

been obtained year by year. Professor Macoun, a well-known botanist, has recently been commissioned specially to investigate this subject. He estimates that there are no less than 160,000,000 acres of land available in this region alone for farming and grazing purposes, of which one-half, or 80,000,000 acres, may be considered fit for cultivation.

The mineral riches of this great division of Canada are but imperfectly known. It has, however, been established that immense deposits of coal exist in many parts, chiefly along the western side. The examinations of Mr. Selwyn, director of the Geological Survey, carry the impression that the coal-bearing rocks pass with their associated coal seams and iron ores beneath the clays farther east, and it may be that shafts would reveal workable seams of coal at such limited depths beneath the surface as would render them available for fuel and for industrial purposes in the heart of the prairies. Should these views of Mr. Selwyn prove correct, it will be of the greatest possible importance to the country. Besides coal and iron ore, petroleum, salt and gold have also been found.

The nucleus of a population has for many years existed on the Red River : it was originally formed by the Earl of Selkirk near the beginning of the present century. In the autumn of 1812 he reached the chosen locality, Kildonan *via* Hudson's Bay and Nelson River, with a small party of Highland Scotchmen. Subsequently the numbers were increased, and a number of French Canadians also settled down to cultivate the soil at St. Boniface, on the opposite bank of the Red River. The Red River settlers, exposed to many vicissitudes during a space of half a century, did not greatly prosper. But since the incorporation with Canada of the whole country] formerly under the sway of the Hudson Bay Company, marvellous progress has been made. The province of Manitoba has been created around the place which was once the Selkirk settlement ; the population has increased from a mere handful to many thousands, and it has to all appearance entered on a career of unexampled progress.

Manitoba, although a province with prospects so brilliant, occupies but a small corner of the fertile lands in the interior of Canada. The Prairie Region, as set forth in the foregoing, is alone ten times the area of England, reckoning every description of land : such being the case it may be no vain dream to imagine that in due time many Provinces will be carved out of it, and that many millions of the human family may find happy and prosperous homes on these rich alluvial plains of Canada.