

the fur trade the main route for all imports and exports, and, although the fleet of steamboats, which, up to the time the railway tapped the Saskatchewan valley, busily plied on the river, now lie idle, as population and development advance the river will again be utilized more and more. Coal is certain to be shipped that way; and the Edmonton farmer will be afforded the choice of an eastern as well as a western market, whenever Manitoba secures the opening of the Hudson's Bay route, and the Canadian Northern Railway from Lake Superior to Edmonton is completed.

#### THE WESTERN OUTLET.

Finally to the west the Rocky Mountains open their portals and invite, by the lowest and easiest grade in Alberta, the construction of a railway through the Yellow Head Pass to Cariboo and the Pacific coast beyond. This, again, is an old natural route frequented by the fur traders. It is expected that the Canadian Northern Railway Company will, on reaching Edmonton, immediately continue their line by this route to the Pacific coast.

On account of its agricultural resources and its ready markets therefor; its gold and coal; its climate and beauty; its geographical position, at which so many important natural routes converge, the Edmonton district attracted settlers, who had a continent to choose from, before the advent of railways.

### CHAPTER III.

#### Source of Information.

In 1896 the Edmonton branch of the Western Canada Immigration Association sent a series of printed questions to farmers throughout the district, to which fifty-two replies were received. It being impossible to publish each reply separately, the answers have been compiled, and the results embodied in this work, in which it is attempted to combine these experiences and opinions for the benefit of farmers in other countries who may contemplate emigration. The publication of the names and address, which follow, is an absolute guarantee that the information is honest, disinterested and reliable. Only five out of the fifty-two objected to the publication of their names, fearing the correspondence such publication might entail on them would be too great a tax on their time.

It is proper to say here that, while

facts reduced to figures are easily compiled and arranged, other facts and opinions expressed in words and phrases cannot be given in so condensed a form. Moreover, as the value of the work depends on its faithfully giving the evidence as nearly as possible in each man's own words, so that the intelligent reader may be able to form his own opinion, no apology is required for copious extracts from the replies.

The reader is desired to bear in mind that the replies came from a large tract of country—120 miles long from north to south, and 66 miles wide from east to west; from men of short and long residence; and from new and old settlements, thus giving rise to varied experiences and, what might seem without this explanation, contradictory statements. As a rule, the compiler has found the most favorable testimony given by the older settlers from the older settlements, while that least favorable came from the new settlers (especially bachelors) in new settlements, whilst experimenting towards success.

The reader is also requested to note that the information applies only up to the early spring of 1896—after two dry years. Information including the splendid crop of 1896 would be of a very much more favorable character, especially from the new comers, than that embodied herein. Though the period of change from a community which received high local prices for every production before railway communication was established, to that of one in which prices became reduced to the level of outside markets, plus freight, and finally to one which had a surplus for export which heavy railway freights rendered unprofitable, was a trying one; yet the farmers continued to prosper, as will be shown by their own statements hereafter. Moreover, with reference to these statements, it must be continually borne in mind by the reader that they were made during the hardest times and after two of the driest seasons the district has ever passed through, and before the new era of prosperity which has now (1897) dawned on the country by the reduction of fifty per cent. in freight rates to the ever-increasing markets of Kootenay and Cariboo.

Some questions were not fully replied to by the farmers, and in such cases it has been necessary to go to the best special authorities for the supplementary information required; but the main ob-