

The Prairies

Save for the common blessing of a rich and productive soil, the Canadian Prairies bear little resemblance to the St. Lawrence Lowlands. After the busy industrial cities and towns in Ontario and Quebec the almost empty plains, stretching endlessly to the horizon, are a striking contrast.

The cities are smaller here. Winnipeg, Canada's fourth largest city, exceeds 350,000 in population, but only two others, Edmonton and Calgary, have more than 100,000 residents; Regina, the capital of Saskatchewan, has 90,000. Most of the people live in smaller communities strung out along the lines of the railroads like beads on a string. The smallest of these settlements may consist of only a house or two flanked by a cluster of barns and sheds protected by a clump of trees; the larger ones are often dominated by the familiar row of grain elevators whose functional architecture is distinctively North American.

The plains slope gently toward the Rockies so that Calgary, in the foothills, is 2,700 feet higher than Winnipeg, 800 miles to the east. On the rolling and generally treeless country between these two points is grown the world's finest hard wheat. The average crop is 450 million bushels, but in a good year as much as 700 millions have been harvested.

Here are the "wide-open spaces". Saskatchewan wheat farms and Alberta ranches often encompass several square miles. The people are used to travelling great distances and

Harvest time on the Prairies
as the earth yields up its
golden store of wheat

