



DITCHING ON THE PRAIRIE

Mountains on the west, and the international boundary on the south, so that the watershed from two directions would supply water in any quantity. The matter was then laid before the Government, and an arrangement was effected by which the Company secured three million acres of its land in block instead of in alternate sections, as had previously been the mode of allotment. This concession was made in consideration of the Company's proposal to supply irrigation, and fit for settlement by small farmers, land that had been regarded as being in the arid area.

At present the western limit of the wheat land is Moose Jaw, in the territorial district of Assiniboia. West of this lie the great grass plains, once the feeding ground of the buffalo, but now the range of innumerable cattle companies, where vast bunches of cattle feed out all winter. No grain is raised in any quantity west of Moose Jaw, until Northern Alberta is reached, when a country of mixed farming is again met with.

The Canadian Pacific Railway proposes

to alter these conditions between Medicine Hat and Calgary, at least, in turning a large acreage of grass land into grain-producing farms, and at the same time improve the grass land so that it will afford better provender than at present. The block of land upon which it is proposed to work this great change, an experiment that will be watched with great interest, extends east from Calgary one hundred and thirty miles, the eastern end being about fifty miles west of Medicine Hat, and lies on either side of the main line of the railway, which runs through the centre of it. At the present time it is sparsely settled. The ranchers, who have practically been in possession since the country was opened to locaters, and who have no fences to their fields of enterprise, look in hostile distrust on two classes of men, regarding them as rank intruders, and these are sheep herders and small farmers. The sheep man is particularly obnoxious to the cattle man as a destroyer of the grazing ground, and the small farmer, with his ploughed land and assortment of domestic animals, is little less