

and Lake of the Woods, and they appear to occur geologically on the separating line between a broad band of laurentian or metamorphic rocks and the softer silurian formations. This great triangular-shaped region is estimated to measure about 300,000,000 acres. Its base, running along the series of lakes, mentioned will probably average less than 1,000 feet above the sea, and its apex, near where the international boundary line enters the Rocky Mountains, will probably be about 4,000 feet above sea level. This region may generally be described as a great plane sloping from its apex in a north-easterly direction downwards to its base, but the inclination is not uniform and unbroken. Several terraces and well-defined escarpments stretching across the country are met with at intervals. A great proportion of the surface is gently rolling, and hills of no great height occur here and there. The rivers of this division of the country flow for a great part of their course in deeply eroded channels, frequently of considerable width, and as the superficial formations are for the most part drift or soft rock, the channels which have been furrowed out are but little obstructed by falls or steep rapids. They generally present a uniform descent, and the long stretches of some of the rivers, although the current be swift, are capable of being navigated. A wide expanse of the region to the south of the main Saskatchewan is a prairie, without trees or shrubs of any sort ; the tree-less prairie passes by easy gradations into copse wood land with prairie intervening. To the north of the Saskatchewan, woodland appears in various localities. On Peace River there are extensive prairies ; there is, also, an agreeable mixture of woodland and prairie, and this character of country appears to prevail for a considerable distance still further north.

It is scarcely to be supposed that a region so extensive would be found all fertile land. The great American desert, which covers a wide area in the centre of the United States, was at one time thought to extend north for a considerable distance into Canada. The Boundary Commission reports, however, appear to show that the arid and unproductive tract is more limited in the Canadian side than was previously supposed, and that a great breadth of the country previously considered valueless may be used for pastoral purposes, and some of it ultimately brought under cultivation. There are other places within the territory described as the Prairie Region which are unfavourable for farming pursuits ; and although certain drawbacks claim recognition, there can no longer be any doubt respecting the salubrity of the climate and the existence of vast plains of rare fertility. Information on this head has