

OTTAWA, June 1st, 1910.

HONOURABLE FRANK OLIVER,
Minister of the Interior,
Ottawa, Canada.

SIR, I have the honour to transmit herewith the report dated May 2nd, last, of Mr. Frank J. P. Crean, C.E., of my Branch giving the results of the exploration carried on by him during the season of 1909, covering that portion of the Provinces of Saskatchewan and Alberta extending north from the present surveyed area to the Clearwater River and extending from Green Lake, the Beaver River and connecting waters as far north as Portage la Pêche on the east to the Athabaska River on the west.

Mr. Crean's report of his exploration in the season of 1908, which covered that portion of the Province of Saskatchewan lying immediately east of the above described tract, was—under your instructions—printed for public information; but owing to the great demand for copies the edition has been exhausted and it is now proposed therefore to issue the two Reports in one new publication.

The gross area covered by the two reports, and as to which some information has been gathered, might be stated at approximately thirty-four million (34,000,000) acres.

The exploration in the year 1909 shows results even more satisfactory as to the possibilities of the country for settlement than the exploration of the previous year. A very considerable proportion of the area explored is shown by Mr. Crean's observations to be well adapted for mixed farming and having natural resources of timber, hay, fish and game which will be of much value to incoming settlers. Results of actual operations in cattle raising are of a most encouraging nature. At and in the vicinity of Meadow Lake over 100 miles north of Battleford, there are herds of cattle aggregating over 300, and over 50 horses, all of which are described as in a thriving condition. At Cowpar and Winefred Lakes towards the western part of the tract explored and in the Clearwater Valley to the north, conditions seem also most promising for stock-raising. It may be of interest to note here that recent reports of investigations in Siberia, Mongolia and Northern Manchuria by the Bureau of Plant Industry of the Department of Agriculture of the United States, give accounts of the discovery of three varieties of yellow-flowered alfalfa which are found growing and thriving in a wild state under conditions of climate much more severe, both as to cold in winter and snowfall, than are to be found in any part of Northwestern Canada as far north as there are any claims made as to possibilities of settlement. It may therefore be considered reasonably probable that whatever advantages alfalfa has over our native grasses as fodder are assured for all habitable parts of our north country.

SOME HISTORY AS TO REPORTS ON THE NORTHLAND.

The work of exploration now being carried on under this Branch is the first ever undertaken in any systematic way of the North Country to ascertain its possibilities for settlement. It may be of interest to give here some history as to previous reports issued by the Dominion Government on that portion of Western Canada.

In the years 1887-8, Select Committees of the Senate under the presidency of the late Honourable Senator Schultz, gathered a large amount of most valuable evidence on the resources of that part of Canada north of the Saskatchewan watershed and lying between Hudson Bay and the Rocky Mountains. The Committee