

twinkling to all the luxurious surroundings of a palace car and whisked over the remaining twenty miles of our journey at a rate of speed rarely attained by other than railroad officials.

This trip from Winnipeg to Qu'Appelle consumes ten days' time, which is a good deal in a short human life, but after all, it shows the traveler only a minute fraction of this vast prairie empire. The journey of 300 miles is only one-fourth of the whole distance from the Red River to the Rocky Mountains, and the narrow strip of country traversed is a meagre sample from which to judge of the immense tract spreading from the American boundary to the Athabaska River. I have tried to supplement my own observations through inquiries of the conventional intelligent native; but it is not easy to get accurate information about this country beyond the limits of one's personal observation. The people who have traversed it are mainly traders, most of whom are ignorant half-breeds, and all of whom go through it with eyes closed to its agricultural capabilities. I have received absolutely contradictory reports of the country only a hundred miles from the line of my journey, and from the home of the persons making the statement. What I write is the mean of perhaps a dozen compared and analyzed reports. I have described the country on both sides of the Assiniboine as far west as Fort Ellice. The strip of fine country along the south bank from Ellice to Qu'Appelle reaches from twenty to fifty miles south, to the line of elevation named at different conspicuous points the Moose Mountain, the Weedy and Wolf Hills. Beyond these the great plain of the Souris, whose northern edge they form, stretches away southward to the American boundary. This plain is described as arid and treeless, but the experience of American settlers with similar plains in Dakota forbid the hasty conclusion that it is uninhabitable. Westward the same topographical condition prevails. The fertile strip south of the Qu'Appelle reaches nearly to the South Saskatchewan. Farther west the high plain to the south gradually invades it and narrows its width. The head waters of the Qu'Appelle are very near the great bend or elbow of the South Saskatchewan. Gen. Rosser, the Canadian Pacific chief engineer, has visited this point, and found the country sandy and barren. The bulk of the testimony is that the whole of the great plain on either side of the Sas-