

there is of course, considerable local variation as to soil, conformation and appearance of the country. But speaking in a general way, the country is gently undulating, a succession of ridges alternating with slight depressions, and is freely interspersed with creeks, streams, ponds and lakes; and there is everywhere sufficient timber to give the landscape a pleasing appearance. All uncultivated land is covered with a rich, rank growth of long grass, wild peavine, vetch and a wonderful wealth of wild flowers. The soil usually consists of a rich, black, vegetable loam, varying from 12 to 30 inches or more in depth. In places this changes to a somewhat sandy loam, still nearly black; in other places to a lighter chocolate-colored loam; and occasional areas occur of light sandy soil of comparatively low fertility, but which would be considered pretty fair land in most countries. Such areas are of limited extent, however, and the prevailing character of the soil is deep, black loam of great fertility.

"The blackest and richest soil I ever saw" is the way a staff correspondent of a big eastern paper a few years ago described the land to the north, south, east and west of Edmonton.

The subsoil is usually clay or sandy clay; but this also is subject to some local variation.

Altitude

The altitude of Central Alberta varies from about 2,000 to 2,500 feet above sea level. At Edmonton the river level is 2,009 feet, while at the post office it is 2,185; Camrose is 2,431, Vegreville 2,082, Morinville 2,293, and Athabasca at river level 1,690.

Climate

The summer climatic conditions in Central Alberta are ideal for rapid growth of vegetation, and a strong, heavy growth, whether of the various grain crops, roots, garden truck, fodder crops, or cultivated or wild pasture may be looked for with certainty any and every season. Similarly, damage from too much rain is unknown. While the annual rainfall is comparatively light, averaging only 21 inches for the six years ending 1916, it is subject to very little variation, and may be depended upon with certainty. A very important factor is that the precipitation for the year nearly all comes during the growing season when it is most needed. When it is further considered that the clay subsoil is retentive of moisture, and there is a total absence of hot parching winds, it will be readily understood why this comparatively light rainfall combined with the wonderful richness of soil produces such luxuriant vegetation.