

siderably beyond its grain limits. There have been only slight attempts to raise potatoes at Fort Macpherson, which, it must be remembered, is within seventy miles of the Arctic Ocean, but at Fort Good Hope potatoes, cabbages and such-like are grown quite successfully. It may be said, in a general way, that the Arctic Circle is the northernmost limit of farm produce vegetation—but that is saying much, is it not? To know that our agricultural possibilities reach that far point on the map is to size up farming in Canada on a larger scale than has been.

At practically every point between Athabasca and Fort Good Hope are vegetable gardens, the range of crop in which is very much the same as on the down-east farms. Not potatoes and turnips only, but onions, lettuce, peas, rhubarb, and even tomatoes figure on the home-made menus of the people up north. These usually grow to a good size, and are well flavored, though unfavorable conditions in a particular season may give a set back to all the garden stuff. Normally the growth is rapid, prolific and fruitful.

The explanation of all this far-northern vegetation is the excessively long sunlight of the Top Country. In this region of almost all-night days, where there is hardly any darkness, and one day runs into another with scarcely a break between, the sunlight is persistent. Actual records show that at Fort Simpson there are 570 hours of sunlight in June and only twelve hours less in July. Fort Macpherson has 720 hours in June, which means that at that topmost point it's day all the time. In the four months from May to August, there are at Simpson, which may be taken as a fair medium, 2,147 hours of sun, as compared with 1,805 hours at Ottawa. It is little wonder that growth is quick.

There is still another region of the far North that has some agricultural possibilities, though admittedly of a much more doubtful kind. East of the Mackenzie,

away over toward Hudson Bay, and Hanbury, flowing through are two good rivers, the Thelon what is known as the Barren Lands, but bordered nevertheless with stretches of timber land and potential farming country. No attempts to farm this country have been made, for it is quite unsettled, and in any case only a very limited degree of agriculture could ever be possible in it.

It is worth noting, however, that the great Arctic prairies around and beyond these two rivers have a productive value in a way of their own. Though they are the so-called Barren Lands, they are barren only in the sense that they are treeless, for immense tracts of their total half-million square miles are covered with a heavy growth of wild grass, to say nothing of flowers and berry patches. Just as the plains of the Peace River and Grand Prairie countries are spread with a rich profusion of native hay, from which abundant crops have been harvested, and upon which thousands of cattle and horses have grazed, so the empty lands to the east are richly spread with as fine a grass crop as can be found in America. Their natural pasture grounds would be the envy of any southern packer, for that vast stretch of hay land would support and fatten almost countless herds of beef cattle. As it is, the caribou or Arctic deer have it all to themselves, and roam at will over its limitless plains in bands of sometimes a dozen or two, sometimes many thousands. Even if the cattle raising idea should never prove to be feasible in this great pasture land, the time may not be so very distant when we shall need to draw upon the animal resources it already has to make up our national meat supply. We shall see then, if not sooner, that Canada has little waste or useless land.

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Jack—"That's where the art comes in."



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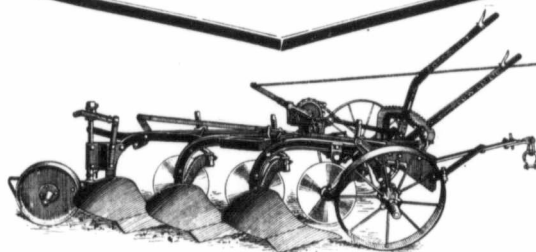
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