



Breaking the Virgin Prairie.

and say, "It is here." The wheat that took the Gold Medal at the Philadelphia Exposition in 1876 was grown not in the United States, nor in Russia, nor the Argentine, nor on that great wheat belt of Western Canada fast becoming the melting-pot of the nations, but in a little garden of the Grey Nuns at Fort Chipewyan on Athabasca Lake.

The writer last summer saw potatoes, beets, and turnips growing lustily at Fort Good Hope under the Arctic Circle, and found wild flax north of that mystic line, with wild roses and golden-rod flourishing among tame Eskimo at the very lip of the Arctic Sea. Forest growth persists to where the mighty Mackenzie widens into its 50-mile delta. Along the lush valleys of the Peace are hundreds of miles of prairie where horses graze beily-deep in a tangled growth of vetches and wild grasses.

At Vermilion-on-the-Peace, in latitude 58 deg. 30 min. north, the Hudson's Bay Company for years has maintained a flour mill, grinding into flour the wheat from half a hundred farms at its very door. With no self-advertising or crying of its deeds in the market-place the *Great Company* has floated in its own steamers this flour for hundreds of miles

down the Peace and the Mackenzie, feeding the people of its fur posts.

The Grand Trunk Pacific will tap an unknown hinterland which is a kingdom in itself, rich not only in timber, fur, tar, coal, salt, and oil, but pregnant with potential harvests of 40-bushel wheat.

Canada's fertile northland is its oyster, its whole succulent plate of oysters. Also, the present prairie wheat-field, a field a thousand miles long and of unknown depth, is tributary to the new line, and the mind reels in trying to think of the activity which will manifest here in Britain's Bread-Basket half a century from now. Western Canada has 200 million acres of wheat lands, and only one acre out of every twenty is under crop. If Canada's wheat crop for 1908 had been shipped in cars, each holding 15 tons, the cars would have made a continuous train 1,365 miles long!

There is every encouragement to the capitalist to build railways. The people are crowding into Western Canada in such numbers, breaking new soil, and growing wheat, that every channel of egress for the golden grain is choked to congestion. The terminal elevators at Port Arthur and Fort William cannot begin to handle with facility the cargoes