

THE ATHABASCA DISTRICT.—The valleys of the Peace and Athabasca rivers, eastward of the Rocky Mountains from latitude 55 deg. to 58 deg., share the Pacific climate in a remarkable degree. The Rocky Mountains are greatly reduced in breadth and mean elevation, and through the numerous passes between their lofty peaks the winds of the Pacific reach the district in question. Hence it is, that Sir Alexander Mackenzie, under date of May 10th, mentions the exuberant verdure of the whole country—trees about to blossom, and buffalo attended by their young. During the late Parliamentary investigation, similar statements were elicited. Dr. Richard King, who accompanied an expedition in search of Sir John Ross, as "Surgeon and Naturalist," was asked what portion of the country visited by him was valuable for the purpose of settlement. In reply, he described "as a very fertile valley," a "square piece of country" bounded on the south by Cumberland House, and by the Athabasca Lake on the north. His own words are as follows: "The sources of the Athabasca and the sources of the Saskatchewan include an enormous area of country. It is, in fact, a vast piece of land surrounded by water. When I heard Dr. Livingston's description of that country, which he found in the interior of Africa within the Equator, it appeared to me to be precisely the kind of country which I am now describing. * * * It is a rich soil, interspersed with well wooded country, there being growth of every kind, and the whole vegetable kingdom alive." When asked concerning mineral productions, his reply was, "I do not know of any other mineral except limestone; limestone is apparent in all directions. * * The birch, the beach and the maple are in abundance, and there is every sort of fruit." When questioned farther, as to the growth of trees, Dr. King replied by a comparison "with the magnificent trees round Kensington Park in London." He described a farm near Cumberland House, under very successful cultivation—luxuriant wheat, potatoes, barley, pigs, cows and horses.

THE SASKATCHEWAN, ASSINEBOIN AND RED RIVER DISTRICT.—The area northwest of Minnesota, the Saskatchewan district, is estimated to comprise 368,000 square miles. Northwest from Otter Tail Lake, the geographical centre of Minnesota, extends a vast silurian formation, bounded on the west along the eastern base of the Rocky Mountains by coal measures. Such a predominance of limestone implies fertility of soil, as in the Northwestern States, and a speedy colonization of Saskatchewan would be assured, if the current objection to the severity of the climate was removed. On this point a few facts will be presented.