

Resources of Manitoba.

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Much has been said and written regarding the agricultural resources of Manitoba; and its great wheat yields have been well advertised. So prominently has the agricultural feature been brought out, that the general impression seems to be that no other industry than that of farming will ever be developed. It may be accepted that local prices for general farm produce are always higher than in the case where the produce is to be shipped for export; or, to illustrate the point more clearly, a farmer when selling his butter, cheese, eggs, etc., in a town, expects to receive, and generally does receive, for a good article for local consumption, a higher price than he looks for from a dealer who purchases to ship to a distance. Now, if the population of Manitoba is to be entirely agricultural, with the professional class, and the mercantile people who handle farm produce and supply such merchandise as farmers require for their use, the local consumption of food articles produced on the farm will always be more or less limited. It will be seen then that if Manitoba has natural resources, whose development will necessarily lead to the establishment of manufactories and a large addition to the population, causing a greater demand for farm produce in the local market, that province offers greater inducements to intending settlers than is generally known. Some of the mineral resources of Manitoba may be mentioned, to prove that there is every likelihood in the near future of the employment of large numbers of men, who, while being consumers of food, are not producers of it.

One of the most valuable of all the minerals is the wonderful deposit of iron on Big Island in Lake Winnipeg. There are two mines, and each has a distinctive ore. The southern and largest deposit being hematite, while the northern is a choice bog-ore. The ore body proper is about one hundred and fifty feet long in its outcrop along the shore, and extends to an unknown depth below the surface of the water. There are millions of tons of this brown hematite ore, a common sample of which when assayed gave a result of 62 per cent. of metallic iron. The mines are on the shore of the lake, where there is a sufficient depth of water for docks to handle the ores, and the supply of firewood around the lake is, practically speaking, inexhaustible. Deep water navigation is open from the mines to C. P. R. main line at Selkirk, and a movement is now on foot to improve the navigation on the Red River, so as to bring lake steamers at all stages of water right into the city of Winnipeg. The St. Andrew's Rapids, mainly a boulder deposit in the bed of the river, once improved to overcome the difficulties presented to lake vessels at a low stage of water, and Winnipeg will be as open to all parts of Lake Winnipeg as Toronto is to Lake Ontario. The iron ores of Big Island have been in quantities severely tested at Chicago, and gave returns that prove them to be of wonderful purity and excellence. When it is considered that the Galt and other western coal mines are in the banks of the Saskatchewan, which, when joined, pour their united waters into Lake Winnipeg, it is not merely a figure of speech to say that nature has placed the coal within reach of the iron. Can it be doubted that the farmers of Manitoba will be called on to provide food for an army of men engaged in working the iron deposits of Manitoba,

and manufacturing the product into the various forms in which it is used?

On the northern slope of the Riding Mountains, and on the Vermillion River, near the north-west corner of the province, about 150 miles from the City of Winnipeg, borings for petroleum have been made, and the prospects are excellent. Good samples of crude petroleum have been obtained. The boring showed strata of clay, shale, soapstone and sandstone; but better machinery must be taken into the district to make a closer and more extended trial before the actual value of the deposits can be ascertained. The Lake Dauphin district is as yet but thinly settled, and free homesteads can be secured in every direction, of a character described by Mr. J. B. Tyrrell, of the Canadian Geological Survey, who has reported that the land and climate he found there is, in his opinion, equal, if not superior, to any he has met with during his ten years of exploration in the Northwest.

An abundance of salt is found in various localities in the province; indeed, in the older days of the Red River settlement, nearly all the salt used in Manitoba was manufactured at lakes Manitoba and Winnipegosis. As late as in 1875, trains of Red River carts were to be seen entering the village of Winnipeg, bearing loads of excellent salt, which could be carted from Lake Manitoba, and delivered at a lower price than the imported article; but cheap freights, consequent on the construction of railways from the south and east, soon cut down the value of salt, and it could no longer be manufactured at Lake Manitoba, and drawn in carts to Winnipeg at a paying price. As soon as there is rail communication into the Dauphin country, salt manufacture in that district will pay well, as all the salt now consumed in the Northwest is imported from Ontario or Great Britain. There is a good field for the prosecution of the industry.

There are vast deposits of high grade gypsum in Manitoba, which can supply all the land plaster and plaster of Paris called for in the whole Canadian and American Northwest.

The quality of the limestone and brick used in the construction of many of the finest buildings in Winnipeg and provincial towns is manifestly of the best. The sandstones of Lake Winnipeg are of good quality and color; and when the demand arises, the immense stores of them are ready to be worked. Fire-clays of superior fineness have been discovered, and only await demand and capital to be utilized.

The coal deposits in the Souris district, and in the Northwest Territories, is reported by the geological survey explorers to cover thousands of square miles, and to be practically unlimited.

The product of the Galt mines is now transported by rail to Winnipeg, and sold by the ton, delivered at \$8.00. Competition in railroad rates will steadily reduce the cost to the consumer, and make it more available. It is only becoming realized that the people of the Northwest can be entirely independent of the eastern coal supply, and that the question of fuel, that largely exercised the fears of the pessimists in the early days of the settlement of the province, is now solved. The use to which these coal deposits may be put in the future is a question that cannot very well be gone into here; but, certainly, it may safely be predicted that as the demand for general manufactured articles whose cost largely depends on the cheapness or dearness of coal becomes greater and of a volume to warrant a large, local

market, manufactories will spring up to turn out goods that are now imported. It is frequently asked by strangers visiting Manitoba, why we do not attempt to manufacture iron goods, if the iron deposits are as good as claimed. The answer given is, that, owing to the limited population, there is at present not a market considerable enough to warrant the establishment of smelting works and manufacturing establishments to supply any particular line of goods. It is apparent, however, that as we have the raw material, it is only a question of time when the foundry and factory population, drawing produce from the farmers, will be a very important item in the census taking.

The fisheries of Manitoba and the Territories are a very valuable asset in the country's wealth. Last year over two millions of pounds of fish, for the most part fresh, were exported from Manitoba to the United States; shipments being sent as far as Buffalo to the east, and Kansas City to the south. The catching, salting, and smoking of fish at Lake Winnipeg, gives employment to hundreds of people who purchase from the farmer the agricultural products of his farm. The lake fishing areas, within reach of market, are estimated at over thirty thousand square miles. Residents of the Lake of the Woods region, though within the Province of Ontario, are for the greater part dependent on the Manitoba farmer for the farm produce consumed by them. With vast resources of mineral wealth, partly uncovered, including rich deposits of gold, silver, iron, copper, mica, lead, asbestos, slate, etc., it needs no especially prophetic eye to foresee that a large mining population there will demand food from the fertile prairie lands of Manitoba.

Avoiding any further lengthy description of the natural resources other than grain, of Manitoba and the Territories, it may afford information to point to a few of them. Marble, both white and grey, is in quantities at Lake Manitoba; ochres are at Lake Winnipeg; terra cotta clay west of the Province; asphaltum in the Territories; limestone for lime on the Red River and elsewhere; building sands at many points, and sulphur on the Athabasca. There are thousands of square miles of poplar and other woods for making wood pulp, straw for paper, reeds and grasses for mats, flax and seed for twines and oils, and proper wood for charcoal. Vast peat deposits exist east of the prairie limits. Barrels of excellent quality are being turned out at the factory at Rat Portage, and there is plenty of timber in different localities which will provide material for lumber, shingles, boxing, implements, fencing, etc. Small fruits, as raspberries, strawberries, currants, etc., with every description of garden vegetables grown in northern countries, will provide material for jam and pickle establishments. The wonderful growth of beets should make beet-root-sugar manufacturing possible. Cranberries grow luxuriously in the swamps about the Rainy River, and with cultivation will give regular and improved crops. With acknowledged advantages for stock raising, the country will be a centre for preserving, curing, and canning of meats. Having an abundance of fine wool, manufacturing on the spot will follow. The fur districts to the far north will always call for provisions. Glue, soap and preserved milk factories will find an abundance of raw materials to work on.

The list might be continued, but as the object sought after is to draw attention to the fact that Manitoba has resources other than mere grain raising, it is unnecessary to give more details. To the most ordinary observer it must be apparent that with increase of population there will be an extension in our lines of manufacturing, and the Northwest farmer will have a good home market as well as an outlet by exportation for a hard wheat and other good grains that are in demand for their especial qualities.