Plaindealer, April 13, 1917.
9 Ibid.
10 Ibid.
tional acre tilled, and no one thought that the usual rains of May, June and July would not come to water their new crops.\textsuperscript{11}

On July 5, 1917, the \textit{Havre Plaindealer} headline stated "drought is the worst in the history of the state."\textsuperscript{12} In the northern Montana counties, only 0.33 hundredths of an inch of rain fell in May and June and only 0.45 hundredths of an inch of precipitation fell in July.\textsuperscript{13}

Other calamities of nature followed. The grasshopper, which had destroyed settler's crops in earlier drought years, appeared once again in eastern Montana. This insect arrived in central and eastern Montana in the months of June and July. The \textit{Wibaux Pioneer} advocated that in order to destroy the grasshopper, the honyocker should utilize a poisoned bran mash solution, and spread this concentration by broadcast method over 4 acres of a field from a wagon or buggy.\textsuperscript{14} Although many homesteaders utilized the method advanced by the \textit{Pioneer}, the innovation proved ineffective against the grasshopper.\textsuperscript{15}

The wireworm and the cutworm accompanied the grasshopper

\textsuperscript{11}\textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{12}\textit{Havre Plaindealer}, July 5, 1917.
\textsuperscript{13}\textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{14}\textit{Wibaux Pioneer}, June 8, 1917.
\textsuperscript{15}\textit{Ibid.}
into eastern Montana. The farmer tried to destroy both these pests by applying a solution of chopped fruits sprinkled with arsenic on his acreage. However, the wireworm and the cutworm caused even more extensive damage to crops than the grasshoppers.

In 1917, the drought conditions did not prevail in all of eastern Montana, but in the northern counties of Teton, Pondera, Hill, Blaine, Phillips, Valley and Sheridan. In Hill county, dry farmers harvested only two bushels of wheat per acre; and Blaine county farmers reported only one half bushel per acre. Other wheat producing areas had good yields, for example Cascade averaged 10 to 30 bushels per acre and Judith Basin 8 to 15 bushels per acre.

At the end of 1917, the Fergus County Argus discussed the drought very philosophically. The newspaper contended that low crop yield had been caused by careless farming, and not the drought conditions. Few farmers had carefully planted their crops and many had not plowed up the stubble from the previous year. The Argus concluded that 1918

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16 Fergus County Argus, July 13, 1917.
18 Havre Plaindealer, October 4, 1917.
19 Ibid.
20 Fergus County Argus, August 17, 1917.
21 Ibid.
should teach eastern Montana farmers to be more careful.²²

The next two years were also dry years, and drought Conditions that had existed only in northern Montana, spread to central and southeastern Montana counties. The drought was like a disease which starts in one place and then spreads to other areas. On June 14, 1918, the Havre Plaindealer stated that in Richland and Musselshell counties extreme heat followed by a strong wind was causing worry over crop failure.²³ It also claimed that crops in Yellowstone, Rosebud and Carter counties had been completely burned up from the lack of moisture.²⁴ By 1919 farmers in Cascade, Musselshell, Richland and Judith Basin Counties reported total crop failures.²⁵ Drought conditions were destroying crops and not the farmers through their careless farming methods.

²²Ibid.
²³Havre Plaindealer, June 14, 1918.
²⁴Ibid.
²⁵Random Selection of Rainfall Measured in Some South Eastern and North Central Montana Counties During the Growing Season of 1919

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COUNTY</th>
<th>APRIL</th>
<th>MAY</th>
<th>JUNE</th>
<th>JULY</th>
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<tr>
<td>Custer</td>
<td>1.67</td>
<td>1.75</td>
<td>.061</td>
<td>2.19</td>
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<td>Teton</td>
<td>.026</td>
<td>.043</td>
<td>.077</td>
<td>.076</td>
</tr>
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<td>Valley</td>
<td>1.12</td>
<td>.037</td>
<td>.055</td>
<td>.140</td>
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<td>Chouteau</td>
<td>.086</td>
<td>.086</td>
<td>1.42</td>
<td>1.85</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 1919, newspapers and commercial clubs attempted to minimize the effects of Montana's drought. The *Minneapolis Daily News* stated "don't pity Montana...the wealth is there in Montana in a soil so rich and productive that you could just about take a sack of it to a bank in Belgium and draw interest on it...."\(^{26}\) The *Daily News* concluded that many of the older states in the Mississippi Valley had survived the effects of drought conditions.\(^{27}\) Eastern Montanans needed only to "hang on, keep a stiff upper lip, study and figure, and they would overcome the drought conditions also."\(^{28}\)

The Billings Chamber of Commerce commented, "Individuals and companies heretofore contemplating starting new industries are being discouraged by grossly exaggerated reports of failure and ruin in this state."\(^{29}\) The Billings Chamber of Commerce concluded that the great amount of unfavorable publicity must be stopped, or Montana's reputation as a stable farming and livestock area would be ruined in a few months.\(^{30}\)

Despite the efforts to minimize the effects of the drought,
eastern Montana farmers experienced a great deal of tragedy. A Shelby homesteader, working in Harlowtown, received a letter from his wife. She stated, "today I have found the mares dead on the range, and the colt in the same condition...the cattle are dying...what is to be done...." Another farmer reported to Governor Stewart, "I have a mortgage of $1,000 against my land. The Peters Investment Company in Elmore, Minnesota holds it, and due to the last three crop failures, I owe $1,300. I need to borrow money for next year's seed, but I cannot even pay the interest due on the mortgage...the company will not loan me any more money...." A honyocker from Dutton stated, "a lot of settlers here have already moved to Canada for they say that the Canadian government is helping farmers much more than the United States government. Unless the government is willing to do something for the homesteaders here right soon, we will all have to nail up our windows and go...."

In the northern and some of the far eastern counties where the drought had first occurred, many farmers did not have enough seed to plant their spring crop. Both the Forsyth 

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31 Letter from Mrs. E. McKenna to Governor Samuel V. Stewart, Helena, Montana, November 7, 1919. (Stewart's Papers).

32 Letter from Mr. George Travis, Shelby, Montana, to Governor Samuel V. Stewart, July 19, 1919. (Stewart's Papers).

33 Letter from Thomas Selstead, Dutton, Montana to Governor Samuel V. Stewart, July 7, 1919. (Stewart's Papers).
Community Club and the Circle Community Club stated that farmers in their areas needed $100,000.00 for seed and feed in 1918. The Jordan Chamber of Commerce stated "drought last year caused about 90 per cent failure, the $10,000.00 worth of county warrants for furnishing seed will cover only one-twentieth of need." Professor F. S. Cooley of the State Extension Service, estimated that two million bushels of seed would be needed for the spring sowing in eastern Montana. He said that in the eleven counties where the drought had been the most serious, thirty per cent of the seed would have to be provided through government help. Cooley concluded that the eleven counties produced about one-half the grain in the state.

The wartime demand for wheat made the drought situation more critical in the spring of 1918 and 1919. The editor of Farm, Stock and Home, a popular midwestern newspaper stated, "there is needed in 1918 every possible acre of wheat that the American people can grow...if the acreage in eastern

34 Letter from the Circle Chamber of Commerce to Governor Samuel V. Stewart, December 10, 1917. (Stewart's Papers).
Telegram from Forsyth Chamber of Commerce, January 14, 1918. (Stewart's Papers).

35 Letter from Jordan Chamber of Commerce to Governor Samuel V. Stewart, January 18, 1918. (Stewart's Papers).

36 Letter from F. S. Cooley, Montana Director of Experiment Station to Chancellor E. C. Elliot, Montana State University, Missoula, Montana, December 8, 1917. (Stewart's Papers).

37 Ibid.

38 Ibid.
Montana is not put into seed...this represents a possible loss in wheat production of 5,000,000 to 8,000,000 bushels -- no small amount when we consider that this amount should feed our army in Europe for a period of at least two years."39

Both Federal and State agencies supplied seed needed by eastern Montana farmers. In 1917 Congress passed a Food Production Act which authorized the Secretary of Agriculture to provide drought stricken farmers with seed.40 On November 13, 1917, a conference held by the seed stock committee of the Department of Agriculture, recommended that money be loaned for seed in the state of Montana.41 Between the years 1918 and 1920, seed loans amounted to $2,005,505 for 7009 farmers in seven counties of eastern Montana.42 The Federal government had provided more for Montana in seed loans than for comparable expenditures in drought areas of Washington, North Dakota and New Mexico.43

Although the state legislature of Montana did not provide as extensive help as the Federal government, it did make an attempt to alleviate the shortage of seed. In 1918 the extra-

39 Letter from Mr. Hugh J. Hughes, Editor of Farm, Stock and Home to Governor Samuel V. Stewart, January 26, 1919. (Stewart's Papers).

40 U.S. Statutes at Large, XLI, 494.


43 Ibid.
ordinary session of the legislature authorized the formation of the Montana Council of Defense. 44 This administrative body sold $500,000 worth of war bonds, and loaned the proceeds of the sales to Montana farmers needing seed. 45 In 1919, the extraordinary session of the legislature liberalized the seed lien law of 1915. 46 The law granted a year's extension of payment to farmers who had borrowed under the law in 1918, and it authorized county commissioners to issue seed lien loans above $10,000. 47

In addition to these measures, the state legislature of 1919 attempted to provide relief for homesteaders by revising the general highway law. Eastern Montana roads needed improvement, farmers desired work on road improvement projects, but county authorities had limited powers under the general high-

44 Montana Laws, Extraordinary Session of Fifteenth Legislative Assembly (Helena: Independent Publishing Co., 1918), Ch. 19, pp. 43-57.


46 The 1915 law provided that in any County of the State of Montana where crop for the proceeding year had been a failure by drought, it was lawful for the county commissioner to issue bonds valued at $10,000.00. With the proceeds from the bond, the county commissioners could buy seeds and loan them to needy farmers. Montana Laws, Extraordinary Session of the Fourteenth Legislative Assembly (Helena: Independent Publishing Co., 1916), Ch. 23, p. 32.

way law to improve roads. The Hill County Commissioner reported, "that roads were in bad shape in many places, but road improvement under the present highway law was almost impossible." The Park County Chamber of Commerce stated, "thousands of men and teams must be employed this winter and fall on road making, and the farmer and his teams must be given special preference in this work." Several of the eastern Montana commercial clubs requested Governor Stewart to sponsor a revision of the general highway law at the extraordinary session of the legislature.

In response to the demands by the commercial clubs and county authorities, the extraordinary session of the 1919 legislature passed a new general highway law that gave county commissioners the authority to determine the amount and general nature of road construction work to be done on county roads. In addition, counties were authorized to issue bonds

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48 County authorities had no power to issue bonds to facilitate road construction. Furthermore, they lacked authority to determine the amount and general nature of road construction to be done on county roads. House Journal, Extraordinary Session of the Sixteenth Legislative Assembly (Helena: Independent Publishing Co., 1920), p. 4.

49 Letter of C. R. Stranahan, County Commissioner, Havre Montana to Governor Samuel V. Stewart, June 14, 1919. (Stewart's Papers).

50 Letter of Park County Chamber of Commerce to Governor Samuel V. Stewart, July 15, 1919. (Stewart's Papers).

51 Montana Laws, Extraordinary Session of the Sixteenth Legislative Assembly (Helena: Independent Publishing Co., 1920), Ch. 15, p. 47.
when their funds were inadequate to meet construction costs.  

The revision of the general highway law helped to provide work for many destitute farmers, but some needed immediate relief. The County Commissioners of Hill County requested Governor Stewart "to call upon the Red Cross to aid the people of Hill County because many are without sustenance and must have immediate aid." After examining the drought stricken areas of northern Montana counties, the Red Cross decided not to help the farmers. The Red Cross concluded "that the drought was not a sudden catastrophe which left the community disorganized and incapable of pulling itself together." The Red Cross also claimed "that the protection of drought sufferers was primarily a state concern, the state being interested in maintaining the vigor of its rural settlers purely as a matter of investment."  

The Salvation Army found more compassion for the desperate eastern Montana farmer than the Red Cross. On July 27, 1919, Colonel John W. Cousins, the Salvation Army Commander for the intermountain states, commented "that the drought

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52 Ibid., 47

53 Letter from County Commissioners Abe Crosson, M. F. Walters, and F. M. Wilson of Hill County to Governor Samuel V. Stewart, July 16, 1919. (Stewart's Papers).

54 Letter from Harry Yaeger, Field Representative of American Red Cross to Samuel V. Stewart, July 23, 1919. (Stewart's Papers).

55 Ibid.
situation in Montana called for special relief for families who are industrious, but temporarily embarrassed by present situation.\textsuperscript{56} During the fall and winter months of 1919, the Salvation Army administered aid to the less fortunate homesteaders throughout Montana.

Even though the Salvation Army extended help to many families, the situation was so critical that a great number of people were forced to leave Montana. During the years 1920 through 1925, the number of farms dropped from 56,000 to 46,904, a decrease of 18.7 per cent.\textsuperscript{57} The amount of land in farms fell from 35,070,656 acres to 32,735,733 acres, and Montana's rural population declined from 225,389 to 203,962.\textsuperscript{58} In the central Montana counties, the decrease in population was very evident. For example, Petroleum county declined 38 per cent, and Golden Valley, Judith Basin, and Wheatland 30 per cent.\textsuperscript{59} Some of the people who migrated from these counties, however, did not leave Montana, but

\textsuperscript{56} Letter from John W. Cousins, Commander of Salvation Army for Intermountain States to Samuel V. Stewart, July 27, 1919. (\textit{Stewart's Papers}).

\textsuperscript{57} \textit{Montana Experiment Station, Farm Population Mobility, Bulletin 371} (Bozeman: Montana State College, 1939), p. 5.

\textsuperscript{58} Ibid., p. 5.

settled on the irrigated clover lands of western Montana.60

The emigration of the honyocker left Montana banks in a chaotic condition. From 1920 to 1925, banks foreclosed mortgages involving 11 million acres valued at $75,000,000.00.61 An average of 4,000 foreclosures occurred annually, the equivalent of one mortgage foreclosure for every two farms.62 Farm mortgage indebtedness increased eight times, from $20,000,000.00 to $155,000,000.00 and 194 of the 431 commercial banks failed.63 In some counties, one out of every four farmers went bankrupt.64 A definite agricultural bust had taken place in eastern Montana.65

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60 POPULATION DECREASES FROM 1920 TO 1930 IN SOME MONTANA COUNTIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>1920 %</th>
<th>County</th>
<th>1920 %</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Hill</td>
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<td>Power</td>
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<tr>
<td>Blaine</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>Liberty</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
<td>Rosebud</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chouteau</td>
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<td>Meagher</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sweetgrass</td>
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<td>Custer</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
<td>Wibaux</td>
<td>10.14%</td>
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Montana Experiment Station, Population Resources and Prospects, Bulletin 309 (Bozeman: Montana State College, 1936), p. 13. From 1920 to 1930, the number of farms in Lake County increased from 1,197 to 1,696 and Ravalli County from 1,286 to 1,477.


62 Ibid., p. 10.

63 Ibid., p. 10.

64 Montana Experiment Station, Montana Farm Bankruptcies, Bulletin 360 (Bozeman: Montana State College, 1939), p. 3.

65 MONTANA FARM BANKRUPTCIES PER 1,000 FARMS -- BY COUNTIES, 1920-25

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<tr>
<td>Stillwater</td>
<td>30-40</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hill</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carbon</td>
<td>10-19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blaine</td>
<td>30-40</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Before the drought ever arrived, many signs in eastern Montana indicated a drastic decline might occur. On January 5, 1917, the Dakota Farmer, and agricultural paper well acquainted with Montana, expressed concern over the speculative nature of eastern Montana's agricultural boom. The Dakota Farmer contended that through advertisement, the idea had been conveyed to prospective land seekers that Montana soil would always produce abundant crops. The Dakota Farmer commented "that many people were being located on land absolutely no good for dry farming." One reporter, who examined homesteads in Dawson county stated, "I saw homesteads that I would not take as a gift if I had to stay on and try to make a living off them." The Dakota Farmer concluded "many immigrants desiring to fall in the land grab bag were just following the crowd, and such people are in

(Continued)

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<td>20-29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Big Horn</td>
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<tr>
<td>McConel</td>
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<td>Custer</td>
<td>20-29</td>
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</table>

65 Ibid., p. 3.
66 Dakota Farmer, January 5, 1917.
67 Ibid.
68 Dakota Farmer, April 1, 1917.
for a bitter disappointment."\textsuperscript{69}

The speculators mentioned by the \textit{Dakota Farmer} migrated
to Montana from 1907 to 1920. On June 18, 1913, George Morrow,
a general land agent for the Milwaukee Land and Townsite Com­
pany stated, "there had been no such similar period when there
had been such a general interest in the lands of Montana, nor
had there been a time when people are hurrying here to invest
in property."\textsuperscript{70} Although this type of person was not a
settler or a permanent resident, he was the type of person
interested in participating in the "land grab bag,"\textsuperscript{71} and he
intended to make a substantial profit on property sales. An
investor who bought a section of Northern Pacific land at
$1.25 an acre in 1905, sold the parcel for $23.00 an acre in
1908. In Dawson county, an investor paid $3.00 an acre for
land in 1906, and sold it for $30.00 an acre in 1909.\textsuperscript{72}

Another type of speculator, the cosmopolitan, wished to
establish a temporary home in eastern Montana.\textsuperscript{73} Since the

\begin{footnotes}
\footnote{69}{Ibid.}
\footnote{70}{\textit{Great Falls Tribune}, June 18, 1913.}
\footnote{71}{\textit{Dakota Farmer}, April 1, 1918.}
\footnote{72}{\textit{Dry Land Farming Congress}, (Billings: Montana Board of
Control, 1909), p. 35.}
\footnote{73}{Cosmopolitan man was the homesteader who had no previous
farm experience. Over 70\% of the settlers who came to the
north central triangle of eastern Montana from 1909 to 1920
had no previous farm experience. \textit{Dry Farming in the North
Central Triangle}, Bulletin 66, p. 5.}
\end{footnotes}
price of agricultural goods was favorable, he considered farming a profitable occupation. An editorial of The Great Falls Tribune stated, "the cultivation of the soil at present prices for land and farm products pays better than any other occupation. It offers a better return for labor and at the same time brings with it a pleasing independence." The Tribune concluded, "for these reasons many hundreds of thousands of people whose energy and labor have been employed in professions, and the various means of distribution are leaving these occupations and turning their attention to agricultural products."  

The cosmopolitan element intended to plant a few crops at the least possible expense. They brought no cows nor chickens but hoped to exist on powdered eggs and condensed milk. Many lived in the tarpaper shacks, and planned to abandon them as soon as they received a reasonable return from their crops. Few knew anything about dry farming and located their homesteads on the undesirable lands that the Dakota Farmer reporters stated they would not accept as a gift.

The eastern Montana banks provided financial assistance to the speculator. Bankers loaned money without regard to the productive capacity of the land. Fifty eight per cent

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74 Great Falls Tribune, April 25, 1913.
75 Ibid.
of all land foreclosed during the bust period was on fourth grade land. Sixty-one percent of farm loan foreclosures occurred on lands that averaged 10 bushels of wheat per acre, while only eight percent took place on land that produced over 20 bushels per acre.

Banks made extensive loans to farmers who had small acreage. Sixty-one percent of the loans foreclosed were on wheat farms of less than 100 acres, while ten percent of the foreclosures were on wheat farms of 10,000 to 20,000 acres. Therefore, it is evident that the speculator could easily obtain financial aid during the bust period. For example, interest rates on farm loans were only 9.3 per cent annually. The bankers' attitude was that if the land was Montana land, it had to be good, and loans were made on farm acreage of unproven agricultural capacity. The banks were speculating that abundant rainfall, and high price for wheat would continue. The eastern Montana land boom had been built up on a precarious loan policy by Montana's banks and the drought brought about the collapse of this system.

During the boom period of 1907 to 1916, the Montana Land Office reported more final patents than other states during

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77 Ibid., p. 2.
78 Ibid., p. 2.
79 The Great Falls Tribune, September 6, 1913.
any boom period. Settlers migrated to eastern Montana from all states of the Union, increasing Montana's rural population from 242,633 in 1910 to 376,978 in 1920. Joseph Kinsey Howard in *Montana: High Wide and Handsome* attributed the boom to the promotional activities of James J. Hill of the Great Northern Railway. As Howard contended, Hill attracted many homesteaders to eastern Montana, but the Milwaukee Railroad, the Northern Pacific Railroad, local real estate companies and local chambers of commerce equally participated in the movement. Even the railroads and local promoters were not entirely responsible for the boom. Before these advertisers organized their wide-spread colonization activities, an earlier series of events occurred in the United States as well as in Montana that had a profound influence on initiating the land boom for eastern Montana.

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82 Howard: *Montana*, pp. 166-209.
CHAPTER II
DEMANDS FOR AGRICULTURAL EXPANSION

In the years 1900 through 1910 the farmers of the United States experienced a general prosperity. Between 1890 and 1900 the farm economy had been depressed, but by 1900 it was showing evidence of recovering. Wheat that had sold for $.83 a bushel in 1890, had dropped to $.48 a bushel in 1894, climbed back to $.60 in 1900 and by 1910 reached $.90 a bushel.¹ The prices of tobacco and cotton followed the same trend. The farmer's produce exchanged favorably with the non-agricultural goods which he needed to buy. The value of the leading farm crops rose 72 percent between 1900 and 1910, yet the manufactured needs of the farmer increased only 13 percent.²

During this decade the average value of the farm land per acre doubled. Whereas the price was $19.81 an acre in 1900, it increased to $39.59 in 1910.³ Farm land in some states increased at an even higher rate than the national rate of increase, for instance farm land value increased 157 percent in


³Historical Statistics, p. 278.
Kansas and in Nebraska skyrocketed upwards 177 percent.\textsuperscript{4} The Bureau of Economic Research concluded, "it is on the increase of the value of the farmer's land rather than the sale of produce that he rests any hope on the thought of getting rich."\textsuperscript{5} Certainly the farmers who owned land in 1900 had a definite opportunity to make a substantial profit.

While the farmer's economic condition was improving, the population of the United States was increasing at a steady pace. From 1900 to 1910 the population of the United States increased 21 percent.\textsuperscript{6} In 1900 the birth rate nearly doubled the death rate, and by 1910 the birth rate had more than doubled the death rate.\textsuperscript{7} Immigration also contributed to the population increase. From 1905 through 1907 alone over one million immigrants arrived in the United States annually; in 1910 the Office of Immigration reported the highest number of immigrants for any single decade.\textsuperscript{8}

Agricultural production in the United States during the decade did not keep pace with the increase in population. While population increased 21 percent, farm acreage, as a

\textsuperscript{4} Fite, \textit{American Agriculture}, p. 6.
\textsuperscript{6} \textit{Historical Statistics}, p. 7.
\textsuperscript{7} \textit{Historical Statistics}, p. 23, 29.
\textsuperscript{8} \textit{Historical Statistics}, p. 7.
gauge of production increased only 10.9 percent. John D. Coulter, official commentator on the Census of Agriculture in 1910, stated, "the relative increase of production is only sufficient to meet the increased demand of the rural population." In addition, he predicted that agriculture would fall further behind; "if the food supply is to be maintained at its present level, agriculture has fallen behind at a much slower rate than the increase of population. By general appearances of things it will continue to fall further and further behind."  

Others also commented on the projected scarcity of the food supply. George K. Holmes, a member of the statistical staff of the Department of Agriculture, spoke of an increasing world demand for wheat. Congressman F. W. Mondell of Wyoming stated, "We have reached the end of rapid increases in cultivation acreage of our farm lands in the humid belt. The average annual increase of 5,000,000 acres of a few years ago has already diminished considerably, while our increase

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9Ibid., p. 278.


11Ibid., p. 24.

in population grows larger year by year."\textsuperscript{13} 

The Malthusian theory of population again gained prominence.\textsuperscript{14} Joseph B. Spengler stated, "in the period of 1890 to 1910 the doctrines of Malthus were defended by nearly every economist of note."\textsuperscript{15} Spengler cited two interesting examples; G. P. Osborne commented, "the earth's stock of subsistence capable of sustaining human life is limited. Hence while no country is yet saturated, Malthus's recommendations are in effect still needed."\textsuperscript{16} Richard T. Ely, speaking of the United States, said, "unless immigration and prudence in contracting marriage are placed under control, there will be no standing room in the United States."\textsuperscript{17}

The obvious solution appeared to be an expansion of agricultural production, but such a proposal created more problems. Generally, it was a common belief that the frontier

\textsuperscript{13}U.S. Congressional Record, 57th Cong., 1st Ses., 1902, XXXVIII, 6681.

\textsuperscript{14}Malthus was an eighteenth century economist who theorized that population, when unchecked, increased in a geometrical ratio: 1-2-4-8-16-32-64-128-256-512-etc., while the food supply correspondingly only increased in an arithmetical ratio: 1-2-3-4-5-6-etc. Malthus believed that positive and preventive checks would probably stop the population from completely outstripping the food supply. Malthus recommended celibacy and moral restraint for preventive checks, and concluded that war, death, famine, pestilence and disease would act as positive checks.


\textsuperscript{16}Ibid., p. 664.

\textsuperscript{17}Ibid., p. 665.
or public domain was at an end. Frederick Jackson Turner in his famous essay, *The Significance of the Frontier in American History*, observed that the frontier line of settlement had ended by 1890. This thesis was as yet uncontested in 1900. William B. Trimble, a contemporary writer on public lands, concluded, "The United States in our time is undergoing a profound and far reaching change. The first great chapter of the nation's history is closing with the passing of public land. From the earliest years of our national existence almost until the present, the main work of our people was to acquire and to occupy the public domain, continental in extent. The continent is now practically occupied; there are no longer great stretches of free land rich in all matter, unowned, and unoccupied."  

John D. Coulter contended that the solution to the problem was to expand into the less desirable lands of the Midwestern states. He advocated, "expansion into lands thought to be gravelly, sandy or worn out," and proposed, "the draining of all wet places; irrigating of all dry places; removing of all stones, underbrush, and timber from unimproved land, and planting of crops on land lying fallow."  

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that only 10,000,000 acres had been put to use by these methods during the period 1900 to 1910.\textsuperscript{21}

Coulter attributed this lag to "the passing of the free homestead which forced the new farmer to buy his land."\textsuperscript{22} Land prices were extremely high; some sites in Iowa, six miles from the railroad, sold for as much as $135.00 to $155.00 an acre.\textsuperscript{23} The tenancy rates in the Midwest, the richest farming region in the country and also the last frontier of agriculture, were high.\textsuperscript{24} President Roosevelt, alarmed by the problem, stated: "we do not want to see our farmers sink to the condition of the peasants in the old world, barely able to live on their small holdings, nor do we want to see their places taken by the wealthy men owning enormous estates which they work purely by peasants and hired servants."\textsuperscript{26} In 1908 he appointed a Country Life Commission to study the causes of

\begin{enumerate}
\item \textsuperscript{21}Ibid., p. 6.
\item \textsuperscript{22}Coulter, "Agricultural Development," p. 14.
\item \textsuperscript{23}John D. Hicks, "The Western Middle West 1900-1914." Agricultural History XX, April, 1946, p. 73.
\item \textsuperscript{24}Coulter, "Agricultural Development," p. 14.
\end{enumerate}
farm tenancy; however, this Commission arrived at no firm recommendations.

Commentators on the problems of farm acreage shortage and plight of the new pioneer farmer did not consider the possibility of expanding west of the 98th Meridian. In 1900 the Annual Report of the Secretary of the Interior stated that as many as 55,643,120 acres were still available for homesteading in the western states. Montana with its unsettled 67,963,000 acres had the most available land for future settlement.

Before any westward expansion could take place, the vast acreage had to be analyzed for its agricultural potential. William E. Smythe, an early advocate of Federal Reclamation, claimed that aridity was the most distinguishing factor of Montana or any state west of the 98th Meridian. Smythe's definition of aridity was a result of an evaluation of the weather and soil conditions prevalent in the Great Plains of the west.

The prevailing westerly winds gather a great amount of moisture as they cross the Pacific Ocean. These winds continually lose this moisture as they cross the mountain peaks of

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28 Ibid., p. 211.

the Cascades, Sierras and Rockies. By the time they reach eastern Montana they are able to provide but small amounts of rainfall. The average annual precipitation for the entire state is 15.37 inches.\(^{30}\) The average precipitation for the western half of the state is 17.42 inches, while the eastern half of the state receives only 13.85 inches.\(^{31}\)

Within the eastern half of the state, rainfall varies from section to section with little regard for the average. Along the eastern border, principally in the Scobey-Wibaux area, rainfall varies from 12 to 16 inches annually, while in the extreme southern corner of the state rainfall amounts only to 10 inches.\(^{32}\) As much as 16 to 18 inches often fall annually in some central Montana counties. Further, the season of rainfall varies greatly which has a profound effect on crop growth.\(^{33}\)

The quality and composition of eastern Montana's soils are as variable as its rainfall. Some can be adapted to intensive crop agriculture while others cannot. In the north-


\(^{31}\)Ibid.


\(^{33}\)Ibid.
eastern section of the State, soils are of a dark brown to nearly-brown type called Scobey. These soils contain an abundance of organic matter and are relatively free from trees, stones and heavy brush. Such soils are found in areas where the climate is usually too cold for winter wheat, but readily adaptable for growing spring wheat. Within the Scobey soil group are grayish brown Joplin soils which are distributed throughout a small portion of north central Montana. This group of soils is highly marginal and will not provide a crop unless rainfall is above the state average.

The chestnut brown soils of the central Montana counties, and which extend into the extreme southeastern Montana counties are lighter colored, and are not as rich in organic matter as the Scobey soils. In poorly drained areas these soils contain a high concentration of soluble alkali in which grains don't grow. Where this soil is devoid of alkali, however, it is rich in lime and mineral plant nutrients essential for the successful growth of plants. The bottom lands, flood plains and low terraces of the Yellowstone and Missouri

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36 Ibid., p. 1090.

Rivers are of this type and provide high crop yields.\textsuperscript{38}

The chestnut soils which contain some immature gray lithosols, mainly in the foothills of the Castle, Crazy, Little Belt, and Big Snowy Mountains, become sticky and plastic when wet.\textsuperscript{39} Upon drying, these soils form into a tough clay which breaks and cracks readily during hot summer days. This group is barely fit for grazing land, and totally unsuitable for crop production.\textsuperscript{40}

The variability of both the rain and the soil makes crop agriculture precarious in eastern Montana. Successful intensive agriculture, with a consistently high yield, can only be found in the Scobey-Wibaux area of southeastern Montana and the Triangle area of central Montana.\textsuperscript{41} Even in these areas, however, the difference between success and failure is rather narrow. For instance, only nine inches of rainfall means a complete crop failure, ten inches will provide a crop of minimum success, twelve inches produces a light crop, and fourteen inches, in most cases, brings a maximum yield and this only if the moisture comes at the proper time.\textsuperscript{42} Except

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{38}U.S.D.A., \textit{Men and Soils}, p. 1135.
\textsuperscript{40}U.S.D.A., \textit{Men and Soils}, p. 1090.
\textsuperscript{41}Montana Experiment Station, \textit{Farm Adjustment in Montana, Bulletin No. 377} (Bozeman: Montana State College, 1940), p. 5.
\textsuperscript{42}U.S.D.A., \textit{Men and Soils}, p. 684.
\end{flushleft}
for the Scobey-Wibaux area and the Triangle area, eastern Montana is classified by the Montana Experiment Station as marginal land suited mainly for cattle grazing. However, the Experiment Station also acknowledges the area's various rainfall fluctuations, and contends that when rainfall is above average much of the most marginal land will produce wheat, if rainfall comes at the right time.

Early farmers dealt with eastern Montana's semi-arid climate by irrigating their farmland. Individually or by small groups, farmers built high water ditches which brought water to their lands during the flood season. Construction costs of these small programs were high. Under the Carey Act of 1894 large scale ditches were begun near the communities of Billings, Big Timber, Valier, Huntley, Sun River, and the Lower Yellowstone. The original concept of the Carey Act projects was to alleviate the high costs found in the smaller projects, yet the Act's program costs per irrigated acre was $60.00 on the Sun River, $49.00 at Huntley, $45.00 on the Yellowstone and $40.50 at Valier. Since few farmers could afford to irrigate at these prices, they began to demand federal assistance in reclamation projects. This pressure came not only from Montana, of course, but from all

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43 Montana Experiment Station, Farm Adjustment in Montana, Bulletin No. 377 (Bozeman: Montana State College, 1940), p. 5.
44 Montana's Resources and Opportunities, pp. 45-47.
over the west.

In 1902 Congress responded to these demands and passed the Federal Reclamation Act. This Act authorized the Federal Reclamation Service to construct large scale irrigation projects on federally reserved lands. In 1903 the Reclamation Service started construction on the Milk River Project in north central Montana. However, delays over the diversion of the waters of St. Marys River into the Milk River, court adjustment of prior rights of the various users, and technical difficulties prevented continuation of construction until 1912. While many federal irrigation projects were completed by the Reclamation Service after 1910, the problems which existed between 1903 and 1912 caused many Montana farmers to wonder if cheap, large-scale irrigation could ever be reality.

Although farmers found construction costs high on small high water ditches and Carey Act projects, and were disappointed by federal involvement in irrigation, they were able, nonetheless, to grow wheat, barley, oats, rye and hay successfully. This demonstrated that despite variable soil conditions, farmers could produce crops if their land received an adequate supply of water. But in view of the widespread disappointment with Federal reclamation projects, sentiment arose for the promotion of dry land farming.

45 U.S., Statutes at Large, XXXII, p. 388.

In 1902 F. H. Ray, assistant state examiner, stated: "Between 1890 and 1900, there has been a definite decline in the yields of gold, silver and lead, stock raising has apparently reached a maximum, and Montana manufactured goods have not increased appreciably." He predicted, "the future of Montana's growth in wealth and homes depends first and most on the development of agricultural resources." Paris Gibson, a Montana senator and earlier pioneer, was more enthusiastic than Ray. He stated: "in my opinion, it is not far distant when the great plateau between the Sun River and the Missouri Rivers and the Marias River will be dotted all over with fields of wheat and barley, grown without irrigation. All that is required for the successful growth of the cereal on these lands is thorough cultivation of the soil. There never was a greater error than the belief that a large rainfall is necessary to successful grain growing on the eastern slopes of the Rocky Mountains. Under proper cultivation of these soils, you can produce excellent crops of wheat even in season so dry that the native grasses will not grow on the uncultivated prairie."

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48Ibid.
49Great Northern Railway Co., "General Information about Montana" (Chicago: Pole Brothers Railway Printers, 1900), p. 16-17.
The growing interest in dry farming stimulated Montana's agricultural scientists. In 1903 an experiment station was built at Wayne Siding near Great Falls to test dry land farming methods, but funds were unavailable from the state government to make the project successful. In 1905 the experiment station received $2,500.00 from the Northern Pacific and $2,000.00 from the Great Northern to establish experiment stations on the routes of these railroads in Montana. The cooperative movement between the railroads and the experiment stations failed to produce any substantial results. In 1907 the Legislative Assembly of Montana authorized the establishment of permanent stations in Judith Basin, Glendive, Forsyth, Wayne Siding and Harlem.

Immediately the agriculturalists at these stations formed some preliminary conclusions on eastern Montana's dry land farming potential. M. F. Linfield stated that "successful results would come from the dry land experiments." Alfred Atkinson told Great Falls' businessmen that "dry farming

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50 Montana Experiment Station, Eleventh Annual Report of the Experiment Station (Bozeman: Montana State College, 1904), p. 191.

51 Montana Experiment Station, Dry Farming in Montana, Bulletin 63 (Bozeman: Montana State College, 1907), p. 21.

52 Montana Experiment Station, Thirteen Annual Report of the Experiment Station (Bozeman: Montana State College, 1907), p. 113.

53 Fergus County Argus, March 1, 1907.
would permit crop production on approximately twenty-four million acres." The Montana Experiment Station at Bozeman issued the Bulletin, *Dry Land Farming*, which stated, "the results gained from experiments conducted by the various experimental stations during the year 1907 show that profitable crop returns are possible in dry farming areas." The Montana Experiment Station advocated "deep fall plowing; harrowing at least twice before planting; packing the subsoil while leaving the surface mulch; thin sowing; maintaining the mulch with frequent cultivation; and alternating a year's use of the land with summer fallow acreage." In light of earlier demands for expansion of the nation's farm acreage, Montana had much to offer in land area and potential wheat supply for the United States if what the early experiments indicated was, indeed, true.

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54 Ibid., April 5, 1907.
CHAPTER III
THE BEGINNING OF PRIVATE PROMOTION AND
THE PASSAGE OF THE ENLARGED HOMESTEAD ACT OF 1909

As a result of the work by the Bozeman Experiment Station, optimism developed rapidly for the promotion of an immigration movement into eastern Montana. Private real estate dealers from Chicago, became interested in the agricultural lands in central Montana. William H. Brown, reputed to be the largest colonizer in the United States, examined a large parcel of land between Lewistown and the Utica area.\(^1\) John Q. Adams and B. S. Adams, who already had invested vast sums in Judith Basin lands, desired even more land for colonizing purposes.\(^2\) These three men termed the Judith Basin "the most favored section for grain they had ever seen."\(^3\) On January 29, 1907, they formed an immigration bureau, and appointed R. W. Reynolds, a local expert in immigration and land settling, to distribute periodicals advertising the Judith Basin.\(^4\) Interest in Judith Basin lands also existed outside the Chicago area. On March 20, the *Fergus County Argus* stated that,

\(^1\) *Fergus County Argus*, January 17, 1907.

\(^2\) *Fergus County Argus*, January 29, 1907. During the spring of 1906, they had purchased 50,000 acres of land in the Musselshell Valley. *Fergus County Argus*, January 26, 1906.

\(^3\) *Fergus County Argus*, January 17, 1907.

\(^4\) John Q. Adams, B. S. Adams and William Brown were also associated with the Milwaukee Railroad in land development programs. *Ibid.*
"C. S. Jones, a well-known banker of Walla Walla, Washington, was seeking a large tract of land on which to grow winter wheat. After examining the Fergus land, Jones planned on making a heavy investment in the area."

Montana real estate dealers demonstrated similar interest in eastern Montana lands. On February the Hilger Loan and Realty Company of Lewistown sold the 1,080 acre Bainch ranch near Stanford to a Montana investor for the price of $10.00 an acre. In the Musselshell Valley area, two sheep ranches of 40,000 acres, and 26,000 acres were sold to Montana real estate dealers. These large tracts were to be broken into smaller lots and sold at $15.00 an acre. The Musselshell News concluded that the available acreage would be enough "for twenty-five families to settle on."

The three continental railroads that transversed eastern Montana were apparently optimistic. The Northern Pacific

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5 Fergus County Argus, March 20, 1907.
6 Ibid.
8 Musselshell News, September 12, 1907.
9 Ibid.
10 Ibid.
decided to open 2,000,000 acres of land for sale and settlement along the Missouri River north of Glendive.\textsuperscript{11} The farm unit of the newly opened lands would be 320 acres.\textsuperscript{12} The railroad company further stipulated that the land would be sold only to\textit{bona fide} settlers, who must also live and make improvements on the land they wished to purchase.\textsuperscript{13}

After receiving many inquiries from the east and midwest, the Milwaukee considered operating a homeseeker excursion train from Chicago to North Dakota, South Dakota and eastern Montana.\textsuperscript{14} The Great Northern planned to run excursion trips on the first and third Monday of each month from St. Paul to Great Falls, Montana for $37.59 round trip.\textsuperscript{15}

Private grain miller companies indicated intentions to expand their facilities in eastern Montana. The Quaker Oats Company of Minneapolis planned to erect a large plant near the Milwaukee railway.\textsuperscript{16} The Company's officials announced construction plans of a first class elevator in the Lewistown area to prepare for an increased production of wheat.\textsuperscript{17}

\begin{itemize}
\item[\textsuperscript{11}]The Rocky Mountain Husbandman, January 4, 1907.
\item[\textsuperscript{12}]Ibid.
\item[\textsuperscript{13}]The price of land would be from $4 to $6 an acre. Ibid.
\item[\textsuperscript{14}]Fergus County Argus, March 13, 1907.
\item[\textsuperscript{15}]Ibid.
\item[\textsuperscript{16}]Fergus County Argus, February 7, 1907.
\item[\textsuperscript{17}]Fergus County Argus, March 6, 1907.
\end{itemize}
On February 2, 1907, businessmen from all over eastern Montana congregated in Helena and formed an organization to obtain $25,000 from the state legislature for immigration purposes. The businessmen wanted an increase in Montana's population, but were discontent with the efforts of the Bureau of Agriculture, Labor and Industry in attracting new settlers to the state. The Bureau had received many letters from Tennessee, Georgia, Nebraska, Iowa, Ohio, Minnesota, France, Germany and England requesting information on the agricultural potential of Montana, and had issued to them periodical literature describing Montana. However, its funds were inadequate to handle all of these letters of inquiry. The businessmen hoped that the $25,000 would alleviate the problem. On March 2, 1907, the legislature refused to grant the $25,000. W.M. Woodridge, a member of the business group, criticized the legislature and expressed concern "as to whether Montana would receive the additional amount of people needed to develop her agricultural resources." Despite the lack of support from the state legislature, a large scale immigration movement had begun. The transcontinental railways, the Great Northern, the Milwaukee, and the

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18 *Havre Plaindealer*, February 2, 1907.
19 *Havre Plaindealer*, April 27, 1907.
20 *Havre Plaindealer*, March 2, 1907.
21 Ibid.
Northern Pacific, plus real estate dealers from states both east and west of Montana took positive steps in planning the agricultural development of eastern Montana. This demonstrated quite clearly that outside interests, other than the railroads were interested in the promoting of an agricultural boom. Furthermore, the sales of Montana real estate concerns, such as the Hilger Loan and Realty Company, showed that private Montana financial interests were equally involved in this movement.

Even the eastern Montana stockman, who owned large grazing areas which would be broken up if a large agricultural boom occurred, displayed confidence that dry farming would succeed. On September 13, 1907, Joseph A. Baker, a well-known stockman and land owner from Highwood, stated: "dry farming is the coming salvation of the west. Every foot of the prairie land of Montana can be made to raise a bountiful crop without the placing of a single drop of water on it. I plan to put the dry land farming system into effect on my Highwood land which has heretofore been considered by men as nothing but poor grazing land." 22

In the early months of 1908 opposition developed to the enthusiasm displayed by private promoters over dry land farming possibilities. The Rocky Mountain Husbandman, the

22 The Rocky Mountain Husbandman, September 13, 1907.
leading agricultural newspaper of Montana, stated, "when we arrived in Great Falls we announced and set up the advocacy of dry land farming with irrigation...it is necessary to practice this method in order to make crops sure...there is no comparison between farming with irrigation and farming without it as the great crops of the Gallatin and the other older valleys attest...."23 The opposition and the language of the Husbandman grew harsher, and on February 8, 1908, it commented, "dry farming is a misleading misnomer and it misrepresents our conditions here to the easterner or would be settler."24

The Husbandman was contentious because it was aware of Montana's variable rainfall conditions. The editor, R. N. Sutherlin, warned that there were many local conditions which could modify any general conclusions drawn from the experiments of 1907. He editorialized about areas where rainfall was above 14 inches annually and predicted that if rain arrived in the months of May, June and July, dry land crops might do well, but he also noted there were many areas in eastern Montana where rainfall was less than 12 inches annually and cautioned that dry land farming would be a very precarious undertaking.25 Sutherlin also asserted that eai-

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23Rocky Mountain Husbandman, January 2, 1908.
24Rocky Mountain Husbandman, February 8, 1908.
25Rocky Mountain Husbandman, March 11, 1908.
ern Montana had exceedingly dry years where only two inches of rainfall might fall in many areas, and predicted complete or partial crop failure if such a condition occurred, even if the crops were planted under the dry land farming method advanced by the state experiment stations.26

In order for the dry land farmer to avert total disaster from a light rainfall, the Husbandman suggested some additions to the Experiment Station's method of dry farming. The paper suggested that the farmer should plant no less than 1,000 acres and that he should utilize the steam plow in handling his large acreage.27 The Husbandman stated, "by putting in grain by the thousand acres, it is possible to make money on a yield of seven or eight bushels per acre in extremely dry years. The steam plow is the thing for the dry land farmer who must bore with a big auger in order to make money. It takes capital to purchase such an implement which makes the poor man out of his element on the dry farm."28

However, the cautioning of the Husbandman failed to slow promotional interest in Montana in the spring of 1908. James J. Hill, of the Great Northern Railway claimed there were 11,648 farms from 20 acres to 500 acres in Iowa and 3,979 of the same type in New Hampshire.29 Hill asserted that the

26Ibid.
27Rocky Mountain Husbandman, January 30, 1908.
28Ibid.
29Rocky Mountain Husbandman, March 12, 1908.
owners of these farms were making a profitable living, and concluded there was no reason why Eastern Montana could not have many farms of small size which would provide an equally comfortable living for many new families.  

William F. Fern, a well-known Chicago capitalist, purchased a tract of 17,000 acres in the Billings area from Montana ranchers S. S. Hobson and W. B. Shiel for colonization purposes. A large mercantile enterprise was planned in the Hobson area under the financial backing of T. C. Powers, S. S. Hobson, J. Weideman, W. A. Erickson and W. Symmes, all Montana businessmen. The Milwaukee railroad requested assistance from the Lewistown Commercial Club for the outfitting of an exhibition train which was to display Montana agricultural production along its rail lines.

This enthusiasm might have been curtailed somewhat if the Husbandman had cautioned only against observations of the state Experiment Station. Many of the same conclusions on dry farming technique of the Experiment Station had been arrived at by a nationally known figure, Hardy Webster Campbell. Since 1894, Campbell had conducted both experiments and model farms for the Northern Pacific, the Burling-

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30 Ibid.
31 Fergus County Argus, June 26, 1908.
32 Fergus County Argus, July 3, 1908.
33 Fergus County Argus, April 3, 1908.
ton, the Union Pacific and the Santa Fe. His work gained national attention through articles in the American Review of Reviews, Century, World's Work, World-To-Day and The Nation. Generally, these magazines concluded that the Campbell method of dry farming was a successful method of agriculture for areas of sparse rainfall and would enable settlement in areas considered too dry for successful crop production. John J. Cowen of Century magazine stated, "the discoverer and demonstrator of the principles of dry farming deserves to rank among the greatest of our national benefactors. He had not only made blades of grass grow where only one grew before, but he has also made it possible to cover with wheat and corn thousands of miles of land on which nothing but sage brush, sunflowers and bunch grass are now found."

In 1908, the national popularity of Campbell also existed in Montana. The Experiment Station bulletin, Dry Farming in Montana, stated "the work of H. W. Campbell of Nebraska shows that profitable crop returns are possible in dry farming areas." The Havre Plaindealer emphasized "that

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34 Billings Gazette, October 26, 1909.
35 Ibid.
Campbell's soil culture method provided farmers with enough security to laugh at the severest drought ever known to them." The Great Falls Tribune commented, "Hardy Webster Campbell, the father of dry land farming, has brought a miracle to the plains states. Now half of their area can be reclaimed without irrigation and they will be the last and the best garden of the world." This support for Campbell, combined with the conclusion reached by the State Experiment Station, completely overshadowed any comments by the Rocky Mountain Husbandman about the nature of Montana's dry climate. Only a series of very dry years would vindicate the success of Campbell and the Experiment Station methods. In 1908, their contentions were sufficiently successful to convince private promoters interested in an agricultural boom for eastern Montana.

This promotional enthusiasm, brought about by a new dry farming method, existed not only on the part of private concerns, but on the part of the Federal government. A large amount of unappropriated public land remained unsettled in Eastern Montana. Prior to 1908, Congress had passed several Land laws for individual settlers who desired to settle on

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38 Havre Plaindealer, March 6, 1909.
39 Great Falls Tribune, October 26, 1909.
40 The Hardy Webster Campbell method of dry farming was essentially the same as the method advocated by the Montana Experiment Station in 1907. See Hardy Webster Campbell Soil Culture Manuel (Lincoln: n.n., 1907).
the public domain. The Homestead Act of 1862, which provided the homeseeker with 160 acres of land, was the most popular of these laws. On land east of the 98th parallel, 160 acres were adequate for the homesteader, but on the dry land of eastern Montana and other western states, settlers found homesteading almost impossible. Furthermore, the Campbell system and the dry farming method advocated by the Experiment Station required that the homesteader leave half his land fallow each year. The new farmer had only 80 acres instead of the full 160 acres. Because of the lack of rainfall in western states, and the new system of dry farming, legislators from the west demanded an increased amount of acreage under the Homestead Act of 1862.

An enlarged homestead in areas of sparse rainfall was not an entirely untested idea. In 1904 Congress passed the

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41 In 1862, Congress passed the Homestead Act which allowed any citizen of the United States to acquire 160 acres of public domain after paying a $10.00 filing fee and living on his acreage for five years. U.S., Statutes at Large, XII, 392-393. Other amendments to the Homestead Act were: Timber Culture Act of 1873, U.S., Statutes at Large, XVII, 605; The Timber and Stone Act of 1878, U.S., Statutes at Large, XX, 89; The Desert Land Act of 1877, U.S., Statutes at Large, XIX, XXIV, 388. These amendments led to land speculation and alienation to public domain by railroads, large stockman, and other corporations. See Paul Wallace Gates, "The Homestead Law in an Incongruous Land System," American Historical Review, Vol. 41 (1936), pp. 652-681.

42 From 1868 to 1900 there was 488,138 patents involving 80,103,409 acres issued under the Homestead Act. Homesteads, p. 3.
Kinkaid Act. This legislation increased the homestead in the dry plains of western Nebraska from 160 to 640 acres. The act required the settler to make improvements of $1.25 an acre at the end of the five year filing period and disallowed the commutation of all entries. Congressmen considered the Kinkaid Act an experiment, but after the law went into effect, it was labeled a success. Senator M. P. Kinkaid of Nebraska stated, "there can be no question about the satisfactory operation of the law and its operation in the interest of the masses in the eastern end of the districts where I reside. These settlers who located have endured the vicissitudes of the country, and they have taken their additional three quarter sections and their sons and daughters can go out and get quarter sections apiece and enjoy their birth right as it were...."

As a result of the success of the Kinkaid Act, other Congressmen from the west desired a similar type act for their own states. Joseph Dixon, senator from Montana, took an active role in sponsoring an enlarged homestead act for eastern Montana. Dixon had been an active participant in the Kinkaid Act hearings and had heard of Campbell's rais-

43 U.S., Statutes At Large, XXXIII, 547.
44 Ibid.
45 Ibid.
ing of crops on 15 inches of rainfall. He concluded that if the claims of Campbell were true, it would do more to populate the state of Montana than many other proposals. Dixon definitely wanted the Enlarged Homestead Act passed so that the Campbell method of agriculture could be utilized, and the population of eastern Montana could be increased appreciably.

In 1908, Dixon, with the assistance of Congressman F. W. Mondell of Wyoming, proposed an Enlarged Homestead Act. This act provided for 640 acres of land for settlers in the states of Wyoming, Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona, Utah, Nevada and Montana; disallowed filing on Indian Reservation and forest reservation for each entryman; required five years' residence and the same filing fee under the original homestead act, and demanded improvements before final proof by the entrymen of no less than $1.25 an acre. Congressman F. W. Mondell shared similar views with Dixon. He desired an enlarged homestead act for the sole purpose of promoting immigration to Wyoming. He stated, "we want settlement, we want homesteaders and we propose to make the

\[\text{\textsuperscript{47}}\text{Billings Gazette, October 26, 1909.}\]
\[\text{\textsuperscript{48}}\text{Ibid.}\]
\[\text{\textsuperscript{49}}\text{U.S., Congress, House, Committee on Public Lands, Hearings on H.R. 18970, 60th Cong., 1st Sess., 1908, pp. 16-18.}\]
\[\text{\textsuperscript{50}}\text{U.S., Congress, House, Committee on Public Lands, Hearings on H.R. 18970, 60th Cong., 1st Sess., 1908, pp. 16-18.}\]
homestead large enough on dry lands so that the homesteader who comes from eastern states will have a tract sufficiently large enough that he can establish and maintain a home upon it."

To facilitate the passage of the bill, the sponsors set forth testimony concerning the abandonment of entries under the original Homestead Act. A Wyoming spokesman testified, "we have been inviting the homesteader on the 160 acre tract. He has been coming to some extent, but in four cases out of five, after enduring the hardship and trial for one to three years, he has gone back to his folk or his wife's folks in Missouri, Iowa and Illinois....By giving him enough of these dry lands so that he feels that it is worth his while to stay there and plan a home, we expect to have very nearly every original entryman a final entryman...."

However, much opposition came from eastern and midwestern Congressmen who appeared to have more knowledge of the dry conditions of the west than the western legislators. Congressman Paul Howland of Ohio reasoned; "we contend that it is bad policy for the government, as the area of the public land subject to homestead entry is rapidly decreasing, to increase the number of acres taken by the homesteader. If

51 U.S., Congressional Record, 60th Cong., 1st Sess., 1908, XXXXVIII, 6840.

52 Ibid., 4215.
he cannot make a living on 160 acres of land, there is something the matter with the homesteader or the land. If the trouble is with the land, a greater quantity of that will not help the situation."\(^{53}\)

William A. Reeder of Kansas exclaimed, "the bill will have the effect of getting people to live on the land... but the settler cannot make a living on 640 acres or even 1,280 acres....there is the trouble...."\(^{54}\) Both Reeder and Howland were definitely aware of the semi-arid nature of western land and the difficulties of attempting agriculture. Their caution resembled the earlier statements made by the Rocky Mountain Husbandman to private promoters.

As the statements of the Husbandman were disregarded, so were the statements of Reeder and Howland. The western Congressmen had support from some eastern Congressmen. Congressman H. T. Rainey of Illinois stated, "for three of four years from fifty to one hundred thousand farmers each year are crossing our northern boundary to settle upon the wheat lands of Canada."\(^{55}\) Rainey asserted, "we want to keep some of them home and we can only keep them at home by making it possible to farm on these dry, nonirrigable lands

\(^{53}\)U.S. Congressional Record, 60th Cong., 1st Sess., 1908, XXXXVIII, 6094

\(^{54}\)Ibid., 6835.

\(^{55}\)Ibid., 6834
in the plains and mountain states."\(^56\) Rainey contended that both Reeder and Howland were wrong in asserting that a farmer could not make a living on the dry land of the west. He stated, "a man can not make a living upon 160 acres of non-irrigable land; but if you give him 320 acres, ultimately he will farm on half of it one year and half of it the next year under the new system of dry farming....this system will preserve enough moisture in the soil so that the farmer can carry crop production successfully."\(^57\)

Congressman Keifer from Ohio supported Rainey and contended that dry farming was an unqualified success. He stated, "this method will secure the settlement of the vast region of the northwest and will result in putting a family on every 320 acres...over these now arid states."\(^58\) The interests of the western Congressmen prevailed. The arguments that the United States was competing with Canada for the homesteader, and that the new dry land farming method was successful were more compelling than the caution demonstrated by the eastern Congressmen. The dry land farming method, which had reinforced the optimism of the private promoters, had played an equally important role in Congress. Definitely, the spirit of the western interest by Congress

\(^{56}\)U.S., Congressional Record, 60th Cong., 1st Sess., 1908, XXXXVIII, 6835.

\(^{57}\)Ibid., 6835.

\(^{58}\)Ibid., 6839.
was to promote immigration on Federal lands. The Enlarged Homestead Act was the scheme for carrying out this proposal.

Congress passed the Enlarged Homestead Act on February 19, 1909.\textsuperscript{59} The Act applied to the area originally proposed by Dixon, but the amount of acreage was reduced from 640 acres to 320 acres.\textsuperscript{60} Furthermore, the Act required the settler to cultivate at least one eighth of his acreage beginning with the second year and at least a quarter of section by the third year.\textsuperscript{61} Neither the original Homestead Act or the Kinkaid Act had a cultivation clause, and only a test period would bear out the wisdom of this stipulation.

Many Montanans commented on the bill while it was being debated in Congress. Paris Gibson, a real estate dealer closely acquainted with James J. Hill, claimed that the 640 acre homestead law would increase fraudulent entries materially, and would attract worthless people who would take up the land without any intention of cultivating it.\textsuperscript{62} Gibson believed this type of homesteader would eventually sell the land to stockmen. Instead of this type of homesteader, Gibson desired, "the man who could make 40 acres produce

\textsuperscript{59} U.S., Statutes At Large, XXXVI, 531.
\textsuperscript{60} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{61} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{62} Fergus County Argus, February 21, 1907.
what ordinarily required 160 acres in areas of eastern and midwestern states." Apparently, by espousing the idea of the smaller farmer, Gibson hoped to attract more buyers for his real estate property.

Again the Rocky Mountain Husbandman took exception to private promotional sentiment. The Husbandman considered it an injustice to prevent the dry farmer from doubling or even tripling his acreage under the Homestead Act. The paper claimed that the farmer needed more than 160 acres to eke out a fair living for his family, and the proposal for more acreage had been discussed and approved by more than a 1,000 farmers who owned small farms in the state. The Husbandman was convinced that Gibson opposed the Act only because he was a multiacre man who advocated dry land farming only for the purpose of dividing up his acreage for small land sales.

Despite the apparent opposition to an Enlarged Homestead Act, and an awareness of the federal government as an eventual competitor in land sales, outside capital continued to flow into eastern Montana. J. H. Strickland Company of Iowa purchased 17,000 acres near Livina, to divide the land into small tracts. Speculative fever appeared in the state of

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63 Ibid.
64 The Rocky Mountain Husbandman, March 6, 1908.
65 The Rocky Mountain Husbandman, March 6, 1908.
66 Ibid.
67 Fergus County Argus, April 10, 1908.
Minnesota. The Wibaux Pioneer reported that Beaver Valley Land Company and the Twin Cities Livestock and Loan Company were in the process of buying up all available land near Wibaux. The Judith Basin Land Company, composed of investors from Wisconsin, was purchasing large tracts of land for investment near Lewistown. The William Brown Company, who had shown earlier interest in Judith Basin lands, purchased 26,000 acres that joined the new Stanford townsite.

The Milwaukee railroad began a very ambitious campaign to advertise eastern Montana. George B. Haynes, an immigration agent for the railroad explained, "our company is deeply interested in this section and is going to make every effort to exploit it in the middle west and to the south." Our immigration office has received at least 1,000 inquiries a day. The Milwaukee opened an immigration office in Lewistown, and began publishing a pamphlet on lands of the Judith Basin. The Company initiated the homeseeker rates it had considered in 1907. Special rates were charged on fares from Chicago to terminal points of Lewistown, Terry

68 Wibaux Pioneer, June 25, 1908.
69 Ibid.
70 Fergus County Argus, September 11, 1908.
71 Fergus County Argus, June 26, 1908.
72 Fergus County Argus, March 8, 1907.
73 Fergus County Argus, April 10, 1908.
and Miles City. As an additional advertisement, the Milwaukee outfitted a grain exhibit, and displayed it at the National Corn Exposition at Omaha, Nebraska.

The Milwaukee had begun an extensive advertising campaign earlier than the other two transcontinental railroads. In 1909 the Great Northern and the Northern Pacific as well as other private interests, would follow the trend.

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74 *Fergus County Argus*, April 3, 1908.
75 Ibid.
In 1909, the Great Northern accelerated its advertising of eastern Montana. James J. Hill, the founder of the railroad stated, "since 1902, we have exceeded 770,000 emigrants per annum, and we have not increased our production of agricultural products...we must bear in mind that there is not enough to feed the new mouths in the country."\textsuperscript{1} Hill concluded that there was plenty of acreage in eastern Montana for growing wheat and alleviating the shortage of the food supply.\textsuperscript{2}

The Great Northern opened a display booth of farm products from northeastern Montana in its St. Paul passenger station.\textsuperscript{3} Immediately, the booth created a sensation among midwestern farmers who examined it. Lewis Hill, the president of the railroad stated, "it is often with difficulty that these people learn that these products come from Montana."\textsuperscript{4} The railroad constructed a building near its railroad station in Havre to display local agricultural products.\textsuperscript{5} Max Boss, the immigration agent of the railroad,

\textsuperscript{1}\textbf{Billings Gazette}, October 27, 1909.
\textsuperscript{2}\textit{Ibid}.
\textsuperscript{3}\textbf{Havre Plaindealer}, August 28, 1909.
\textsuperscript{4}\textit{Ibid}.
\textsuperscript{5}\textbf{Havre Plaindealer}, April 10, 1909.
explained that the products in the building provided evidence of the productive capacity of the region to those coming from St. Paul on the excursion trains. Furthermore, the railroad was advertising eastern Montana on Wall Street and planned an exhibition train composed of farm products from Havre, Harlem, Chinook, Dodson and Glasgow which would travel on the Great Northern main line in 1910.

The Northern Pacific also was preparing a large scale campaign to dispose of its Montana lands. The railroad granted excursion rates of $22.50 from St. Paul, $30.00 from St. Louis and $27.50 from Minneapolis to Billings, Montana.

6Ibid.

7 Havre Plaindealer, August 28, 1909. Letter from Louis Hill, president of the Great Northern Railway to Governor Edwin L. Norris, September 27, 1909, Governor Edwin L. Norris Papers (University of Montana Archives). Hereafter cited as Norris Papers.

8 Northern Pacific Lands in Eastern Montana

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</table>


9Wibaux Pioneer, February 18, 1909.
The Company distributed printed matter describing eastern Montana in states that the railroad traversed. C. W. Mott, immigration agent of the railroad, requested assistance stating, "an education war will be made in the respective states that our railroad traverses, and Montana must be sufficiently patriotic to furnish enough literature explaining its agricultural possibilities." He concluded that the Northern Pacific was planning the largest advertising campaign ever attempted by the railroad.

The Milwaukee continued its own advertising campaign. The railway stated it would place literature descriptive of Montana and the opportunities which awaited the persevering settler in the hands of 30,000 eastern farmers.

The Milwaukee decided to run through the east central and middle west farming communities, an exhibition train fitted with exhibits of farm products from all parts of Montana. It planned to advertise the coming of the train weeks ahead of its actual arrival.

The Milwaukee's advertising program was quite effective.

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10 Letter from C. W. Mott, immigration agent of the Northern Pacific Railway Company, to Governor Edwin L. Norris, September 27, 1909 (Norris Papers).
11 Ibid.
12 Fergus County Argus, April 17, 1909.
13 Ibid.
14 Ibid.
Immigrants who arrived in Lewistown from Iowa commented that Judith Basin was the best advertised spot in Montana and that they were pretty familiar with the most important facts concerning the area due to the great advertising campaign carried out by the Milwaukee railroad.  

The advertising techniques used by the railroads in their printed matter were generally the same. Usually the literature contained an endorsement by the governor and an agricultural official as to productive value of eastern Montana lands, and alluring illustrations of various phases of farming, new buildings, farm equipment, and livestock. A great amount of emphasis was placed on the Enlarged Homestead Act, and the procedure of settling a claim under the law. The pamphlets contained maps of the various routes of railroads, locations of land offices and moveable rates.

The railroad advertising was overenthusiastic in reports of crop yields and in the testimonials solicited from successful settlers. In the pamphlet "Fergus County Montana," the Milwaukee claimed that twenty bushels per acre yield in the Judith Basin was considered small and stated that 40 to 60

15 *Fergus County Argus*, October 1, 1910.

bushels an acre in many cases was average. In the "Great Northern Bulletin," glowing testimonials concerning eastern Montana stated, "Montana farm lands are the best in the United States; that 320 acre homesteads are slipping away so rapidly that a young man back east had better wake up before his birthright slips away; and that Montana was far ahead of any state for a poor man or renter."

The railroad advertising was very honest in many respects. The Northern Pacific pamphlet, "Northern Pacific Lands" emphasized that the new settler should have at least $3,000 cash to take care of down payments on land, buildings, horses, and farm equipment. The Milwaukee's tract, "Montana; Its Resources and Opportunities" listed a cost of living index which included prices of farm implements such as plows, harrows, seeder drills; building necessities such as lumber, wire fences, posts; basic foodstuffs such as bacon, flour, beef and potatoes; and fuels such as coal and wood.

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17 Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railway, "Fergus County Montana" (Chicago: Poole Brothers Printers, 1912). The average yield in Fergus County was anywhere from 20 to 25 bushels per acre. See Dry Farming in North Central Montana Triangle, p. 13.


19 The Northern Pacific Railway Company, "Northern Pacific Lands" (Chicago: Poole Brothers Printers, 1921), p. 63.

Unfortunately, the honesty used by the railroad companies in advertising was not followed by the local chambers of commerce and commercial clubs. These local organizations were taking a very active role in attracting settlers to eastern Montana. The Milk River Valley Information Bureau which consisted of commercial clubs in the Havre area, issued 50,000 booklets describing the Milk River Valley to prospective homeseekers in the middle west. The Billings Chamber of Commerce spent $20,000 to advertise the Yellowstone Valley. Each individual community club wanted to attract the greatest number of immigrants, and its advertising was very enthusiastic.

The commercial clubs performed feats of geographic legerdemain in describing eastern Montana weather. They termed the weather as the most delightful and invigorating of any place in the world. The Lewistown Commercial Club pamphlet, "The Lure of Lewistown Is Health and Wealth" stated, "summer days glow with warmth in an atmosphere unequalled for purity while summer nights are so cool that one may sleep with comfort covered by a pair of blankets." The local advertisers failed to mention hot summer winds which contributed to the recurrent droughts or the cold winter winds which lowered

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21 Havre Plaindealer, May 15, 1910.
23 Lewistown Commercial Club, "The Lure of Lewistown is Health and Wealth" (Lewistown: Lewistown Commercial Club, n.d.)
temperatures below zero, and increased the chance of freezing for the unprepared farmer.

Rainfall figures and description of soils were grossly inaccurate. Commercial clubs used rainfall figures from a very wet year instead of a figure representing average amount of rainfall for a number of years. In describing the soils, they made broad generalizations about their areas. The ideal soil for dry farming was a dry clay loam composed of one-half clay and one-half sand. Many localities, in their literature, stated that their particular area contained this type of soil exclusively. For example, the Glasgow Commercial Club pamphlet stated, "our soil is of the rich, sandy, clay loam, of deep brown color and carries a percentage of light gravel, but not to the extent to interfere with cultivation." The commercial club literature had a wide distribution. Local organizations used their pamphlets in the outfitting of the exhibition trains and distributed copies to the various immigration agents and real estate dealers

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26 Glasgow Commercial Club, "Glasgow the Golden City of Northeastern Montana" (Glasgow: Glasgow Commercial Club, July 1, 1914).
who sent them along with their own propaganda to prospective settlers.

The real estate companies were also advertising eastern Montana lands. The Mungger-Corry Company of Shawnut, Montana was advertising extensively in North and South Dakota. An advertisement of the company which appealed to both the investor and farmer stated, "the farmer who buys land that will raise 20 to 45 bushels per acre as it does in the Musselshell Valley can make a good profit by simply holding the land for a few years without lifting a hand while the land rises in value." 27 Gallagher and Quigley Land Company of Great Falls advertised that it had cheap farm land available. The Company's advertisement stated, "we have tracts of 160 acres of improved and unimproved land for $10.00 an acre; and we also have good stock ranch land for $5.50 an acre. 28 The Moore Land and Realty Company of Lewistown stated, "sell high priced land and come to the great Judith Basin where wheat is king and yields are thirty to fifty bushels per acre... we are the oldest firm in business here and assure you of a square deal...." 29 Some real estate companies were unscrupulous in their advertisements. The Yellowstone National Land Company stated that its land in the Madison Valley was

28 The Great Falls Tribune, December 17, 1909.
29 The Dakota Farmer, August 1, 1910.
composed of the rich, sandy, clay, loam, but in reality, it contained a great amount of gravel. Governor Edwin L. Norris, alarmed over the advertisement, stated that, "it was a fake of the first order" and requested the citizens of Madison county to print a pamphlet so that the innocent investors interested in the area would know the actual truth.

In 1909 The Montana Bureau of Agriculture, Labor and Industry participated in advertising eastern Montana. The Bureau advertised in newspapers both inside and outside the state, prepared lists of inquiries about eastern Montana and printed a propaganda booklet called Montana: Resources and Opportunities. In addition, the Bureau printed 20,000 copies of James J. Hill's speech at the 1909 State Fair in Great Falls, and distributed them to prospective settlers. Although the legislature only provided $5,000 for the printing of the booklet, it proved to be an invaluable advertising device. C. W. Mott of the Northern Pacific stated that, "this book had more weight than almost any kind of publicity..."
since some prospective settlers believe land companies and railroad companies have personal intentions; a book under the hand and seal of Montana is looked upon as an honest and accurate description of the country...often when we send printed matter to homeseekers, we follow with the state book.  

On April 7, 1909, the railroads and the representatives of the chambers of commerce united in their efforts to advertise eastern Montana. They called their new organization the Montana Development League. At the first meeting Governor Norris commented that the organization was a movement in the right direction for future publicity and exploitation of the state's resources. Max Boss, immigration agent for the Great Northern, noted that North Dakota was spending $30,000 a year to advertise its agricultural potential, while the Bureau of Agriculture, Labor and Industry expended only $5,000 for the same purpose. George B. Haynes, immigration agent for the Milwaukee, requested that all counties should pool their advertising funds in one large adver-

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35 Letter from C.W. Mott, immigration agent of the Northern Pacific Railway Company to Governor Edwin L. Norris, September 27, 1909 (Norris Papers).

36 Development League Proceedings.

37 Ibid.

38 Development League Proceedings.

39 Ibid.
tising effort instead of promoting individually. After much discussion the group decided to print a pamphlet describing the various resources of the state without any reference to any particular locality and explaining the method of acquiring homesteads and railroad land. C. W. Mott, immigration agent for the Northern Pacific, suggested that November through December would be the best months to distribute the pamphlet, and Max Boss offered the use of the Great Northern's mailing list of some 80,000 addresses.

On October 27, 1909 many of the private interests who had formed the Montana Development League congregated in Billings for the Dry Farming Congress. The purpose of the Congress was to educate new settlers on the methods of agriculture required for successful farming in areas of deficient precipitation. John T. Burn, secretary of the Congress stated, "for nearly a decade the tide of immigration into western states has been gaining headway until the last two years it has become a flood...years ago settlers went to

\[40\] Ibid.
\[41\] Ibid.
\[42\] Ibid.
\[43\] There had been three previous meetings of the Dry Farming Congress at Denver, Colorado in 1907, Salt Lake City, Utah in 1908, and in Cheyenne, Wyoming in 1909. Membership was composed of governors, railway officials, state experiment station members, chamber of commerce members from all states west of the Mississippi River, and representatives from the United States Department of Agriculture. Billings Daily Gazette, October 26, 1909.
Nebraska and began farming as they had back east under humid conditions...a few were successful until the drought came and drove them back home beaten and impoverished. In 1909 the Congress had issued 30,000 bulletins to farmers who wanted information about dry farming.

The Rocky Mountain Husbandman claimed that the Congress was an organization dominated by land boomers, and was a vehicle of those wishing to exploit colonization schemes in the arid west. The delegates who attended the Congress were promotors rather than dry land farmers. Every town in eastern Montana sent local real estate agents and chamber of commerce members to the Congress. Immigration agents and the presidents of all three transcontinental railroads which traversed Montana were present at the meeting. Lewis Hill brought a special train, composed of railway officials, grain

44 Billings Daily Gazette, October 26, 1909.

45 At the first meeting of the Congress in Denver, Colorado, its members endorsed the Hardy Webster Campbell method of Dry Farming. At the meetings in Salt Lake City, Utah, and Cheyenne, Wyoming, members of the Department of Agriculture, James Wilson and E. C. Chilcott presented modifications to the Campbell method. They advocated the use of legumes and drought resistant wheat. The Bulletin, issued by the Congress, espoused the modifications presented by the Department of Agriculture's representatives. Billings Daily Gazette, October 26, 1909.

46 The Rocky Mountain Husbandman, March 11, 1909.

47 Billings Daily Gazette, October 27, 1909.
men, and implement manufacturers from Minnesota cities such as Minneapolis, St. Paul and Duluth.\textsuperscript{48} In addition, immigration agents and railway officials interested in promoting settlement in other western states attended the meeting.\textsuperscript{49} Members of the Montana Experiment Station, representatives of the Department of Agriculture, and other western states' agriculturalists came to the meeting, but they represented a minority.\textsuperscript{50}

At the proceedings of the Congress, James J. Hill wanted to change the name of the Congress to Scientific Farming Congress or Good Farming Congress.\textsuperscript{51} Hill stated that it was difficult to attract settlers to eastern Montana because of the name, dry farming. He commented many Midwestern farmers get scared when they hear the term 'dry farming,' and do not understand its methods and are not willing to find out.\textsuperscript{52} Dr. F. B. Linfield of the Montana Experiment Station, opposed Hill's idea. Linfield claimed that, "it is more important that the present settler be successful in undertaking the new dry farming method, than bringing in

\textsuperscript{48}Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{49}Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{50}Billings Daily Gazette, October 27, 1909.  
\textsuperscript{51}Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{52}Ibid.
more settlers to the state. Linfield stated that the distinctive name, dry farming, helped to impress newcomers that they could not farm successfully using the methods of humid state farming. Despite the protests of Hill, the majority of the delegates at the Congress voted to retain the name Dry Farming Congress. The conservative elements of the Congress who wanted the organization to exist for education purposes won a significant victory.

The Congress helped to promote eastern Montana lands. Local organizations took an active role in advertising the merits of their areas at the Congress; for example, Yellowstone and Valley counties spent $1,000 to construct displays of farm products. James J. Hill offered $1,000 for the best exhibit of produce grown under dry farming conditions in Montana, Oregon, and Eastern Washington. The Hearst Syndicate, The New York Herald Syndicate, The Publisher's Press, The United Press, The Scrips-MacRae Press, and The Associated Press all published articles on the Billing's proceedings. Secretary Burns estimated that 13,600 of the

53 Ibid.
54 Ibid.
55 Wibaux Pioneer, August 12, 1909.
56 Great Falls Tribune, October 26, 1909.
57 The Billings Daily Gazette, October 26, 1909.
nation's papers commented on the Billing's meeting. The Great Falls Tribune called the Congress a successful promotional effort, and concluded that eastern Montana displays were splendid enough to present an unanswerable argument for dry land farming proponents against the "knockers" of the movement.

In the latter months of 1909 settlers responded to the propaganda of the advertisers and began migrating to eastern Montana. Homesteaders filed on lands along the Milwaukee railroad from the North Dakota border to Terry, Montana; in northeastern Montana from the North Dakota border to the Fort Peck Indian Reservation; in the Glasgow area from 10 to 20 miles north of the Great Northern tracks; and in the Glendive area as far as 40 miles from the Northern Pacific lines. In addition the Northern Pacific reported extensive land sales from Glendive to Hope.

The immigration of settlers brought about the development of many eastern Montana towns. Culbertson acquired a new hotel and many new business buildings, and a business block with many of the conveniences of the larger Montana

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58 Ibid.
59 The Great Falls Tribune, October 28, 1909. "Knockers" meant those who opposed the dry farming movement. The Rocky Mountain Husbandman was a good example of a "knocker."
60 The Great Falls Tribune, January 25, 1909.
61 The Rocky Mountain Husbandman, April 3, 1909.
cities. Gilford had six new lumber companies, and the small town of Hobson in the Judith Basin obtained a new flour mill. Eastern Montana was booming as real estate companies, commercial clubs, chambers of commerce and the railroads all had hoped.

The Rocky Mountain Husbandman cautioned the newcomers on eastern Montana. R. N. Sutherlin stated, "sometimes there are good years where wheat yields are from 30 to 60 bushels per acre, but in the bad years, yield only runs from 4 to 6 bushels per acre." Furthermore," he commented, "we have stated many times that if a man is going to try dry farming, he must farm on a large acreage, and those who attempt it on a small scale will eventually fail."

Despite the warnings of the Rocky Mountain Husbandman, immigration continued in 1910. Some came from eastern Washington and others emigrated from western Canada, but the majority arrived from Iowa, Illinois, Minnesota, Wisconsin.

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62 Wibaux Pioneer, June 24, 1909.
63 Fergus County Argus, May 24, 1911.
64 The Rocky Mountain Husbandman, January 7, 1909.
65 Ibid.
sin, North Dakota, South Dakota and Michigan. One-half of the new immigrants were single, and many came without capital. The Fergus County Argus related that one homesteader arrived in Lewistown with only forty cents, and in Miles City another had to work a month before he could afford his filing fee at the land office. William Jardine, an agronomist of the Department of Agriculture, estimated that only 50% of the new arriving families had enough money to equip their farms and to provide food and shelter for their families until the first crop.

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**NUMBERS AND ORIGINS OF EMIGRANTS WHO ARRIVED IN NORTH CENTRAL TRIANGLE OF MONTANA**

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<th>State / Origin</th>
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<tr>
<td>West Virginia</td>
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<td>North Dakota</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Western Canada</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idaho</td>
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<td>Oregon</td>
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<td>Pennsylvania</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michigan</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wisconsin</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Dry Farming in the North Central Montana Triangle, p. 125.**

Fifty-one per cent of the farmers who came to the North Central Triangle district of eastern Montana were single. Furthermore, thirty per cent of the settlers arrived in the area without sufficient money to begin dry farming. See *Dry Farming in the North Central Montana Triangle, p. 125.*

**Fergus County Argus, December 29, 1909. The Dakota Farmer, June 15, 1910.**

**Billings Daily Gazette, October 27, 1909.**
The immigrant came to eastern Montana at this time for many reasons. Some settlers from Washington and Idaho hoped to get rich quick on eastern Montana's wheat lands. Many immigrants from the midwest were farm tenants who desired to own their land instead of paying high rent fees. Others were farmers who wanted cheap, productive wheat land.

The homeseeker usually arrived in eastern Montana by immigrant train with cows, horses, household goods and farm


71 In the midwestern states of Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, Illinois, Iowa, Missouri, Kansas, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Minnesota, some landlords required renters to pay from one-third to one-half the grain he reaped for rent. See John D. Hicks, The Western Middlewest, 1900-1919 Agricultural History, Vol. 20, No. 1, April, 1946, p. 71.

72 Average Bushel Per Acre Production Of Some Midwestern States And Montana From 1900 to 1910 (Wheat)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Average Bushel Production</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>North Dakota</td>
<td>12.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Dakota</td>
<td>12.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nebraska</td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kansas</td>
<td>14.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wisconsin</td>
<td>16.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minnesota</td>
<td>13.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iowa</td>
<td>14.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montana</td>
<td>26.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

machinery. His first stop was the local land office,\textsuperscript{73} where he paid his filing fee for his homestead land.\textsuperscript{74} After filing his claim, the homesteader encountered the land locator, who offered to find the newly acquired land for a fee of $25.00 to $50.00.\textsuperscript{75} When a Dutton homesteader inquired for a locator, a native replied, "Just go down the street and look like a sucker and George Sollid will find you."\textsuperscript{76} Some land locators handled as many as five or six claims a day, making the occupation quite profitable. Many of them were unscrupulous, and located several homesteaders on the same claim. After the homesteader located his land, he built a 10 X 12 shack and plowed his land. If he intended to make Montana his permanent home, he planned to plow more acreage and build a modern

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|}
\hline
Year & Number of Final Entries & Number of Acres \\
\hline
1909 & 7,258 & 1,327,911 \\
1910 & 11,898 & 2,523,964 \\
1911 & 10,644 & 2,148,135 \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\caption{Final Homestead Entries from 1909 to 1911}
\end{table}

\textsuperscript{73} \textbf{Final Homestead Entries from 1909 to 1911}

\begin{flushright}
\textbf{Montana Land Office}
\end{flushright}

\begin{flushleft}
\textbf{Year} \quad \textbf{Number of Final Entries} \quad \textbf{Number of Acres}
\end{flushleft}

\begin{flushleft}
1909 \quad 7,258 \quad 1,327,911
1910 \quad 11,898 \quad 2,523,964
1911 \quad 10,644 \quad 2,148,135
\end{flushleft}

\textsuperscript{74} The homesteader was required to pay a filing fee of $22.00 for 320 acre claim, $16.00 for 160 acre claim, and $8.00 for an 80 acre claim. \textit{Montana's Resources and Opportunities}, p. 51.

\textsuperscript{75} \textbf{The Great Falls Tribune}, February 19, 1910. \textbf{Havre Plaindealer}, September 29, 1909.

\textsuperscript{76} \textbf{Dutton Montana Community Club}, "Dutton Golden Jubilee" (Dutton: Dutton Montana Community Club, October, 1909).
Many of the newspapers attempted to provide good advice to the newcomer on the techniques of dry land farming. The Dakota Farmer cautioned the homeseeker not to buy the land without having examined his property carefully. The paper stated that many Montana soils were gumbo and strongly impregnated with alkali, and advised the homesteader to find the sandy, clay-type soil more suited for dry farming.\(^\text{77}\)

The Havre Plaindealer suggested that the newcomer raise livestock on his dry farm, break the sod from 3 to 6 inches deep during the months of May and June, disk after plowing, and plant a hulless macaroni type of wheat.\(^\text{78}\) The Great Falls Tribune warned, "the man who follows eastern methods of farming, and who does not handle his soil and crops according to dry farming methods, is doomed to fail."\(^\text{79}\) The Tribune suggested that farmers should not plant crops on all their acreage, but should leave some part of the land fallow.\(^\text{80}\)

The three railroads initiated a farm institute movement to instruct the homeseeker on the dry farming technique. Under the leadership of Thomas Shaw, farmers locating near the Great Northern tracks, were furnished seeds free by the

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\(^{77}\)The Dakota Farmer, May 1, 1910.

\(^{78}\)Havre Plaindealer, April 3, 1909.

\(^{79}\)The Great Falls Tribune, January 7, 1909.

\(^{80}\)Ibid.
railroad to plant six acres of crops. The farmer was to work the land with his own implements, but was required to farm following Shaw's advice. When the crops had been harvested, the returns belonged to the farmers who had planted the crops, and for each acre sown, the Great Northern paid an additional bonus of ten dollars. The Northern Pacific utilized a train called the "Better Farming Special." When the train reached eastern Montana in 1910, the railroad hired the members of the State Experiment Station to speak on dry farming technique. At each stop in eastern Montana, the members of the Experiment Station lectured 45 minutes and then answered questions asked by the new homeseekers.

The Milwaukee maintained 17 experiment stations in the Judith Basin. The railroad experts at the stations traveled between local farms and offered free instruction to farmers requesting help on dry farming techniques. Therefore, the railroads were not only interested in bringing the settler to eastern Montanan through their extensive advertising campaign, but also wanted to aid the newcomer in surviving on

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81 The Dakota Farmer, April 1, 1910.
82 Ibid.
83 Ibid.
84 Wibaux Pioneer, April 14, 1910.
85 Wibaux Pioneer, June 23, 1910.
86 Wibaux Pioneer, December 2, 1909.
their new lands.

Weather conditions in 1910 were not favorable for survival or success in dry land farming. Rainfall at Chester, Montana was only three and one-half inches during the months of May through June. Crops along the lines of the Great Northern were not growing. Thomas Shaw minimized the conditions: "the effects of the dry weather have been exaggerated...the data we have obtained shows that the grain crops in Montana this year will be larger than it was a year ago...it is absolutely untrue that drought prevails to any extent over the state...." But by July 22, 1910, hot winds, combined with a lack of rainfall, completely ruined the crops in northern Montana. Thus, in the second year of the boom period, Montana had a severe drought which was a warning to the new homesteaders about eastern Montana weather conditions.

The Great Northern had a definite answer to the problem. Shaw concluded that the drought conditions were not responsible for the crop failure, but incorrect farming methods used by the new farmers. The railroad's Experiment Station near Chester, Montana produced 12 to 15 bushels of

87 The Dakota Farmer, December 15, 1910.
88 Fergus County Argus, July 1, 1910.
89 Ibid.
90 Fergus County Argus, July 22, 1910.
91 Havre Plaindealer, August 1, 1910.
wheat per acre, while the native grass nearby the farm land had not even turned green during the summer.\textsuperscript{92} On July 29, 1910, The Great Northern ran a special train, composed of farmers from all over eastern Montana to the Chester Experiment Farm.\textsuperscript{93} After the farmers inspected the crops, Thomas Shaw gave a lecture on dry farming. He emphasized that the differences of locality somewhat modified the dry farming method and stressed that deep plowing was not always beneficial; that sub-surface packer should not be used when the soils were moist; that repeated harrowing in dry weather would make the soil too fine and that drought resistant wheat should be used in low rainfall areas.\textsuperscript{94} Shaw concluded that if the farmers followed his method, they would produce successful crops even under drought conditions.\textsuperscript{95}

While the Great Northern was demonstrating that Thomas Shaw's method of dry farming could raise crops even under drought conditions, the railroad's exhibition train had concluded a successful tour of Nebraska, Iowa, Illinois, Indiana and northern Mississippi.\textsuperscript{96} Lecturers on the train talked in school houses, court houses, county halls and post

\textsuperscript{92}The Dakota Farmer, December 15, 1910.
\textsuperscript{93}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{94}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{95}Fergus County Argus, August 5, 1910.
\textsuperscript{96}Havre Plaindealer, April 30, 1910.
offices. They emphasized that the Great Northern was not in the market to sell land, but claimed the railroad had developed lands that needed inhabitants. They suggested that the railroad needed strong men capable of bettering themselves.

The Milwaukee reported that its exhibition trains had been successful in 1910. The line used three exhibition trains that toured Ohio, Oklahoma, Texas, and the southwest. Company officials stated that the trains attracted a good deal of attention and claimed that the Judith Basin was becoming the best known farming region in eastern Montana.

In 1911 the exhibition trains continued to advertise eastern Montana. A Northern Pacific exhibition car toured the middle west making stops at the Indiana State Fair and the National Corn Show. Both the Great Northern and the Northern Pacific equipped a train called the Western Governor's Special that traveled between St. Paul, Minnesota and Washington D.C. Finally, all three railroads sent exhibition trains to the middle west.

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97 Ibid.
98 Ibid.
99 The Havre Plaindealer, April 30, 1910.
100 Fergus County Argus, March 3, 1911.
101 Ibid.
102 Wibaux Pioneer, December 29, 1911.
103 Wibaux Pioneer, September 22, 1911.
tion cars to the New York Land Show at Madison Square Garden. 104

The State Bureau of Agriculture, Labor and Industry was also advertising extensively. The Bureau printed 150,000 publicity cards and 30,000 publicity pamphlets. 105 In addition, circulars containing lists of names of inquirers were printed and mailed weekly to the chambers of commerce, commercial clubs and real estate firms. 106 The Bureau sent a 1,500 word article about the general immigration into Montana to the Chicago Tribune and the Omaha Daily Bee. 107 Both papers published the entire article on their editorial page. 108

The United States Congress again promoted immigration to eastern Montana as well as other western states. In debates before the House and Senate, legislators from the west wanted a change in the Enlarged Homestead Act of 1909. Senator William Borah, of Idaho, argued that the United States lost 100,000 homesteaders in 1911 because the Canadian homestead act required the settler to live on his claim only three years instead of the five years demanded by the Enlarged Homestead Act of 1909. 109 Furthermore, he stated that the Canadian law

104Wibaux Pioneer, November 17, 1911.
106Ibid.
107Ibid.
108Ibid.
allowed the homesteader to be absent from his claim six months of the year so that he could obtain additional employment to support himself.\textsuperscript{110} The House Committee on Public Lands reported a significant decrease in land entered during the fiscal year ending June 30, 1911.\textsuperscript{111} The report stated: "to reclaim and subdue our remaining public domain requires an expenditure of labor and money far beyond what is generally supposed.\textsuperscript{112} Congressman Edward Taylor, of Colorado, complained there had been drought in eastern Colorado for the last two years and homesteaders had found it difficult to follow the cultivation requirements under the Enlarged Homestead Act.\textsuperscript{113} Taylor favored a definite liberalization in these cultivation requirements.

The arguments of the western Congressmen prevailed, and Congress passed the Three Year Homestead Act on June 6, 1912.\textsuperscript{114} The Act reduced the prove-up time from five to three years, and allowed the homesteader five month's absence from his claim each year.\textsuperscript{115} In addition, the law

\textsuperscript{110}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{111}U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Public Lands, Report No. 413, 62nd Cong., 2nd Sess., 3367.
\textsuperscript{112}Ibid., p. 1014.
\textsuperscript{113}U.S., Congressional Record, 62nd Cong., 2nd Sess., (1911-12), XLVIII, 3686-3690.
\textsuperscript{114}U.S., Statutes At Large, XXXVII, Pt. 1, 123.
\textsuperscript{115}U.S., Statutes At Large, XXXVII, Pt. 1, 123.
required the homesteader to cultivate one-sixteenth of his claim the second year, and one-eighth of the land by the third year, thereby reducing the cultivation requirements of the Enlarged Homestead Act by one-half.\footnote{116} Furthermore, the law allowed the homesteader to commute his claim after four-teen month's residence.\footnote{117} The United States could now com-pete with Canada for homesteaders. The Three Year Homestead Act was a promotional device supported by western Congressmen to attract immigrants, and in eastern Montana, it was a success.\footnote{118}

After the passage of the Three Year Homestead Act, the promoting of eastern Montana lands generally declined from 1912 to 1916. The three transcontinental railroads issued advertising periodicals, but they discontinued the use of exhibition trains. Because much of the land in southeastern

\footnote{116}{Ibid.}

\footnote{117}{Ibid.}

\footnote{118}{ORIGINAL HOMESTEAD ENTRIES FROM 1912 to 1916 IN MONTANA}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Entries</th>
<th>Acres</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1912</td>
<td>15,399</td>
<td>3,917,816</td>
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<tr>
<td>1913</td>
<td>17,844</td>
<td>3,996,358</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1914</td>
<td>20,662</td>
<td>4,429,623</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1915</td>
<td>16,146</td>
<td>3,500,268</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1916</td>
<td>14,486</td>
<td>3,318,450</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

However, there were only 18,631 final patents involving 3,475,614 acres during this period. Apparently there were many immigrants filing claims, but few intended to stay the full three year period. \textit{Homesteads}, pp. 15-17.
Montana, the Judith Basin and the north central Triangle had been filed on by homesteaders, commercial clubs and chambers of commerce in these areas did not advertise extensively. However, the Bureau of Agriculture, Labor and Industry, continued a full-scale advertising campaign.

In 1913 the Montana Legislature divided the Bureau of Agriculture, Labor and Industry into two departments; The Department of Labor and Industry and the Department of Agriculture and Publicity. The sole purpose of the latter was to advertise Montana's agricultural resources. The new department immediately printed and distributed 5,000 booklets which contained an article by Governor Samuel V. Stewart called, "Looking to the Future." The department also sent copies of the governor's article to the Western, a Seattle magazine, The Chicago Record-Herald and The Financial American of New York. Each of these periodicals printed the article.

The following year the Department printed 30,000 insert

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119 Only 10,000,000 acres of adequate dry farming was available to the homesteader at this date. Montana's Resources and Opportunities, p. 51.

120 Montana, Laws of the Thirteenth Legislative Assembly (Helena: Independent Publishing Co., 1913), Ch. 56, p. 70.

121 Report of J.M. Kennedy, Commissioner of the Department of Agriculture and Publicity to Governor Samuel V. Stewart, November 30, 1913 (Stewart Papers).

122 Ibid.
cards that compared yields of farm products from twelve of the leading agricultural states.\textsuperscript{123} Seth Maxwell, the Commissioner of the Department, considered the insert cards an invaluable advertising device. He stated, "these cards served a useful purpose out of all proportion to the trifling expense incident to their publication, and the Department is still called upon to furnish them in considerable number to Montana business houses which have extensive correspondence with possible settlers and investors throughout the country."\textsuperscript{124}

In 1915 the Department forwarded literature to the Montana Commission at the Panama-Pacific Exposition at San Francisco, California and the San Diego Exposition at San Diego.\textsuperscript{125} The literature at these land expositions brought excellent results. Commissioner Maxwell commented, "in the past, practically all the inquiries received at this office have been from prospective settlers in the southern, middle western and eastern states...the present year has brought forth an exceptionally

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item \textsuperscript{123} Report of J.M. Kennedy, Commissioner of the Department of Agriculture and Publicity to Governor Samuel V. Stewart, November 30, 1914 (Stewart Papers).
\item \textsuperscript{124} Report of Seth Maxwell, Commissioner of Department of Agriculture and Publicity, to Samuel V. Stewart, November 30, 1914 (Stewart Papers).
\item \textsuperscript{125} Report of Seth Maxwell, Commissioner of the Department of Agriculture and Publicity to Samuel V. Stewart, November 30, 1916 (Stewart Papers). During the years 1913 to 1916 the Department continued to issue the booklet \textit{Montana: Its Resources and Opportunities}.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
large number of inquiries from people in the coast states."  

The Department of Agriculture and Publicity was quite successful in attracting settlers to eastern Montana from 1912 to 1916. On April 9, 1912, The Great Falls Tribune reported that 2,344 cars of immigrants, representing the personal effects of 11,729 colonists, were handled through the Twin City Transfer Co. by the Great Northern and Northern Pacific.  

On June 18, 1913, the Tribune commented that operators of the Milwaukee's big train, the Olympian, found it necessary to put on three extra sleepers to carry the crowd coming to eastern Montana. During 1914, Montana recorded 20,622 of the total 61,229,000 original homestead entries in the United States. Although in the next two years original homestead entries decreased, the Great Northern reported an increase of 55 percent in the shipment of settler's goods to Montana.  

While these settlers were arriving, eastern Montana was becoming prosperous. After 1910 rainfall was abundant on the eastern Montana plains, and the honyocker was obtaining high yields and good prices from his wheat acreage. Total

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126 Ibid.

127 Great Falls Tribune, April 9, 1912.

128 Great Falls Tribune, June 18, 1913.

129 Great Falls Tribune, February 3, 1915.

130 Great Falls Tribune, March 28, 1917.
production of wheat doubled from 1909 to 1916 and its value increased from $9,364,000 to $46,134,500. Farmers bought passenger cars and farm equipment and expanded their acreage. Eastern Montana had developed rapidly from a farming frontier to a reliable wheat producing area.

The entire economy of Montana had changed because of the land and wheat boom. In 1909 there were thirty-three counties in Montana; by 1925 there were fifty-six. Only three of these were west of the continental divide - which is to say that twenty new counties were created in essential response to the pressure of the homesteaders. Because the influx of people subsequent to the census of 1910 was great and because the exodus prior to the census of 1920 was also great, there are no exact figures as to the number of people involved in

131 WHEAT PRODUCTION IN MONTANA FROM 1909 TO 1919

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Average Bushel Per Acre</th>
<th>Total Production</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1909</td>
<td>30.8</td>
<td>10,764,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>22.0</td>
<td>10,560,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>28.7</td>
<td>12,299,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1912</td>
<td>24.1</td>
<td>19,346,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>1913</td>
<td>32.8</td>
<td>20,673,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>1914</td>
<td>20.2</td>
<td>18,356,000</td>
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<td>1915</td>
<td>26.5</td>
<td>42,180,000</td>
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<td>1916</td>
<td>19.3</td>
<td>28,655,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>1917</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>17,963,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>1918</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>25,434,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>1919</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>10,729,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>28,690,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Report of Seth Maxwell, Commissioner of Department of Agriculture and Publicity to Governor Samuel V. Stewart, December 1, 1916 (Stewart Papers). Montana's Resources and Opportunities, p. 27.
this attempt to make an "Eden" of an arid plains region. Suffice it to say that it was an enormously costly experiment. Thus when the drought came—and with it the wind and grasshoppers; even the cutworm competed with homesteaders for control.

Some homesteaders, of course, stuck it out. What percentage of the many thousands who flooded in managed to survive on the drought stricken land it is not known. But some managed to adapt, to diversify and ultimately to expand and prosper.
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