

It has been estimated that there are three million or more acres of land of the first quality lying between the Root and Saskatchewan rivers.

For about a hundred miles in a direct line South-westward of "the Forks" of the Saskatchewan the country is described as having a rich soil with abundant woods, in clumps and groves; but after passing that distance it gradually assumes the character of treeless prairie. At a distance of about two hundred and fifty miles, from "the Forks" on the South Branch, the elbow is reached, and although the country from the latter point to the base of the Rocky Mountains, especially to the southward, has been described as of inferior character, there are large exceptions to be found --The Cypress Hills for instance, which are described by Palliser as covered with fine timber, abounding in excellent grass and well watered.

Along the base of the Rocky Mountains Northward to where the Athabasca takes its rise, the country is partially wooded, and has innumerable clumps of poplar and willow. Fine streams run through numerous beautiful valleys, which are covered with a most luxuriant growth of vetches and nutritious grasses. There are fine prairie bottoms and others covered with scrub and willow, and in some parts there is an abundance of woods of spruce, poplar and aspen, sufficient to afford shelter for cattle in winter. In winter the eastern slopes of the Rocky Mountains are less encumbered with snow than much of the prairie country, and the grasses are of a finer and more nutritious nature than those found on the plains, and this combined with the clumps and ridges of wood, the numerous valleys and clear running streams, makes this part of the Canadian North-West peculiarly fitted for the raising of immense herds of cattle.

The North Branch, for five hundred and twenty miles up from "the Forks," and the Battle River which enters the Saskatchewan about a hundred and seventy miles above the junction of the North and South branches, for about four hundred and fifty miles, traverse a rich prairie country, more or less interspersed with woods.

This immense area of country may be termed the garden of the North-West, and at one part has a breadth of one