

prairie land, as yet uncultivated, belonging nominally to 'The Crown.' In less than five years this territory could supply the whole British market with grain of a quality unsurpassed in the world. All reports by competent judges concur in the opinion that the great fertile belt of British North America—stretching westward a thousand miles from Red River—will in time become the wheat-field of the world. In a few years it will have railway communication with the seaboard, as well as unequalled water highways. It, therefore, only requires labour and capital for its development, and for placing the entire British people, who are its inheritors, in complete independence of all foreign food supply.

Individual colonization must naturally be slow, and as such settlers cannot be expected to have Imperial objects in view—no matter how great may be the tide which flows towards this 'illimitable wilderness'—it cannot result in such timely development as to overtake the demands of the British markets, and so to outstrip foreign competitors.

Instead of such fitful and tardy settlement, I propose that the Imperial Government acquire extensive tracts of land in Manitoba and the North-West territories, and that such lands be cultivated exclusively for the growth of corn and cattle directly by the Crown. By arrangement with the Canadian Parliament, the lands—some of which are held as railway reserves—could readily be acquired at a fair valuation. British labourers could be sent under labour contracts to cultivate them, and the entire surplus product could be profitably sold in Britain on Government account.

These lands are now held at prices varying from one dollar (4s.) per acre to five dollars (20s.) per acre, the latter being for the belts nearest to the Canada Pacific Railway, now under contract from Winnipeg westward; the reserved belts might be left to unassisted settlement, for there are thou-

sands of square miles within reasonable reach of outlets that are fertile beyond conception, and that could be acquired for the maximum price of one dollar per acre.

The descriptions which have been published concerning the resources of this northern territory have naturally been received in Britain with considerable incredulity. Preconceptions of a country only known as the former domain of a vast fur-trading company, could not naturally be favourable, and actual observation, on any extensive scale, has been so recent that the British public may well be excused if they have thought of it not as a fertile, but as a frozen wilderness. I may, therefore, quote some remarks here concerning it, from sources exceptionally well informed, or not likely to be unduly prejudiced in its favour. The *Pioneer Press*, a paper published at St. Paul, Minnesota, makes the following statement:—

'Within the isothermal lines that inclose the wheat zone west and north-west of Minnesota, which is being, or is to be, opened to cultivation, lies a vast area of fertile lands, from which might easily be cut out a dozen States of the size of New York.'

The lands referred to are all within the British American North-West. Mr. Wheelock, the official statistician for the State of Minnesota, remarks, concerning the wheat area of the United States, that—

'The wheat-producing district of the United States is confined to about ten degrees of latitude and six degrees of longitude, terminating on the west at the 98th parallel. But the zone of its profitable culture occupies a comparatively narrow belt along the cool borders of the district defined for inland positions by the mean temperature of fifty-five degrees on the north, and seventy-one degrees on the south, for the two months of July and August. This definition excludes all the country south of latitude forty degrees, except Western Virginia, and north of that it excludes the southern districts of Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and Iowa, while it includes the northern parts of these States, Canada, New York, Western Virginia, Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, and the Red River and Saskatchewan Valleys. In general terms, it may be stated that the belt of maximum wheat production lies immed-