

### The Regina District.

By Geo. W. Brown in *Regina Standard*.—

The Regina district embracing an area within a radius of say twenty-five miles around the town of Regina, consists almost entirely of an undulating clay plain of which ninety per cent. has been classed as "first-class land" in the reports made by the Dominion Land surveyors published in connection with the survey of the district.

The north-east part of the district is the only part differing materially from the rest. Here we find a black loamy soil interspersed with a few gravelly ridges, ponds or sloughs and dotted with islands or clumps of poplar and willow.

To the north and northwest the clay plains are traversed by many large ravines and coulees in the bottom of which are found springs and spring creeks which flow into the Qu'Appelle river. In nearly all these coulees or ravines and along the Qu'Appelle river quantities of timber are found which will serve for fuel and fencing for a considerable time. The Qu'Appelle valley itself is about a mile and a half wide and from two hundred and fifty to three hundred and fifty feet deep. Its vegetation is profuse: more than eighty varieties of grasses have been discovered. From its natural shelter, large quantities of natural hay and abundant herbage, it has become a favorite place for cattle ranching, the cattle being able to run at large all winter, needing very little, if any, feed but depending mainly upon the grass which has been cured into a natural hay by the hot sun and dry weather so prevalent in autumn and which is preserved in all its nutritious qualities under the light dry snow peculiar to the Northwest. The ranching now carried on must, however, with the advent of settlement give way to dairy farming which, on account of its wonderful adaptability of the soil for root culture, pure spring water and a temperature during the summer months several degrees cooler than on the plains above, is sure to prove more remunerative on land which is too valuable to be given up for ranching alone; dairy farming needing more labor will receive more impetus when the supply of labor becomes constant and cheaper and the output becoming extensive enough to guarantee the putting in use of the best method of handling butter and cheese; a higher price and a surer market will be obtained than is at present the case with only a home demand to supply.

Besides the Qu'Appelle river the district is watered by the Wascana, Boggy creek, Cottonwood and Spring creek, and their tributaries, while almost everywhere a plentiful supply of good water can be had by digging to a depth of from twelve to sixty feet.

Although the soil is what may be termed a clay, still its qualities are entirely different to those generally found in clay soils. If turned up in lumps while wet instead of baking it will moulder away into dust upon exposure to the atmosphere, and in fact the wetter it is when ploughed or harrowed the better the effect upon the soil. It is almost entirely free from boulders or stones except along the lakes or bottoms of ravines or coulees. When wet it is

very adhesive and all its qualities go to show that the Regina plain was at one time an island sea or lake now extinct, as upon examination of the strata it is clearly seen to be made up of a series of alluvial deposits. The sub-soil is practically the same as the surface, except, of course, that it lacks the vegetable matter and if brought to the surface and exposed to the air for a time it appears to become as equally productive as the surface soil.

It more nearly resembles the soil of the Red River valley than any I have seen, with this difference, that while the surface is not so full of vegetable matter and black in color the sub-soil is almost identically the same as that of the surface and it is not such a dead level, but, from its gentle undulating character it is naturally well drained and free from all alkali patches.

That it is an excellent wheat soil is attested by the excellent quality of grain produced. Some two years ago the United States Government at Washington, wishing to distribute among the farmers small quantities of the very best seed wheat, sent to Mr. Waugh of the *North-West Farmer* at Winnipeg to obtain the very best sample that could be procured in the Canadian Northwest. The seed he selected came from the Regina district and the United States Government not only expressed their satisfaction with the grain sent but claimed that it far exceeded their expectations.

The average yield on fairly well cultivated land would be from 20 to 30 bushels per acre. I have seen several times from 50 to 55 bushels to the acre, but this is exceptional; on very poorly cultivated land the yield is often much less than the minimum I have mentioned. Oats yield from 30 to 100 bushels per acre and barley 25 to 60. All kinds of root crops do exceedingly well and with proper cultivation are never a failure. As to the danger from summer frost I may say, after an experience of eleven years spent wholly in this district, that the usual time for frost that would in the slightest degree injure wheat is between the eleventh and seventeenth day of September, only twice I have seen injuries done the wheat crops before this date, viz: in 1885 on the 5th and in 1890 on the 8th of September, twice have I seen wheat cut during the last days of September wholly unharmed.

The fuel supply of the district after the wood is exhausted is assured by the proximity of the Souris coal fields, which are now being developed.

Brick clay is found in many parts of the district, also sand and lime, which, with the boulders mentioned, can be used in building, while lumber of all kinds must be brought from British Columbia or Northwestern Ontario.

I have, in a very brief way, described the district. There are many things that a minute description of would be of interest to an incoming settler, that the bounds of the present letter do not admit of.

In conclusion I would say that I have no hesitation in recommending the district as a field for settlement to any one who is willing to give it a fair trial. It is a land of undeveloped possibilities, and the extent to which the possibilities are developed depend largely on upon whom the task devolves.

### B. C. Notes.

The Okanagan Telephone Company has been incorporated.

The Turner and Beeton salmon canneries in Varness, near the Skeena river, were destroyed by fire on February 7th. The property destroyed is estimated to have been worth \$40,000; insurance, \$34,600.

The new factory of the Canada Paint Company, at Victoria, is now in operation. Almost everything which will be sold, excepting, of course, the raw materials, is produced at the works, even to the cans in which the paints and oils are put up.

Argenta and Duncan City are among the latest of British Columbia's new towns. Argenta is at the head of Kootenay Lake, on the east side, and Duncan City is situated on Upper Kootenay Lake, 34 miles from Kaslo.

Mary Island, one of the finest and prettiest islands between Vancouver Island and the Mainland, has been sold to a syndicate of eastern people. It contains 1,956 acres and is situated east of Valdez Island on the line of the proposed ferry of the British Pacific Railway. It is almost clear, the soil fertile and the surroundings picturesque.

A February issue of the *Steveston Enterprise* says: "Although a small place, Steveston boasts of possessing a musical prodigy in Mr. Ed. Hunt's son. Eddie is at present 9 years old and his first induction in musical lines took place a year ago when he became a member of the Steveston brass band. He took to music as naturally as a duck takes to water and soon distanced his older rivals in the ease and skill with which he rendered his parts. He has mastered the cornet, the fiddle and piano, and plays first or solo cornet in the band. Eddie has lately turned his attention to composing music, and has already written several intricate pieces which he has adapted for the use of the various instruments in the band. One of these which he has entitled the 'Richmond Quickstep,' will be played at the coming band concert."

### School Land Sale.

A plan has been adopted by the Dominion Government by which it is thought the vexed question of illegal occupation of school lands in Manitoba can be settled. The principles of this plan were contained in the issue of the *Canada Gazette* (official), of February 4th. The explanation read as follows:—

"After careful consideration of the long-standing question of illegal occupation and cultivation of school lands in Manitoba, it was decided that, except in certain special cases, the only way of protecting the interests of school endowment and preventing at the same time any apparent hardships to those squatters, who in good faith and ignorance of the law have settled upon these lands, would be to offer at public auction all those quarter sections which to the knowledge of the Department of the Interior are illegally occupied, thus affording squatters an opportunity of acquiring the land, and after the sales to take legal proceedings against those who failed to avail themselves of this chance of acquiring the land, and yet persisted in their illegal occupation or cultivation of it.