

stores, as these are, in general, inferior in quality, as I have too often proved; and, that instead, they go to, or send to, some of our reliable seedsmen in a city, where they can obtain seed with certainty, and the extra odd cents so spent are the very cheapest coppers anyone wishing to grow good vegetables ever spent. Old and weak seeds are too dear to sow at any price, and money so saved is at least from one thousand to ten thousand per cent. lost.

J. H. GARNER, M.D.

Lucknow, Jan. 1st, 1877.

Half-Breed Reserves in Manitoba.

SIR,—At last the half-breed reserves in Manitoba are being broken up. These reserves cover all the best land, near the City of Winnipeg, and other important points in the Province. The Lieutenant Governor is engaged drawing them for the individuals who are entitled to them in lots of 240 acres each. As soon as the drawing is completed patents from the Crown will issue to all drawers who are of age; as few of these have any use for the land they will offer it for sale, and will with the improvidence of that class take what they can get for it. Indeed, even now before it is known which lot they are entitled to, some of them are selling their right. Speaking generally all these lands may be said to be within thirty miles of the City of Winnipeg, and are therefore cheap at two dollars an acre—although doubtless much will be sold for one dollar and some for even less. There are no Government lands within thirty miles of the City of Winnipeg, so that the only chance of our Ontario farmers securing land near the future Metropolis of the North West is to buy half-breed lands. Many of those who have gone to Manitoba expecting to buy Government land at one dollar an acre, the Government price, within a reasonable distance of the market, have been amazed and dispirited to find that the half-breeds had secured and were holding all the lands of choice soil and location; and either did not buy at all or went distances of from forty to one hundred miles. Fortunately for the Province, and fortunately for those in Ontario who desire good farms at a low rate, the half-breeds are to monopolise no longer. From my knowledge of the different localities I am in a position to select good lands, and my connections are such that I can procure bargains for any one who wishes to buy. To prevent disappointment I add that as the prices I name are so much below the real value of the lands, they will undoubtedly soon rise to higher prices.

ARCHIBALD YOUNG,

37 Colborne Street, Toronto.

P. S. Since writing the above I have intelligence of sales near Oak Island at \$3 per acre, and in the Boyne Settlement at \$2½ per acre. Both of these places are about fifty miles from Winnipeg. From this, one can judge how fortunate the purchaser of lands close to Winnipeg will be at the prices mentioned in my letter.

SIR,—As I see so many different reports about this country, perhaps it is as well to try and give your farmers some idea of what it is like, as many come and are very much disappointed when they get here. I do not mean to say that it is a bad country, for I have lived in it for the last three years and like it very much. I have no interest in running it down or praising it up. I shall speak first of the soil, which is light, and in many places sandy. The only rich, black, loamy parts are the prairies or beaver meadows which are subject to overflow. These are mostly taken up, and are not capable of being brought under cultivation without being dyked, and steam pumping machinery erected. These prairies are subject to overflow from the melting of the snow on the Cascade and Rocky Mountains, and which lasts from the middle of June until the middle of August. The coarse hay which grows upon them is a very good makeshift to keep cattle alive during winter, together with a few turnips. So much for the prairies. I am speaking of what is called the lower country as well as Vancouver's Island. The upper country is only adapted for stock raising, as there is no means of getting produce to a market at present. The land suitable for cultivation is of very limited extent compared with the size of the country. The banks of the rivers, and all the lots adjoining a road are either taken up by actual settlers or are held by speculators who will require a good round sum to sell-out, so that a new settler will have to cut his own road

or wait until the Government makes him one, unless he is prepared to buy some one out. The land is better than it looks, for good crops of potatoes and oats are raised on pure sand, without a particle of manure for two or three years after it is cleared. The high land wherever it does not overflow is thickly covered with timber and underbrush, and the price for chopping an acre is from \$15 to \$20. The burning season is short; last year there was very little burning done at all. The general system of farming is different from Ontario, for we never harrow in wheat on a new burn, as the land would choke out the wheat. The way we do here is to put part in potatoes with the hoe, and harrow in the rest with oats and clover, or, if the roots and stumps are too thick to run the harrow, seed right down with timothy and clover. Grass grows well where it is sown, and only where it is sown. I have seen over two tons to the acre often, and hay is from \$15 to \$20 a ton. Potatoes are from one cent to three cents per pound, always three cents for good seed. The reason of these high prices is because labor is high and the bush is very hard to clear up. One gentleman said in your very valuable paper that 60 bushels of wheat could be grown to the acre; and so it can, and is, but only in very small patches, or else why is our flour mills standing idle? and almost all our flour is coming from the United States. The principal reason why we do not grow our own wheat is:—1st, Because it would cost too much to get the stumps out so that we could plow at the present price of labor; and secondly, hay and butter pay too well to induce us to break up our grass lands. Building timber is very plentiful, and rough lumber costs from \$12.50 to \$15 a thousand. As I do not wish to trespass too much on your space, I will conclude with a little advice to people who are thinking of coming here. Those who have good farms are very foolish to sell out and come here, if they have enough land where they are. The kind of people who will do well here are those who would do well anywhere if they had the land. To farmers with large families and small means this country offers great inducements, for living is cheap, the climate mild and healthy, work plentiful in summer and wages high. If you should wish for any further information I shall be at all times most happy to give it.

VERITAS.

Maple Ridge, Frazer River, British Columbia.

[We are much pleased to insert such valuable reports and facts from our subscribers. We hope more may send in accounts and reports.]

The Free Grant Lands of Muskoka.

SIR,—Enquiries from correspondents asking information about Government Lands having frequently appeared in the ADVOCATE, and as these enquiries have not to my knowledge been answered by any who are themselves located in this district, I will trespass upon your space while I give a few particulars of what I know of the Free Grant Lands of Muskoka. Were it not a fact that interested persons who, from political or other motives, have during the past few years unceasingly run down Muskoka through a portion of the press, I would not trouble you with my remarks, knowing that my ability for taking up the cudgel in its defence is but small. From the vague accounts that the defamers of the Free Grant Lands give, it is evident that nine-tenths of them write only on the strength of what they have heard, for, had they really ever seen these lands, they would never have put such statements into circulation. For over four years I have resided in the township of Stisted, one of the northern townships of the district, where my land is situated, and as during that period I have been proceeding with my improvements in accordance with the stipulations of the Free Grant and Homestead Act of 1868, I know something of the bush-farming in Muskoka.

SITUATION.

Muskoka is situated about 120 miles from the city of Toronto in a northerly direction, the line 45° north latitude passing through it. It is an electoral district of Ontario; is bounded on the south by the Severn River, and on the west by the Georgian Bay. Owing to continual additions to the territory its eastern and northern boundary cannot be definitely described. In 1871 its area was 5,307 square miles, and its population 6,919, of whom 2,541 were of English descent, 2,092 Irish, and 1,293 Scotch. Muskoka is watered by the Muskoka River, and its tributaries, and other streams and lakes. Its capital is Bracebridge, containing a population of 1,000 inhabitants.

CLIMATE.

The climate is mild and salubrious; the seasons are regular and well defined. Winter generally sets in during the month of November, and snow falls to remain from the middle to the end of the month. It continues to fall for two or three months, then begins to settle and is generally away again about the 15th of April. It sometimes obtains a depth of over three feet. The sleighing season is very enjoyable, the roads being good as a rule throughout the season, and the sky bright and clear, almost without interruption, the winter through. The air is cold, but high winds being uncommon, it is not so keenly felt. Sometimes the cold reaches 30° below zero, but does not remain at this for more than a few hours at a time. The coldest months are January and February. The atmosphere is clear and bracing, and fogs are almost unknown. Owing to the purity of the air and water throughout the district, sickness is very little known, and, except in case of accident, a doctor is seldom seen. Many persons who were sickly before coming to the district have become healthy and strong after a residence of a few months. This is attributed to the salubrity of the climate and the universal nature of the water. As soon as the snow is gone the land is ready to work, and sowing soon follows. Rain falls in abundance during the spring and autumn, but drought is unknown. This renders the district peculiarly adapted for stock raising. The heat here in the summer is not nearly so intense as in some parts of Ontario, and the prevalence of cool breezes renders the seasons exceedingly fine. The hottest months are July and August. The Indian summer generally occurs in October or the early part of November, and is a fine time of the year.

SOIL.

The soil is generally good, but varies considerably, and although large flats of clay are found in many places the soil is principally sandy loam with a clay sub-soil, and is easily worked. During the early days of settlement it was thought that but one-half of the land would be capable of cultivation, but it is gratifying to learn that since clearing and cultivation has been carried on for sometime, it is found the average amount fit for cultivation will reach fully two-thirds. The surface of the country is undulating.

TIMBER.

The land is timbered with a variety of native trees, composed chiefly of hardwood, which consists of maple, birch, beech, basswood, elm, oak, ash, iron wood and cherry. In some sections belts of white pine of fair quality are found, particularly along the course of the streams. Hemlock, spruce, tamarac and white cedar also abound in some localities, red pine being rare.

WILD ANIMALS.

Persons who have never lived in the bush, are apt to picture to themselves, woods swarming with savage creatures of every description, whose presence renders it unsafe to venture abroad even in daylight. Nothing could be more ridiculous than such a supposition. In Muskoka, wild beasts are seldom seen or even heard of. Bears are sometimes seen, wolves and lynx have been heard, but they invariably flee on the approach of man. With the exception of deer, the only wild animals I have seen in this district are porcupine, hares, wood-chuck, skunks, beaver, otter, and the smaller fur-bearing animals. Deer are quite common, but if you wish to procure them you must visit their favorite haunts, as contrary to the ideas of some people, who, on first coming into the bush, imagine that the deer would come up to the door of their shanty to be shot at. Partridge, ducks and other birds are to be met with in considerable quantities at certain seasons. The rivers and lakes also abound in fish of various kinds.

INDIANS.

Very few Indians are to be met with in the district, its rapid settlement having tended to drive them to seek hunting-grounds more remote from civilization, and they are seldom seen except when passing through on their way to and from their points of rendezvous. The Indians here are of the Chippewa tribe, and are a very peaceable, harmless people. They make baskets and other useful articles for sale. They are fond of music and gaudy attire. The majority of them are Protestants.

CROPS.

Every kind of grain which has been grown in other portions of Ontario, has been grown here with