

7 EDWARD VII., A. 1907

fields of wheat from August 4 to 12, and on August 18 I found the grain in stacks, so that I gave up asking, because my intention to compare the ripening of the crops in the West with the ripening in the East was of no use. I had seen enough to satisfy me that the ripening in the West was, for this year anyway, not different from that in the East at all.

*By Mr. Jackson (Selkirk):*

Q. Were you finding out from the people, at the same time, how many crops they had taken off that land, whether it was two or ten or twenty, because, if you did not, the information would not be of such great value?

A. I did not, for this reason, that the oldest settler I spoke to in the interior of the country was that man who had been there for seven years, the man in the Smith settlement, where I talked the matter over, said their crops were exceptionally good.

Q. You did not find out either whether this land was summer fallowed or not?

A. Well, sometimes it is. That is another peculiarity: the summer-fallowed land had the poorest crop this year, because the spring was very cold. The wheat grew at first like a hothouse plant, and then it got chilled by cold, sleety rain, and it did not do nearly so well as it did on the stubble.

Q. I consider your opinion, to have been of any use, should have added to it how many years that particular field had been cropped.

A. Yes, but I can go further. Let me test my statement now. It is a broad one, but I challenge contradiction to it. The people do not realize yet that we have scarcely any running water in the Northwest, and where there is no running water, there is no leaching of the land. The land of our Northwest is practically inexhaustible on that account. Please let that pass into your mind as absolutely true.

Q. How about the Saskatchewan river and the Assiniboine, and the country which they drain?

A. There are no creeks that run into them.

Q. Are there no creeks running into them?

A. No, that is absolutely the fact.

Q. Are you aware there is one running into the Saskatchewan river near Battleford?

A. Yes. I can tell you of Eagle creek and Eyebrow creek and others, but the water that runs into them you can carry in a few pails.

Q. Are you not aware there is a creek that runs into Quill lake?

A. Certainly.

Q. There are streams running into them?

A. Yes. Excuse me, but there is nothing like making things clear. There is Big Quill lake (pointing to the map) and the smaller lake, but the water is quite salt; it is of a saline character.

Now, in this country from this point (indicating on the map) to Saskatoon, an area of nearly a hundred miles, there is no creek at all; but, gentlemen, there is a good rainfall. You may ask where does the water go? I asked that question of Senator Perley. We talk these things over pretty often, and I asked him, 'Where does the water go?' It passes for a certain distance down into the soil, and eventually it evaporates. The point I wanted to make is that as long as there is no leaching there is no loss except what the crop takes from the soil.

*By Mr. McCraney:*

Q. What would you say regarding the effect of burning straw? I have always believed that eventually it would tend to the depletion of the land?

A. I do not think it will. Senator Perley asked me on one occasion in my office how I considered the men in the West could keep their land up to a proper tilth—in other words, so maintain it that it would perpetually produce crops. He said, 'I want to leave that land as God has given it to me.' I told him, 'You are going to leave it that way if you are careful.' There is no leaching, and a slight rotation of the crops