

PART I.

HISTORICAL

The history of the agricultural settlement of the territory now described as the Western Provinces of Canada dates from 1812, when Lord Selkirk, a young Scottish Nobleman, established a small colony on the Red River. Previous to that time the vast expanse of practically unknown territory from the Great Lakes to the Pacific Coast had been exclusively a preserve of the fur traders. The Hudson's Bay Company dates its charter back to the days of King Charles II., in 1670, and for two hundred years it was the dominant factor in the civil and commercial management of the territory.

POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

In 1869 the Dominion of Canada acquired from the Hudson's Bay Company the whole of the area then administered by that concern, and a Lieutenant Governor and council were appointed by the Dominion Government. Previous to this, as far back as 1833, there had been a form of local government in the Red River settlement. In 1870 the Province of Manitoba was formed, and a government for that province was organized the following year. The area lying between the Rocky Mountains and Manitoba was organized into the three provincial districts of Assiniboia, Saskatchewan and Alberta. In 1905 the Provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan were constituted out of this area and given responsible government.

West of the centre line of the Rocky Mountains is the Province of British Columbia, which had been a British colony up to the time of Canadian Confederation. In point of settlement the only important part of this area was Vancouver Island, and in 1869 this island had been granted to the Hudson's Bay Company for ten years. In 1870 British Columbia, including Vancouver Island, joined the Dominion on the condition that a railway should be built within ten years to unite the territory with Eastern Canada. The railway was built, and now forms the main portion of the Canadian Pacific Railway, the "All Red Route."

SOILS OF WESTERN CANADA

Scientists contend that the great prairies of the Canadian West are really extensions of the upper sections of the Valleys of the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers. The materials constituting the surface deposits of the prairie region vary in different districts, but may be generally described as consisting of a loam bed which may be anywhere from a few inches to several feet in thickness, and which, so far as studied, appears to be partly of a vegetable formation intermixed with fine sand and silt. Beneath this loam, which varies from a heavy black to a chocolate color according to location, is a clay subsoil of variable thickness almost everywhere on the plains. From this clay considerable quantities of common brick are manufactured, and in some localities it is found to be of pronounced value as the basis of ceramic industries.