

THE FERTILE BELT

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MANITOBA.

Its Position, Institutions, Commercial and Social Advantages.

People residing south of the international line that divides Canada from the United States frequently have only an imperfect knowledge of the country to the north of them. They are apt to think that from Minnesota and Dakota northward it is all the same, and are often unaware that while Manitoba and some parts of the Territories beyond are becoming the greatest wheat producing countries of the world, other portions are no less remarkable for the facilities they offer to stock-raisers.

The Province of Manitoba lies north of and along the western part of Minnesota and the eastern portion of Dakota. It is already famous both on this continent and in Europe for the quality of its wheat. Manitoba No. 1 Hard stands at the head of the wheat list, and realizes a higher price at Liverpool than any other. The farmers there, however, do not now give their attention solely to wheat. Mixed farming is very largely practiced, and the highest class beef is raised on the Manitoba prairies. A large proportion of the fat cattle shipped from Montreal to Europe comes from Manitoba and the Territories beyond. Many men who went into Manitoba without ten dollars belonging to them are now prosperous farmers owning their own freehold, and some who are considerable shippers of cattle began with hardly enough to buy a carload.

SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS.

It is intended in this article to show wherein lies the difference between the several sections of Western Canada, and thus enable an intending settler to form, before starting for the west, a rough idea as to the locality he will pull up in. But as there is much unknown concerning Canada and its ways, form of government, school system, railways, etc., by those living at a distance, it may be well to give shortly a few facts on these points.

Canada is governed by a parliament elected by all the people. This body assembles at Ottawa, the capital of the Dominion, once a year. The Canadian parliament corresponds to the congress of the United States which sits at Washington. The several provinces are governed in their provincial matters by a local legislature elected by the people and sitting at the capital of each province. These correspond to the state legislatures in the United States. The settled portions of the country are also divided into municipalities for the regulation of purely local affairs. There are no taxes, therefore, except such as the people may themselves choose to impose. The federal government out of the general revenue of the country pays each province a certain annual subsidy. In Manitoba this amounts to about \$2 per head of the population, and this is spent with interest as may be raised in the province in defraying the necessary expenses of government and in support of schools,

roads, bridges, agricultural societies, etc. The taxation to the farmer is about half that which he pays in the United States. Cattle, which are taxed at so much per head on the ranches of the United States, are free in Canada.

In Manitoba there is an exemption law; that is, the law protects from seizure where no mortgage exists, a certain acreage and buildings, a certain number of cattle, horses, pigs and fowls, some householder's effects and a year's provisions, so that if a farmer who has not mortgaged his property is overtaken by misfortune he can not be turned out of his house and home, but obtains time and retains the means of living while he recovers himself. When he requires to borrow, as he may sometimes do with advantage to himself, he will find English and eastern Canadian companies who will lend on farm property at from 6 to 8 per cent., and who are easy in their dealings with honest clients.

SCHOOLS.

The school system of Manitoba is designed to meet the requirements of a mixed population more or less scattered. The rural schools are about every three miles or so apart in the settled

ber is now 1,113, about the one-half males, and there appears to be no scarcity, as 1,017 new certificates were granted during the past year. These figures show, on the average, one teacher for every 210 people, and for every 33 children. The entire value of the school properties of the country is now \$750,351, or nearly \$3 per head of the entire population, a condition of things to be envied by many an older country. The average salary paid to teachers in rural districts is \$368 a year, and the highest in cities is \$1,800. In addition to teachers being all well certificated, the schools are inspected at intervals by competent teachers to see that the most approved methods are fully observed.

There is no state church in Canada. Every religion is alike in the eyes of the law, and there are churches of various denominations in all the towns and villages throughout the country. There are many friendly societies in Manitoba with the headquarters in the cities and branches in the smaller places, and the meetings of these with other friendly gatherings contribute to the social enjoyment of the people.

An important feature from the farmers' point of view are the government Experimental Farms, where all the different kinds of grain seeds, roots, vegetables, grasses, small fruits, trees and shrubs, that it is sought to grow in the province are cultivated on the varied soils which are found on the farm, and a faithful record of the results is preserved, for the information of the entire agricultural population of the country, and occasionally published in the newspapers, of which most of the small towns have one and the cities several. Experimental Farms are to be found in Manitoba, the North-west Territories, and British Columbia.

In addition to this the Government sends around to the towns and villages a travelling school of dairy instructors. In these schools lectures are given, accompanied by practical operations, by competent men, in all the arts of cattle raising, butter and cheese making, etc., that all may learn the best methods known to the country without loss of time or money to the settlers who wish to take up dairying.

THE SOIL.

The soil of Manitoba varies, of course, but generally speaking it is a deep black argillaceous loam on a subsoil of deep clay, and stands a great deal of cropping without manure. Snow disappears early in April, seeding begins about a week afterwards and harvesting about the middle of August.

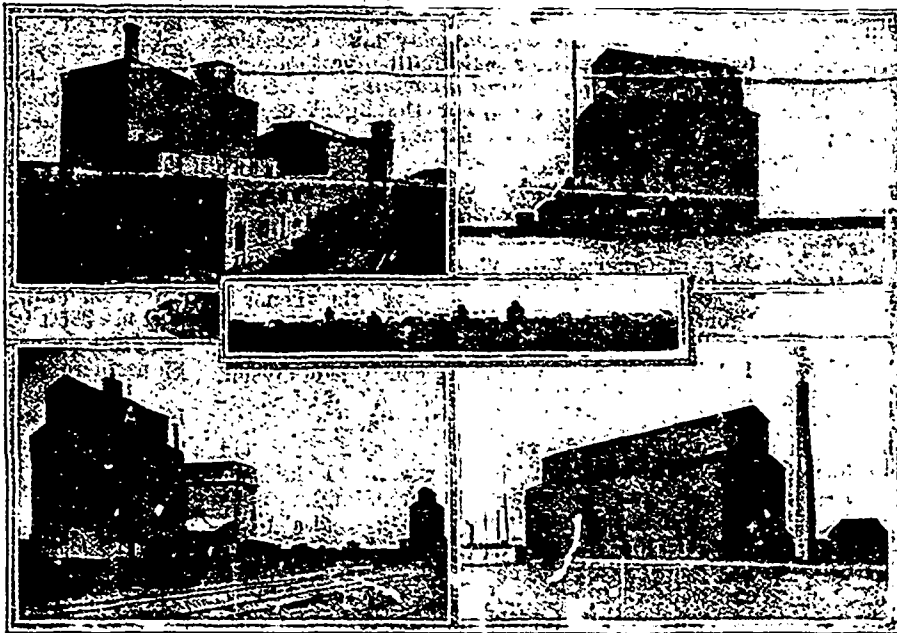
RAILWAYS.

The main line of the Canadian Pacific Railway runs through the Province of Manitoba, east and west, but it has branches running in all directions. The Manitoba and Northwestern is another line running through a portion of Manitoba, and the Northern Pacific railway running from St. Paul through Minnesota and Dakota has two branches in Manitoba.

FREIGHT RATES.

One result to the farmer of the excellent railway facilities in this province is that freight rates are lower than in the neighboring state of Dakota.

Winnipeg is the capital of Manitoba. It is a city of about 45,000 inhabitants, and possesses a



ELEVATORS AT FORT WILLIAM.

districts, and the system is free. There is no taxation of pupils for attendance. The Government makes an annual grant of a considerable sum to each school, and all the expenses, teacher's salary included, are paid by this grant, and a general taxation of the land within the district, whether occupied or unoccupied, or owned by parents or those having no children. This assures the poor all the advantages of primary education that are enjoyed by the rich. The teachers are all skilled educationists, duly certificated. In these schools all the ordinary branches for every-day life are taught. In many of the village schools, where two or more teachers are employed, a still higher education is given, and in the city and town schools collegiate instruction is maintained where students are fitted. The several colleges at Winnipeg and other cities in Canada. One-eighth part of the whole of the "Fertile Belt" from Pembina to the Saskatchewan, and beyond it, is set apart for the maintenance of schools.

In 1881 the school population was 5,064, and now it is 23,000. In 1881 there were 246 teachers in the province, and now there are 1,113. The number of pupils is now 117,000, and the number of teachers is 1,113.