

Department of the Interior.

vided for in the Dominion Lands Act, which was referred to in my report of last year, has become possible through the provisions of an act passed at the last session of Parliament authorizing the Governor in Council to grant the Canadian Pacific Railway Company portions of their land subsidy in solid blocks, with a general reservation for roads instead of road allowances. There is little doubt that any attempt made by this company to reclaim these lands by irrigation will be greatly aided by having them conveyed *en bloc* instead of in alternate sections. In fact, such an arrangement is a necessity to any successful project of reclamation.

After the passage of the North-west Irrigation Act it at once became apparent that to exercise the control and apportionment of the water supply contemplated, and to provide the data requisite to enable the department to deal intelligently with the subject, a somewhat extensive topographical survey of the arid region would be necessary. After some consideration of the best system upon which to carry on these surveys, a scheme was decided upon by which our sectional land surveys are made the foundation upon which is based the additional information necessary to show whether water can be applied to the lands the irrigation of which the railway company had in contemplation. It is satisfactory to be able to say that the scheme not only promised well theoretically, but that it worked well practically, and will permit of a topographical map of the arid region being prepared at a relatively small cost. Still more satisfactory in a practical way is the conclusion of the railway company, founded largely upon the results of our first season's surveys, that they can count upon the successful application of the waters of the Bow River, its tributaries, and other natural sources of supply available for that purpose, to a very much larger area in the railway belt west of Moose Jaw than was before thought possible, and that they are consequently ready to accept three millions of acres in the railway belt which otherwise they would have proposed for rejection as not fairly fit for settlement, provided they can have them granted in such form as will permit of them being profitably irrigated.

The field operations were put in charge of Mr. Dennis, and were carried on by two survey divisions, both working in South Alberta. About 3,000 square miles were surveyed, and the results are now being prepared in the form of a comprehensive report, with necessary maps and illustrations, which it is expected will be ready for issue at an early date. The information obtained, regarding both the topography and water supply of the district, will prove of great value to the department in administering the provisions of the Act. To the residents of the arid region, and those interested in the subject of irrigation generally, the data furnished by this report cannot but prove of great value. It is intended to incorporate in the report a small manual of information and statistics regarding the experience of other countries in irrigation, as a guide to those of our people to whom the subject is new and by whom it is little understood.

PROGRESS OF THE IRRIGATION MOVEMENT.

The irrigation movement is making rapid strides in those portions of the Territories situated within the dry district. It is only a year or two since the actual construction of ditches for the artificial application of water to agricultural lands may be said to have commenced, and yet at the close of this season there were some sixty odd private ditches in operation in Southern Alberta and Western Assiniboia,