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## ALBERTA'S IRRIGATION WORKS.

This journal frequently is asked about the irrigation project of the C. P. R. in the Calgary district and what the prospects are of the scheme being a success. Different representatives of the Farmer's Advocate have had an opportunity of looking over the work of constructing the irrigation canals and of examining the lands it is intended to irrigate and each have pronounced the scheme most feasible and the land of a high average of fertility. The work is being pushed with all possible speed and by May 1st next it is expected the first division of the work will be ready to distribute water to the farms adjoining it. This ditch will serve an area of 24,000 acres of land in the Gluchen district about fifty miles east of Calgary. Two other trunk canals are to be built in the same district which when completed will make it bring the irrigated area up to 300,000 acres in the Gluchen district alone. Just how much more will be irrigated it is difficult at present to say except that all lands which will admit of it will be made as prolific as nature's water and C. P. R. enterprise and money will make them.

Five years ago it was considered by many that the country east of Calgary would never be of value for agricultural purposes, but would remain for all time the property of the rancher. When fall wheat was successfully raised in southern Alberta a new idea began to take root, and at the present time thousands of farmers are finding their way into this new country. The experience of the past year is fully demonstrated that the whole of this country is well suited for all kinds of farming operations, and with a supply of water assured, at the particular season of the year when it is most needed, it is difficult to prophesy what the maximum of development will be.

Throughout the whole of the district served by the canals, the soil is a black sandy vegetable mold, from six inches to three feet in depth with a subsoil of porous chocolate earth, from two to six feet in depth, resting on sandy clay. At the present time the land where unbroken is covered with a heavy growth of native grasses, from six inches to two feet in height. There are few stones, brush or timber, and the whole country is ready for the plow. At the present time there are a number of settlers scattered throughout the country, all of whom seem to be doing well.

Of late years irrigation has become one of the prominent sciences a few hundred miles south of Calgary, so much so that special engineers have been trained, journals devoted to irrigation have come into existence, and immense areas of previously unproductive lands have been made to yield of latent riches. The success of agriculture aided by irrigation has been demonstrated over and over again so that it would appear that this is absolutely no experimental venture in Alberta.

It may be interesting to Canadians to know that the work now being carried out by the Canadian Pacific Railway at Calgary is many times larger than has ever been carried out or planned by either the federal government or by any other corporation in the whole of the United States or in fact on the continent. The largest area attempted across the line is approximately 125,000 acres. The first section of the first irrigation district comprises 110,000 acres, while the whole of the first district is one and a half million acres of irrigable land. The whole of the area to be brought under ditch between Calgary and Medicine Hat is a total of approximately three million acres.

What this area of irrigation will mean to the Canadian west when planted with wheat, oats, alfalfa, sugar beets, and other root crops and cereals, would make a list of figures for statisticians to glory in. Official United States government reports prove that the farmer on irrigated land raises larger crops every year than does the farmer any year, who is forced to depend on rainfall. This proves clearly that the question is not, "is irrigation necessary," but rather "is irrigation possible?"

The water supply of this immense undertaking is the Bow river whose minimum discharge at the point where the irrigation canal taps it is 3,000 cubic feet per second and at all of this the company is allowed to use 2,000 cubic feet. But during the season when water is required for irrigation the river is always swollen from the melting of snow in the mountains so that its minimum during the irrigable season is 6,000 cubic feet per second. Last spring Dr. Elwood Meade, irrigation expert of the department of agriculture at Washington, visited Calgary and prepared an extensive report on the proposition. After a thorough examination he gave it as his opinion that the soil of the irrigable area is fertile and well suited to the application of the water. The water supply is ample and the rights of the company there are secure. He also thought that there would be no difficulty in securing ample settlers for the new districts, as many farmers in the Western States have come to realize the value of irrigation, and would take advantage of the cheap lands, which were valuable not only for agricultural purposes, but also in connection with stock raising, the present leading industry of the district. He believed that a man who had once farmed by irrigation would never revert to the old style of depending on natural rainfall, if he could possibly help it.

There is no question as to the suitability of the land, for the most casual spectator can readily see that the distribution of the water can be very easily accomplished. The whole country, which is rolling prairie, resembles a number of irregular saucers, grouped together. Here and there scattered through it are small swales, which are flooded during wet seasons, but in dryer ones are covered with a heavy growth of native grass. At other points are high knolls and ridges, gradually falling away toward the east. The first irrigation district comprises the divide between the Rosebud and the Bow rivers, the land sloping gently either way. Here and there are small creeks, chief of which are the Serviceberry, and Crowfoot, tributaries of the larger rivers, whose courses makes excellent natural channels for the distribution of the water. On each irrigable piece of land the company delivers the water to the highest possible point on the boundary of the quarter section, and the owner then distributes it over his land as he sees fit. For water the farmer pays fifty cents per acre per annum, and very little experience is required to know the amount that best suits a crop.

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