

settlers. I visited seven out of the ten experimental farms, namely, those at Gleichen, 784 miles from Winnipeg; Tilley, 713 miles; Stair, 668 miles; Dunmore, 650 miles; Forres, 615 miles; Maple Creek, 596 miles; and Gull Lake, 546 miles from Winnipeg. The three not visited, although they were within sight, are those at Swift Current, Rush Lake, and Secotan, the latter being 442 miles west of Winnipeg. The whole of these farms cover a district of about 350 miles from east to west. The farms should evidently be taken as a test of the capabilities of the country for farming operations, and the suitability of the climate. I was careful to observe the quality of the crops, as well as the respective kinds. The wheat was uniformly a fair crop, not so heavy as some seen in the district around Calgary or in Manitoba, but would probably average from 17 to 20 bushels to the acre. One remarkable feature of the whole country is the number of stalks of grain from one kernel. In one instance we counted no fewer than forty-six heads from one root. The oats and pease yielded a fair crop, while roots, such as potatoes and turnips, showed quite as good a result as on any of the farms in better known districts of Manitoba. On several of the farms I observed tomatoes (in one case nearly ripe), melons, cucumbers and citrons. The district embraced by these experimental farms covers the larger part of the district generally believed to be more or less arid in its character, and subject to alkali deposits. Alkali, however, is found in the Province of Manitoba as well as in the North-west and western districts. In the vicinity of Brandon, for instance, I observed considerable portions of the fields showing traces of alkali deposits. The uniform testimony of those who have cultivated the lands where alkali prevails is to the effect that it is worked out of the land after a few croppings. Some authorities, notably Prof. Macoun, maintain that it does not at all injure the land. On the whole, my impression is that a very much smaller area than was generally believed will prove to be unproductive as far as the soil is concerned. "Water, climate and fuel largely enter into the question of its adaptability for settlement. As to the climate I am convinced that sowing early and properly taking care of the land will almost invariably insure a good early crop, but if the plowing of the land is insufficiently performed and the grain sown late in the season, there will be more or less danger of damage in the autumn. The grain on some of the experimental farms was sown on the 4th and 6th of June, days manifestly too late to be reasonably certain of the crops ripening early. Generally speaking, there is no reason whatever why early sowing should not be the rule. The question of rain-fall is a disputed one. I found many people who said that the rain fall this year was but very slightly in excess of the average, while some said there had been more rain than usual, although during my visit I saw no signs of recent rains. My impression is that in some few districts there will be some difficulty at first in securing the best quality of water for household use, but the same difficulty exists in some counties in Ontario where clay prevails. In some cases this will have to be overcome by sinking wells, or by forming tanks for the reception of water, or both. Very few wells have been sunk so far, but in most of them water has been obtained. The railway company has, however, failed in several cases to get a sufficient supply of pure water for the engines at their stations. The district supplied by the Bow and Belly Rivers and their tributaries, including the South Saskatchewan, as far at least as Medicine Hat, have an abundance of the best water, and the districts where groups of wood prevail, as round Qu'Appelle station and Moosomin, are, as a rule, abundantly supplied with good water. On the "Bell" farm an abundant supply has been obtained by simply erecting dams across a small creek, and similar advantage can be taken of many creeks in the country at comparatively little expense. As to fuel, discoveries of coal deposits at various places would seem to secure an abundant supply at moderate prices. The Saskatchewan mine, about eight miles west of Medicine Hat, can supply coal at Winnipeg for \$7.50 per ton, and at corresponding rates at nearer points. The quality is not the best for locomotives, but it can be used mixed. The Galt Mines, 100 miles up the river, produce coal equal to Ohio. At present it is accessible only by the river."

After the sittings of the British Association at Montreal, in the beginning of September, a number of its members visited the North-West, going over the Pacific