

The nutritive value of the prairie herbage is sufficiently proved by the fact of its having sustained the vast herds of buffalo which for ages have made the prairie their home, but which are now disappearing before the advance of civilization. Nevertheless, the introduction of cultivated grasses would in all probability be a step in the right direction, and the attempt would most likely be justified by the success which would follow it. Although much of the land appears capable of growing wheat for an indefinite period, yet those settlers whose means would allow of it would, I think, do well to sow a portion of their land with good English grass seeds after the third or fourth year. Such grasses as cocksfoot, foxtail, meadow fescue and timothy, together with white and purple clover and a little black medick suggest themselves as desirable, but every effort should be made to secure clean seed. It is an interesting fact that there are no true clovers native to the prairie, although many species of the milk-vetch, *Astragalus*, are met with.

The more mixed farming extends on the prairies the more interesting will the settlers find it, and the less dependent will they be upon the prices they will from year to year secure for their wheat. The establishment of flour mills in the North-West will lessen the cost of flour and oatmeal, while the facilities afforded by the railway must continue to enable them to compete on favourable terms with the other wheat-exporting countries of the world. Artificial feeding stuffs, like artificial fertilizers, belong to a future period.

There is no scarcity of timber or fuel, for vast forests are at different spots touched by the railway.

#### EXTRACTS FROM A REPORT BY J. P. SHELDON, PROFESSOR OF AGRICULTURE, AT THE WILTS AND HANTS AGRICULTURE COLLEGE, DOWNTON, TALISBURG, ENGLAND, IN 1884.

The grain-growing capacity of the soil is the leading criterion of its value, probably, in Manitoba and the North-West generally, and most likely will continue so for some time to come, because that region will become the chief granary of the American continent and remain so; but it is none the less true that its ability to produce excellent roots and green crops is a factor which will be utilized extensively in years to come. A purely grain-raising region is an agricultural anomaly which cannot last, and it is a fact of great potential value to this vast territory that its soil will produce all the crops which contribute to the plenary welfare of both men and animals. Cattle, horses, pigs and poultry are inseparable from the comfort of man in all agricultural communities, and the same may also be predicated of sheep; but all of these demand arrangements and provisions more or less intricate, in the form of shelter and food, provisions which can in a great measure be dispensed with while the land is devoted to grain-raising only. The process of populating the North-West with domesticated animals will be contemporary with the provision of shelter, water, and suitable food; and though the process may be a slow one, it will be perfected in time. In the foothills of the Rocky Mountains it will be much more rapid, for there exists in that region a rich natural herbage, a good supply of water for the most part, and abundance of "land shelter" among the hills and dales.

We passed along through the Province of Assiniboia, containing 95,000 square miles, and Alberta, containing 100,000 square miles, at least fifty per cent. of which is said to be good land available for agriculture. We saw several of the experimental farms which have been established by the C.P.R. Co., and found various cereals, roots and garden vegetables growing successfully on the new prairie soil. The soil varies from a dark-coloured clay to strong loams, and light sands, and affords scope for all kinds of agricultural fancy. But the handsomest country we saw was from Calgary up the slopes of the Rockies. This is the great ranching country, and we saw many cattle roaming about the pastures which adorn this undulating district—a district which stretches a long distance to the north and south of the railway. It must be admitted that the advantages which this country affords for cattle-raising are very extensive and important; for, as the isothermal line runs in a north-westerly direction along the prairies, the climate at the Rockies is habitable and even genial in a degree of latitude which is desolate on the Atlantic side of Canada. At a point five thousand feet above the sea level, in the Rocky Mountains, we found the air so mild that no overcoats were wanted, even at five o'clock in the morning, although we had come up the mountains in a snow-storm the previous evening. Above this point, which is the highest the railway attains in the Kicking Horse Pass, the