

for this, there is still room for many millions of inhabitants in the choice agricultural districts of Western Canada alone. If we cut off one-half of Western Canada as worthless, and give the balance a population equal to Russia in Europe, per square mile, the number of inhabitants would be about 57,000,000. In comparing with Russia, no such reduction, however, should be made for territory unfit for settlements: as Russia lies within about the same latitudes as Western Canada, and probably has about as large a proportion of land unfit for settlement. A comparison with Russia, in order to estimate the number of inhabitants which Western Canada is capable of supporting, should be made on the total area, or say at least 100,000,000 persons. Without encroaching upon the more northern regions, Canada therefore offers free lands, in choice agricultural districts alone, for many millions of people.

### Population of Western Canada.

The census of Canada, taken in 1891, shows the population of the various divisions of Western Canada to be as follows, compared with what it was when the census was taken in previous years:

	1871.	1881.	1891.
Manitoba .....	25,228	62,260	154,442
Assiniboia } Alberta } Saskatchewan }	18,000	25,615	67,55
British Columbia.....	33,586	49,459	92,707
Unorganized region .....	30,000	30,931	32,163

Total.....106,814 163,165 316,931  
The population of the three territories of Alberta, Assiniboia and Saskatchewan are not given separately in the census bulletins so far as they have yet been issued. The percentage of increase in the population, between 1871 and 1881, and between 1881 and 1891, is given as follows:

	1871 to 1881.	1881 to 1891
Manitoba . . . . .	146.78	143.06
Assiniboia } Alberta } Saskatchewan }	41.75	164.76
British Columbia.....	47.26	87.56
Unorganized region.....	3.10	4.00
Total .....	57.43	106.30

These census returns show that the percentage of increase in the population, during the last ten years, has been nearly double the percentage of increase during the previous ten years. This is what might have been expected, as it is only in the past ten or eleven years, that the country has really been opened up for settlement. The increase of the population of Manitoba between 1871 and 1881, is wonderful, when we consider that during that decade, the country was without railway communication with the outside world. The record for 1891 also shows rapid progress, the population having been considerably more than doubled in ten years. The increase in the territories to 1891 has been even greater than in Manitoba, due to the opening of railways, and to the tendency of incoming settlers to go to the most recently opened districts. This is perhaps partly owing to the desire to get first pick of the land. British Columbia makes a good showing, like the three territories, the increase being much greater for the past ten years, than it was during the ten years ended 1881. This is also

owing to the opening of the country by railways. The increase of population in the vast unorganized region, is very slight, but this great region, though much of it is adapted to settlement, is yet beyond the bounds of civilization, and is likely to remain so for a few years at least. The population which it now has is mostly made up of the Indian tribes, and these people, it is well known, do not increase materially in numbers. As settlement encroaches upon them, the tendency among the Indians is rather to decrease in numbers. A remnant of these people will no doubt be preserved, and become civilized and in time assimilated with the general population.

Taking western Canada as a whole, provinces, territories and unorganized region, the increase in the population to 1891 is shown to be over 100 per cent, as compared with about 57 per cent during the ten years ended 1881. This shows that rapid progress has been made in peopling the country. With the amount of territory made available to settlement by railway construction, the next ten years may be expected to show even greater progress.

### Resources of Western Canada.

#### ITS CLIMATE, PHYSICAL FEATURES AND PRODUCTS.

In a country of such vast extent as Western Canada, it is but natural to expect a great variety of climate, natural products, etc. There are sections where snow and ice are practically unknown, and again there are other portions where the sun never succeeds in completely removing these evidences of a northern winter. There are districts where the normal rainfall is exceedingly heavy, and there are "dry belts," where the rainfall is so slight, that agriculture cannot be carried on without irrigation of the soil. There are portions of the country noted for clear skies and a maximum of sunshine, and again there are other portions, where cloudiness and fogs shut out the sun for a considerable portion of the year.

#### PLAIN, MOUNTAIN AND FLOOD.

The physical features of the country are as varied as the climatic conditions. There is the great, open prairie region (the true prairie) where one could travel for days without seeing anything in the nature of a tree, and where the nearest approach to timber are the little prairie rose bushes. Again there are vast areas of forest, stretching in an unbroken line for hundreds of miles. Then there is the mixed prairie or park country, with its waving grass meadows, sprinkled freely with clumps of trees and bushes, which stand out like little islands, rising from a vast body of water. The latter description of country will apply to a large portion of Manitoba, and also to considerable portions of all the territories. There is the plain country, where scarcely a pebble would be found in miles of travelling, and where a plow could be put in the ground, and a furrow could be turned perhaps fifty miles long, in a straight line, without meeting with obstruction; and there is the Laurentian region, where chaos seems still to reign, and where the surface is a mass of rocks and boulders, piled up everywhere in bewildering confusion. Travelling over an open, level

prairie, under a warm summer sun, the tourist may observe in the distance, snow-capped mountain peaks, whose tops pierce the clouds. Rolling through the arid regions, are large rivers, whose source of supply are hundreds of miles away. Lakes, large and small, and brooklets and rivers, some of the latter measuring their length by thousands of miles, are features of the region. In fact there is every variety of country to be met with in Western Canada.

#### NATURAL RESOURCES.

Such a variety of climatic and physical conditions as those described, must admit of very varied resources. This is the case concerning Western Canada. Of these, agriculture undoubtedly stands at the head, and the prairie, or park districts, are most preferred for agricultural purposes. The soil is rich, and with all its original properties intact. No great labor or delay is required to bring the land under cultivation. All the new settler has to do is to put in his plow, turn over the natural prairie sod, and his land is ready for a crop. While the soil of the forest districts may be valuable, yet the labor necessary to clear and prepare it for cultivation, is very considerable, and so long as there is abundance of land all ready for the plow, incoming settlers will mostly avoid the wooded portions.

Throughout the prairie or park regions of Western Canada, all cereals, vegetables, roots, etc., which can be grown in a temperate climate, do well. Wheat is the staple crop, but oats and barley are also grown to a considerable extent. Rye, flax, maize (corn), peas, beans, are grown on a more limited scale. Potatoes are the principal root crop, but all vegetables and garden stuffs are grown for domestic use. Roots are not grown to any considerable extent for feeding animals, as there is an abundance of hay, and coarse grasses yield heavily and require less labor than roots. Turnips, beets, mangolds, however, produce very heavy crops. A considerable variety of fruits may be grown in Manitoba and the territories, but fruits are not largely cultivated, as the people depend mainly on the wild varieties, of which there are a great number. The native wild fruits include currants, strawberries, raspberries, gooseberries, cherries, blueberries, cranberries, plums, grapes, buffaloberries, and others. In British Columbia more attention has been given to fruits, and apples, pears, peaches, apricots, plums, cherries, etc., are cultivated on a considerable scale.

#### DOMESTIC ANIMALS.

The name prairie, signifying meadow land, is alone sufficient to indicate the value of the country for grazing animals. The farmer of other countries is obliged to devote a large portion of his land and his labor to growing fodder crops for his cattle and other animals. In the prairie and mixed prairie regions of Western Canada, all this is unnecessary. The country is one vast natural pasture-ground for grazing animals, and these natural prairie grasses may be cut and cured the same as cultivated fodder crops, for winter feeding. These natural grasses make excellent fodder, and it has been proved that cows will give more and richer milk, which will yield more butter per quart, when fed on natural prairie grass, than where they have the cultivated varieties.