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RUSSIA'S POSSIBILITIES

Gilbert Grosvenor of Geographical Society Gives Amazing Statistics



SHOWING how Russia is larger than the entire continent of North America, with the Islands of the Caribbean thrown in; how it occupies three-fifths of Europe and two-fifths of Asia, how its Asiatic possessions are one and a half times as great as those of China and three times as great as those of Great Britain; how it comprises one-sixth of the landed area of the globe and one-tenth of the world's population, Gilbert H. Grosvenor, director of the National Geographical Society, has just furnished the members of that organization with a striking pen picture of "Young Russia—A Land of Unlimited Possibilities." ¶ After giving an impression of the diversity of the origin of its people, who come from the Orient and the Occident, the frigid North and the tropic South; of its range of climate, which gives the Palm Beach touch to its Crimea and the breath of the North to its White Sea region; of its vast agricultural wealth; of the widely varying aspirations of its people, which differ as greatly as those of the Poles and the Mongols, as those of the Confucians and the Jews, as those of the Tartars and the Lapps; and of the vastness of the geographic limits of the Empire, Mr. Grosvenor says:

"But with all its geographic greatness Russia is about as poor in natural outlets to the world as the smallest of the countries of the earth. Holland could be hidden in the vast reaches of the Russian plain, almost as a needle in a haystack, yet Amsterdam does more international business than all the ports of Russia together. Not one free outlet to the open sea does European Russia possess except on the icebound shores of the Arctic Ocean. The path from the Black Sea to the Mediterranean leads through the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles held by alien hands. ¶ Mr. Grosvenor next shows how there lives within the boundaries of the Russian Empire enough people to duplicate the population of Germany, Great Britain and France combined, with enough left over to duplicate half the population of Austria-Hungary. Furthermore, if Russia grows from 1912 to 2000 as she grew from 1872 to 1912 her population will then be upward of six hundred million.

He then continues: "From such a record of size, of bigness in everything, we should expect Russia to be an old nation, like Great Britain, with perhaps a thousand years of unhindered growth behind her. But, as a matter of fact, Russia is a youth among the nations compared with England, a stripling whose full stature and breath is still a subject of conjecture and speculation. ¶ "Russia is young because she never has had a chance to grow until recent years. Her

that for centuries her people were constantly being enslaved or despoiled by stronger neighbors." ¶ After dealing briefly with Russia's remarkable history, especially with the surprising reign of geographical shape or condition was such Peter the Great, Mr. Grosvenor shows that when Alexander II freed the fifty million serfs of Russia he released from bondage a population equal to that of the twelve leading States of the United States, and a population more than twelve times as great as was freed by Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation not very many months afterward. Alexander bought 350,000,000 acres of land for them, permitting them to buy it from the Government on easy terms. He thereby carried into effect the most extensive piece of agrarian legislation in history.

"Each village conducts its own internal affairs through 'town meetings' and not through elected or appointed officials. Their lands are held on the common ownership basis, and is apportioned out for cultivation from time to time. ¶ "With the bulk of its crops raised by the peasantry, and for the most part, employing most primitive means of farming, Russia is still able to produce a very large proportion of the world's food supply. In 1913 it gave to civilization nearly a fourth of its wheat, a full fourth of its oats, a third of its barley and more than half of its rye. That year its wheat crop was three times as great as ours, and its rye crop twenty-five times as large as ours. ¶ Russia has more horses than any other nation on earth, with 35,000,000 as compared with our 24,000,000; more sheep than any other nation, with 80,000,000 as compared with our 50,000,000; nearly as many cattle, with 51,000,000 as compared with our 59,000,000.

"The latest authoritative information on Russian educational conditions, that for 1908, shows that only 211 out of every thousand people in the Empire could read and write, and there are two illiterate women for every illiterate man. With our hundred million population, in 1912 we had an enrollment of 19,218,000 school children. With her population of 172,000,000 Russia's total enrollment was 7,970,000, and 23 of these were boys for every 10 who were girls. ¶ "And yet the first woman civil engineer in the world was a Russian, and the educated woman of Russia enjoys a freedom equal to that of her kind in any other country in the world. They are even allowed to become professors in men's universities, and after twenty years of service are retired on pensions, which continue during the lives of their husbands, if they are married and are survived by the heads of their houses.

"The Tsar of Russia is a well paid ruler. He receives the revenues from the Russian crown lands, and their area is equal to that of one-third of the United States. Several years ago the imperial treasurer is reported to have advised the Tsar: 'Your Majesty need have no fear of ever coming to feel the sting of poverty. Financially you are solvency