

My six years of office were years of prosperity for the Dominion—of advance in all directions. The great railway development, of the development of mineral resources and illimitable water-power; whilst, more important than all these, the world seemed of a sudden to realise the enormous wheat-growing capabilities of the Canadian North-west. Realise is, perhaps, too strong a word, for I doubt if even yet a true conception of the vastness of Canada's wheat-growing area exists on this side of the Atlantic. I brought home with me some figures which, though I have no doubt later returns are to be had, may serve to give some idea of the future possibilities of the West.

If you will allow me, I will quote from the report of the Director of Experimental Farms (Professor Saunders) for 1903. He reckons that in Manitoba and the three provisional territories—Assiniboia, Saskatchewan, and Alberta—there are 171 million acres suitable for cultivation; still further, that in the Athabasca and Mackenzie districts there are respectively 155 and 340 million acres of land which has not yet been fully reported on agriculturally, but where considerable quantities of wheat have already been grown.

Of the 171 million acres of agricultural land referred to, only about 4 per cent. has yet been brought under crop; but supposing that one-fourth of this 171 million acres was under wheat crop annually, and taking the average production per acre of Manitoba for the last ten years, Professor Saunders estimates that the total wheat crop would be 855 million bushels annually, which would place Canada in the position of being much the largest wheat-producing country in the world. And these figures deal only with a portion of the West, and take no account of the wheat-growing areas in the Eastern provinces.

It is also interesting to note in the same report the difference between the average present wheat yield per acre of the United States and Canada. The average yield of the United States for the preceding ten years was 13.53 bushels per acre, whilst in Ontario and Manitoba, which were the only provinces from which Professor Saunders found available statistics, the average winter wheat crop for the last ten years was 21.52 bushels per acre, and spring wheat 16.64; and for the same period in Manitoba, where only spring wheat is grown, a little over 20 bushels per acre.

But perhaps the fairest way to make a comparison between the wheat-growing capabilities of the Western States of America and the Canadian North-West is to take the average yield for ten years of the States bordering on Manitoba, viz., Minnesota, 14.33; North Dakota, 12.87; South Dakota, 10.67,