

This is not all. The section of country east of the city of Winnipeg and extending to Lake Abitibi was also explored by the engineers of the government at that period. In order to save time I will not refer to the opinion then expressed; but I will come to the information which has been collected by the government of the province of Ontario, which in 1900 organized a special expedition entrusted to carefully selected commissioners for the express purpose of visiting and reporting upon that section of country between Lake Abitibi and the western boundary of the province of Ontario. In their report the commissioners speak as follows:

Agricultural Land.

The great clay belt running from the Quebec boundary west through Nipissing and Algoma districts and into the district of Thunder bay comprises an area of at least 24,500 square miles, or 15,680,000 acres, nearly all of which is well adapted for cultivation. This almost unbroken stretch of good farming land is nearly three-quarters as great in extent as the whole settled portion of the province south of Lake Nipissing and the French and Mattawa rivers. It is larger than the states of Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New Jersey and Delaware combined, and one-half besides of the state of New York. The region is watered by the Moose river, flowing into James bay, and its tributaries, the Abitibi, Mattagami and Missinabie, and the Albany and its tributaries, the Kenogami and Ogoke. Each of these rivers is over 300 miles in length, and they range in width from 300 or 400 yards to a mile. They are fed by numerous smaller streams, and these in turn drain numberless lakes of larger or smaller size, so that the whole country is one net-work of waterways, affording easy means of communications with long stretches fit for navigation. The great area of water surface also assures the country against the protracted droughts so often experienced in other countries. The southern boundary of this great tract of fertile land is less than forty miles from Missinabie station on the Canadian Pacific Railway; and the country north of the height of land being one immense level plateau sloping off towards James bay, the construction of railways and wagon roads through every part of it would be a comparatively easy matter.

In the small part of the district of Rainy river which was explored, the proportion of good land is not so great, but the clay land in the townships around Dryden was found to extend north in the valley of the Wabigoon river, with an area of about 600 square miles, or 384,000 acres. There are also smaller cultivable areas at various other points.

The Climate.

Another important fact established by the explorations is that the climate in this northern district presents no obstacle to successful agricultural settlement. The information obtained completely dispels the erroneous impression that its winters are of Arctic severity and its summers too short to enable crops to mature. The absence of summer frosts noted by the explorers and the growth of all the common vegetables at the Hudson Bay posts must disabuse the public mind of this erroneous impression. The 50th parallel of latitude passes through the centre of the agricultural belt, and

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the climate is not much different from that of the province of Manitoba, lying along the same parallel, with this exception, of course, that the winter is tempered by the great spruce forests and the presence of so large a proportion of water surface. The country, too, has an abundance of wood for fuel, building and commercial purposes, and plenty of pure water every where.

The Timber.

Another point equalled only in importance by the existence of a vast area of agricultural land in this country and its moderate climate is the fact that it is largely covered with extensive forests of spruce, jackpine and poplar. The value of this class of timber, as everybody knows, is increasing every day and the market for it is widening; and rich, indeed, is the country which has boundless resources in these varieties of woods. In the district of Nipissing, north of the Canadian Pacific Railway line, there is estimated to be at least 20,000,000 cords of pulp-wood; in the district of Algoma, 100,000,000 cords; in the district of Thunder Bay, 150,000,000 cords; and in the district of Rainy River, 18,000,000 cords; a grand total of 288,000,000 cords. The pine region does not seem to extend much beyond the height of land, but on this side, in the country around lakes Temagaming and Lady Evelyn, and to the north, an area of red and white pine of fine quality was explored and estimated to contain about three billions of feet, b.m.

Water Powers.

A feature of this region, which it is well to note from an industrial point of view, is the existence of many falls on the rivers and streams. These will no doubt be utilized with advantage in the creation of economical power when the country comes to be opened up.

Conclusion.

It was not expected, of course, that the parties would be able to make a thorough and exhaustive exploration of all the territory assigned to them, and the estimates here given of what has been reported are very conservative. Totalling up the figures here quoted, however, we have over 25,000 square miles of good fertile land, or over 16,000,000 acres, and 288,000,000 cords of spruce or other pulp-wood. There are also numerous smaller areas, both of timber and land, which are not included in these figures, but which will all be available when the development of the country takes place.

The country east of Lake Abitibi, in the province of Quebec, has also been explored, and explored several times. It was in the possession of the early French settlers, as far back as two hundred years ago. The French, I believe, had a port on Lake Abitibi in the seventeenth century. But it is difficult to summarize all the information with regard to that country, collectable in books of exploration. The Quebec government has had it explored in the last few years by an engineer of eminence, Mr. O'Sullivan, and his opinion has been summarized by another engineer, Mr. Doucet, in the following language:

From Roberval (which is a station on the Quebec and Lake St. John Railway) to the western limit of the province of Quebec, a distance of some 375 miles the line runs through a good farming country, the soil being chiefly clay.