

APPENDIX No. 4

to ask, but we just pulled the posts down with the wire attached, and laid them down, and rode into the field. Then we crossed to the other side and did the same thing.

*By Mr. Wright (Renfrew):*

Q. And went on your way rejoicing?

A. Yes.

*By Mr. Burrows:*

Q. What locality were you in last year?

A. I travelled from Portage la Prairie to Edmonton, along the Grand Trunk Pacific. I thought we were going to have it as easy as I had twenty-seven years previously, told my men that when we reached the 'old trail' all would be well; but the trail sometimes did not run a mile, and we were in sloughs and bogs, as usual.

*By Mr. Crawford:*

Q. You find roads in Manitoba sometimes do you not?

A. They fix the roads to suit themselves; they do not suit me. Each man has a road to suit himself and when I got into the Galician settlements in Manitoba, what was the result? You would ask 'Is this road all right?' 'Oh, yes' was the reply and we would follow it and find ourselves at another man's place and have to go away around in order to get out again. Everybody is a road-maker to suit himself there.

GROWING WHEAT ON ALKALINE SOILS.

*By Mr. Schell (Oxford):*

Q. Is the alkali an injury to the production of wheat or is it considered a benefit?

A. Yes, absolutely, and that is where the grand value of our Fife comes in.

Q. When I was out there I heard a great many reports as to alkaline land being worthless for the production of wheat. I think I heard you remark that you found the very best wheat growing on land considered very bad for alkali. That was my impression also, as I went through the country. I thought I saw land with strong indications of alkali and yet it was considered the very best land for wheat.

A. That is where I gave advice for these people. I would say 'have you broken the land up and found the wheat would not grow?' 'Oh, no,' they would say. Then I would tell them, 'It is no use in your condemning the land unless you have got the actual proof of the thing.' I will give you an example to illustrate what I mean. In 1872 I went out with Sir Sandford Fleming and when we reached Winnipeg, I stopped with Governor Archibald in the old fort. While there I met the future chamberlain of the city, an active little man called Brown. Some of you may remember him. He was the city chamberlain in Winnipeg afterwards. Brown was a progressive man and upon hearing that I was there he came and showed me a well he was digging. It was the first well that was dug there, and I remember the big square hole down through the black stuff which was lined with beautiful white crystals. We called them alkali crystals as a general term. He said to me, 'The water in that well is of no use, it is salt. How far must I go down before I come to good water?' Even in that day the folks thought I knew a whole lot of things that I did not, and Brown was one of them. Well, I said, 'I do not know, but I will tell you this much; that you will have to sink until you come to gravel. If you should get through to China you will obtain no good water until you strike gravel.' We left the well and went out to a potato patch. Now I am coming to the alkali. Going to the potato patch, between the city and Fort Douglas, there was about a mile of land without any occupants. We came to a slight depression in the road and what did I find in it? I was a botanist, you see. I found a whole lot of seaside plants that exist along the Lower St. Lawrence and along the coast. I was astounded at the fact, I had no idea that they were growing on the roadside there, but I took the plants and brought them along to the potato patch. He had broken up a little basin, quite a shallow basin. You know that around Winnipeg at that early date the earth was so trodden with carts and the camping of people