

describe the soil of his neighbourhood as being most fertile in its character, whilst another man may with equal truth describe some land he has discovered as being of little agricultural value. No one knowing the country can honestly deny these facts, but it does not matter to us as men of business whether or not it is possible to find poor soils in Manitoba. The practical question we have to deal with is this:—Can we find plenty of very good land throughout the Province? I have not the slightest hesitation in saying that land of very high fertility may be most easily obtained there by any man who knows his business, and who can tell the difference between good and inferior soils. I am bound even to go beyond this, and state that although we have hitherto considered the Black Earth of Central Russia (Tchernoi Zem) the richest soil in the world, that land has now to yield its distinguished position to the rich, deep, black soils of Manitoba and the North-West Territory. Here it is that "The Champion Soils of the World" are to be found, and we may rejoice that they are located within the British Empire. Take as an illustration of their powers of fertility the simple fact that on the Kildonan Farm near Winnipeg, belonging to Mr. Robert McBeth, on which land I saw their 50th crop of wheat growing in 1884—crops which had followed each other year after year, and had maintained their full yield from first to last—without the soil losing any portion of its productive power. Year by year had the winter frost renovated that soil with fresh stores of fertility, from its rich reserves, and thus the land became better prepared than ever for its work. It may appear to a stranger to this country a bold statement to make, but with full knowledge of the responsibility which attaches to it, I do not hesitate to say that there are millions of acres in the Canadian North-West, not only fully equal to the Kildonan soil in fertility, but that these lands are still remaining as uncared-for wastes only requiring the plough to prepare them for the reception of the seed. If we descend in the scale of fertility and take those soils which are fully equal to the richest soils in Great Britain and Ireland, even when these possessed their most luxuriant powers, soils of this character and quality exist in still larger quantities. Manitoba possesses her full share of such lands, but these rich soils overspread her boundaries, and are well distributed throughout her sister provinces, and thence they extend onwards and onwards through much of the outer territories. The opportunities therefore which exist for capital and labour being profitably employed in the production of food, sufficient for millions of British subjects, and for supplying them with happy homes surrounded by every comfort, these opportunities, I say, are simply boundless.

"There a man is a man if he's willing to toil,
And the humblest may gather the fruit of the soil.
There children are blessings, and he who hath most
Has aid for his fortune, and riches to boast.
There the young may exult, and the aged may rest,
Away, far away, in The Land of the West."

AGRICULTURAL CAPABILITIES.

These results will take us beyond the enquiry as to the quality of the soil, and will bring us into contact with the surrounding circumstances which enable us to make use of a good soil in a more or less successful manner. Here we have to deal with two very clearly defined seasons—the summer or the period of growth, and the winter, or the period of rest. At the present stage our enquiry will be limited to the former of these, for this demands our consideration by reason of its special influence upon our crops and live stock. Every farmer knows that if he is to obtain an abundant crop he must not only secure a fertile soil, but be favoured by a good season and a suitable climate. Happily for the Canadian North-West good seasons are the rule, and bad seasons are extremely exceptional. The conditions of climate are definite and settled, for the frost and snow having left the surface, the land is soon ready for tillage, the seed is sown, and the rapidity and luxuriance of growth is simply incredible to those who are accustomed only to the growth of crops under the British climate. This variation will be easily understood if we remember the clear, bright sunshine, and the steady stimulating warmth which distinguish the climate of the Canadian North-West. The rapidity of growth we observe may be traced to the fact that there is an abundance of plant food in the soil, and that the stimulating influence of warmth and sunshine impart to the plant a great energy of growth, whereby that food is rapidly made use of. In these cases such rapidity of growth is free from the objections which too often accompany it in Great Britain, for the simple reason that the plant-food in the soil in Manitoba and in her