

but softer and producing from their decomposition a more abundant soil—a slightly sandy yellow loam admirably adapted to pasturage and the raising of Indian corn and other cereals. In Gaspé, the calcareous and Devonian formations, which are very extensive, furnish exceedingly rich agricultural land. The forests of this region include a good deal of hard wood, which is almost entirely lacking in many parts of the Laurentides.

The great plain of the St. Lawrence rests upon beds of primitive Silurian and Devonian rocks composed of sandstones, limestones, and schists. These beds are level and overlaid with clay, sometimes interstratified with sand and gravel. These superficial strata, which frequently attain a thickness of several hundred feet, are mostly of marine origin and date from the period when all this region was submerged by the ocean.

They are composed of strong and compact clays, which, in the newly cleared lands, are in many places covered with a thick layer of vegetable mould. The parts adjoining the region of the Eastern Townships, and especially that of the Laurentides, are covered with sandy deposits, chiefly in the neighborhood of Berthier and Three Rivers; but the central part, which is by far the largest, is composed of a tenacious blue clay, more or less calcareous, and of great thickness, constituting a rich soil, which produces crops of all kinds in abundance, but is particularly adapted to wheat raising. These good lands, whose fertility is proverbial, have, however, been exhausted by excessive cropping contrary to the very elementary principles of rational husbandry; they have been constantly sown and resown without regard to fallowing, rotation of crops, deep ploughing or manuring to restore their fertility; but, with the aid of an intelligent system of tillage and the help of manure and rest, they would quickly recover their natural qualities, as attested by the improvements which have been noticeable for some years past especially in the neighborhood of St. Hyacinthe and Montreal.

The immense region of Lake St. John is mostly characterized by an exactly similar soil and one fully as rich as that of the St. Lawrence valley, being composed of clay equally suitable for wheat raising.

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ARABLE AND WOOD LANDS.

It has been stated above that the area of land comprised within the actual boundaries of the Province of Quebec amounts to 120,764,651 square acres. Strike off from this figure the 10,678,931 acres included in the seigniories and the 11,744,599 acres held in free and common socage, and it will be found that the amount of available land, forming the public domain, is equal to an area of 98,341,121 acres. Of this domain, it is estimated that at least 20,000,000 acres consist of good, arable land. Allowing a lot of 100 acres to each family, these good lands represent an area sufficient to support a farming population of a million of souls on the basis of five persons to each family.

The forest domain, actually under license for the manufacture of timber,