

the relatives and friends who are still left to me. Moreover, since my arrival my time has been almost wholly occupied, and you must not, therefore, expect any elaborate or exhaustive address from me, but what I shall tell you this evening about Manitoba you can depend upon as being an exact transcript of my own thoughts and beliefs about that great country.

As you are aware, the North West Territories of Canada before the confederation of the several Provinces of British North America into one great Dominion in 1867—which I may say was the greatest and most successful effort of statesmanship in Canadian politics during this century, as it secured the permanence of British Institutions in North America—was occupied by the Hudson's Bay Company, partly under charter and partly under lease from the Crown, and being required for the purposes of the Fur Trade, colonization was not much encouraged. But when this vast territory was acquired by the Dominion of Canada in 1870 by the purchase of the Company's claims and the extinction of its monopoly, its character as a superior grazing and farming country at once became known and it was made immediately available for settlement, and from that time until now it has continued to attract in an ever increasing degree the attention not merely of the people of Great Britain but of every European country, as being at once the most eligible and the most accessible field for emigration in the world. This immense territory has of late years been divided into the Province of Manitoba which contains the eastern and best portion of it, and into three other territories namely Alberta, Athabasca, and Saskatchewan. Manitoba contains 116,000 square miles or about 75 millions of acres—a larger area of land than is contained in England, Scotland and Ireland put together, and this land is nearly all level and of unsurpassed quality for agricultural purposes. "The Fertile Belt" is the name given to a well known tract of land, which has a width of some 300 miles, and which, beginning east of the Red River, and embracing the whole of Manitoba, stretches north-westwards for a distance of at least a thousand miles through the territories which I have just mentioned, and speaking of this illimitable extent of land, I shall never forget my first view of the boundless prairies of the North West. There are times when even prosaic and ordinary men experience feelings which are akin to inspiration, and such a time was this to me. Far away as the eye could reach on every side lay a vast level plain, covered by luxuriant grass, which waved gently and gracefully in the wind, with here and there islands, or clumps of young timber and willows, which gave the scene a park-like appearance. The grass was sprinkled with innumerable flowers, and was the haunt of an endless variety of birds of every shade of plumage. On every side the view was bounded only by the horizon. The canopy of this sublime scene—the vault of heaven—was a perfect dome, in which the summer clouds lay high and light, and whose disc was unbroken by hill or mountain peak. A flood of sunshine