

prairie, two varieties are noticed, the white and black, and timber for building purposes and fencing can be secured from both, all along the rivers and on the ridges and in coulees. For other and more durable timber the settler has only to go eight miles from Duck Lake station, north, when he comes to the great timber belt, where there is an unlimited quantity of spruce, fir, birch and tamarac. Poplar being the easiest to get at is generally used for fuel in the winter. Although burning away quickly it makes a good fire, and when the dry is mixed with the green wood it lasts well, keeping up fire in a good box stove all night. The other varieties are used chiefly for timber, a great quantity also being manufactured into lumber and shingles at the mills in Prince Albert and Muskeg Lake. As to fuel, although the supply of wood is unlimited, yet the people look forward to the opening up of the coal mines, now existing on the banks of the north Saskatchewan, and which will be working in the near future, when coal will be supplied at a small cost.

Abundance of water, which is both wholesome and pure, can be secured any where by digging wells from 10 to 25 feet deep. The much talked of alkali is not to be found in well water to any extent in any part of district, and even where it is found it is not injurious to health, rather the contrary. It is found in some of the surface ponds or sloughs in all parts of Manitoba and the Northwest, and has been much talked of by people who are ignorant of what it is. The generally found alkaline salt is sulphate of magnesia, which is nothing more or less, when sold in the chemist's shop, than common or Epsom salts, which in almost every country people are accustomed to take in large doses. Now the small amount of this salt found in any well water would never have any effect on the system; and the minute quantity found in wells in different parts of the country is not worth mentioning, being not nearly so detrimental to man or beasts as the water drunk from the old fashioned wells at home. Unless there was a great quantity of this salt in water, it would never be recognized except by a chemical analysis, and by digging wells to proper depth, no trace of it will be had. In different parts of the district running streams, creeks, etc., furnish an unlimited supply for the farm, even without a well, as the much talked of frost of Canada does not freeze it to the bottom in midwinter, in fact in several parts of the district running streams are seen flowing all winter with no ice covering them.

Native Fruits.

As in other parts of the Saskatchewan country, the Duck Lake district has some 15 varieties of native fruits, 10 samples of which have been sent to the World's Columbian Exposition at Chicago this year with the other exhibits from this district. There are the wild strawberry which occurs everywhere on the prairies, and raspberries to be found in the bluffs in all parts. Cherries, three varieties, blue berries or huckle berries, Saskatoons, a fruit resembling the blueberry, cranberries, two varieties high bush and low bush, found in immense quantities, gooseberry, resembling much the cultivated variety and producing a splendid crop which is increased by cultivation. Black and red currants are plentiful along the rivers and on the banks of lakes, quite equalling the cultivated ones in size and flavor. The buffalo berry grows on a small tree and resembles the red currant in appearance and taste. And another much resembling the raspberry, viz. the dewberry. Owing to the great amount of these fruits to be had for the trouble of gathering them fruit culture has not been carried on much in the district, although the cultivated species of the above are grown without the least trouble. And no doubt in the near future apples and plums will be grown here as in Ontario.

The Climate.

This is one of the most interesting subjects to the intending settler, the much exaggerated stories and illustrations of the Canadian winters often frightening good settlers who would otherwise settle here if they had some authentic information on this matter, or had a chance of visiting the country and seeing for themselves. Winter gradually merges into spring during the last half of March and beginning of April; although snow disappears and warm weather often comes earlier,

still this is the rule. The thermometer never ranges very low nor do we have much severe frost after the middle of March, while in April the farmers are all at work getting in their crop. Early in May flowers are seen on the prairie and we may say we have warm weather. During these two months we have occasional showers of rain, and although the days are warm the nights are cool. Summer begins about the middle of May and extends to the latter part of September. June and July are great growing months, that is to say, the growth of everything in the vegetable kingdom rushes on with great rapidity, owing to the heat and moisture at this time most favorable to growth. As a general thing there is a great deal of rain in June and in the early part of July, while during the latter part of this month there is a long spell of beautiful warm weather with only occasional showers. The atmosphere is always beautifully clear and one can see with the naked eye for a surprising distance. During the last half of July and early part or till the third week in August is the hottest weather, the thermometer ranging from 68° to 80° Fahrenheit, and up to 100° in the sun. August and September are usually dry months with a clear and cloudless sky, most suitable weather for the farmer at this season.

We have had, during one or two years, a very slight frost during the last week in August, which has never been so severe as to seriously damage crops, except some that were sown very late. It is a usual thing to have a frost during the first 10 days of September, which is rarely felt, after which we may have none until on in October. September is a most beautiful month for comfort, being neither too hot nor too cold, but keeping about that genial temperature which everyone enjoys. Although in summer the days are warm the nights are always cool, so we never have those stuffy hot nights of other climates. October is usually more unsettled, often having a week or two of wet weather, then delightful weather for the rest of the month, clear days, cool nights with frost occasionally in the first part of the month and regularly during the last week. This is generally called Indian summer although in a late autumn it often comes in the next month.

In November the days are still clear but somewhat colder, there being a fall of snow probably early in the month melting away in a day or two, which takes the place of rain in hot climates. After this we have dry weather with a few degrees of frost at night, continuing up to Christmas. Although we usually have enough snow for sleighing at Christmas, yet the weather is not very cold and winter may hardly be said to have set in earnest. In January and February we have clear cold weather with occasional falls of snow. The thermometer ranges in these months from freezing point to 40 and 45° below zero, still even in the coldest weather it is not disagreeable, owing to the dryness of the atmosphere and the cold is not much minded, the writer having often driven 40 and 45 miles a day during the last 10 years. In March the cold weather is a thing of the past and even from the middle of February in some years no severe weather has been experienced and the snow disappeared early in March. As we do not have rain from the beginning of November until the latter part of March the snow is looked upon as a friend rather than an enemy, taking the place of the rain in other countries and thoroughly wetting the ground for the spring seedling. There is no uniform depth, as seasons are not all alike in this respect, but taking one year with another it may be said to be from 6 to 15 inches on the level, with a greater depth in the bluffs where it collects. In some years there has been so little snow that cattle have wintered out as well as horses, while in others, as during this winter, we have about 18 inches on the level and a great depth in any sheltered places where it can gather up.

It is seen from the foregoing that our cold weather seldom lasts over two months or two months and a half, giving us, taking from moderate to severe cold weather, three months of winter. It must not be thought for a moment that this severe cold lasts continuously, as we often, both in January and February, have weeks of balmy weather with very little cold, and in no year has the cold been uninterrupted by these breaks of moderate weather throughout the winter.

Shooting and Fishing.

Duck Lake is recognized as one of the best shooting grounds in the Territories, for both small and

large game. The prairie chickens, a species of grouse, are probably the most common of the small game and can be shot in hundreds anywhere in the district, even on the buildings in town on a frosty morning. They are exceedingly fine eating and much prized in Manitoba and all over the Territories. The open or shooting season for these birds is from Sept. 1st to January 1st, four months, but as they do not migrate, the settler who is anything of a shot, can bag enough in November and December to keep him in game for the balance of the winter. Next come wild ducks, of which some 30 to 40 varieties are found in abundance on all small lakes, which abound all over the district. These vary in size from the small teal to the mallard and fall duck, which equal in size many of the largest domestic ducks. The season for shooting ducks is from August 15th to May 15th. Thousands upon thousands will pass over your head in an evening should you chance to be near some body of water.

Then there is the wild goose, of which there are several varieties, varying in size from the white wavy (pure white) to the large black goose, which is as large as any domestic goose. These birds collect by thousands on various favorable feeding grounds in the vicinity of Duck Lake, and are killed in great numbers both in the spring and autumn. Other varieties of small game found in abundance are partridge (several species), plover, snipe, sand hill crane (several species), hare, rabbits, and others somewhat rarer. Partridges are found in all the woody parts and in bluffs; they are not so large as the prairie chicken, but their flesh is delicious, being as white as snow. Snipe and plover of different varieties are found in immense numbers all over the district. The sand hill crane, the flesh of which much resembles that of the domestic turkey, generally visits the farmers grain fields in a morning. This bird is somewhat larger than the turkey. The season for shooting it is generally the same as for prairie chicken.

Going further from the settlements, big game is found, deer, several varieties, including black tail, white tail, jumping deer, red deer, antelope and moose. One Duck Lake settler has killed between 90 and 100 deer this season. By going still farther from settlements, the ambitious hunter may find something more exciting in the bear, of which there are three or four species, including the small black bear, brown or cinnamon and the grizzly, which latter will probably give the hunter all the excitement he wants, should he show fight. However, these are very seldom seen and only in districts remote from settlements. The country is teeming with foxes, coyotes, badgers, etc., which would create excellent sport if hunt clubs were organized. Occasionally some of the settlers give Reynard a run with their swift bronchos, but as yet there is no pack of hounds in the district. There is no country in the world where this sport could be more enjoyed than here, with the beautiful prairies for miles before the hunter, and foxes to be found in some localities every hundred yards.

Here also those who are fond of fishing can enjoy themselves to their heart's content. Although the two Saskatchewan rivers, one on either side of the district, are teeming with fish, yet those who can afford to take a week's holiday in summer could not do better than camp with their families at some of the beautiful lakes within half a day's drive from Duck Lake, taking their beds, camp and tent with them, trolling for pike or perch from the boat, getting sport seldom obtained elsewhere. The fish to be found in all large lakes, as well as in many of the very small ones, are chiefly pike, perch, whitefish and trout, while in running streams one gets sturgeon, gold eyes, minnows, etc. The writer would strongly advise all settlers coming out from the old country to bring their guns, etc., with them, although all sporting goods can be obtained reasonably here, still if one has them so much the better. Every accommodation can be given to sportsmen and tourists at the Saskatchewan Hotel, Duck Lake, and teams can be furnished for those who wish to go to a distance for sport.

The System of Education.

By W. R. Tymms, Principal of Duck Lake Public School.

Many who would improve their position by emigrating to a new country may be deterred by an anticipated difficulty in providing for the

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