DRY-LAND FARMING METHODS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

As practised at the Experimental Dry Farms at Quilchena and 105-Mile House under the direction of Professor W. J. Elliott

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HERE are vast areas in the northern central portion of America that receive limited rainfall, and are call d, for the lack of a better name, dry-land areas. Generally speaking, the term applies to areas that receive less than 20 inches of precipitation. It is possible, however, to find areas with a precipitation of 20 inches where the evaporation is not excessive, and where, for this reason, very successful crops may be grown. On the other hand, it is possible to think of areas farther south where

the temperature is very high and where the evaporation is correspondingly great. Such a district might have more than 20 inches of precipitation, and still be regarded as a dry area. So that 20 inches of precipitation as a designation of a dry-hand area will vary considerably with the location of that area. Generally speaking, however, in British Columbia less than 20 inches would indicate that the district is one in which dry-land methods might be followed.

CENTRAL BRITISH COLUMBIA.

There is a vast area of land in British Columbia lying between the main Rocky Mountains and the Cascade Range which parallels the Coast. On the western slope of the Cascades there is a very heavy precipitation, but these monutains seem to so elevate the moisture-inden clouds that they pass over the great central rolling plains and valleys, and only drop their moisture or snow when the main Rocky Mountains are reached.

Records kept on the Commonage south of Quilchena and at 105-MHe Honse, on the Carlboo Trall, give a precipitating as follows:—

	105-Mile House.	Quilchena.
Precipitation from September 1st, 1913, to August 31st, 1914. Precipitation from September 1st, 1914, to August 31st, 1915.	Inches. 10.94 15.05	Inches. 10 34 15.913

105-Mile House is located in the central part of the Province and Quilchena in the southern part, yet the precipitation at each point for the corresponding time is surprisingly alike.

These figures indicate that both districts would come under the dry-land classification as given above, as both are considerably less than 20 inches in precipitation.

MOISTURE NEEDED FOR CROPS.

For the growing of farm crops the main question is not particularly "How much precipitation do we receive?" but it is "How much of the precipitation which fails can we conserve for the use of the growing crop?" To answer this question successfully, we need to ask ourselves two additional questions, as follows: (1.) is the soil of such a nature that it will muturally retain moisture? (2.) Can we so cultivate the soil as to put the surface in prime shape for the retention of moisture?

It is obvious that a self might be so gravelly or porous that the storing-up of moisture in it would be impossible. On the other hand, a soil that is composed of clay, clay loam, loam, and their many variations, as a usual thing, lends itself admirably to suitable cultivation methods for the storing of moisture.