The Agricultural Prospects of Manitoba.

BY HUGH M'KELLAR, DEPUTY MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE.

There has been so much said recently about the expansion of trade of all kinds in Manitoba, that it is almost impossible to say anything new on our agricultural prospects. All that can be done is to point out a few of the strong features that present themselves to my mind, and allow your readers to fill in between the lines as suits their own fancy.

The rich soil and favorable climatic conditions are here as a bank account, upon which present farmers in the Province are not yet drawing more than a portion of the interest accruing from year to year. Only when 20,000,000 acres of our heritage are actually cropped, will we realize what the account to our credit is; 4,000,000 acres are now under cultivation. These lands can still be purchased at from $5 to $40 an acre. Resident farmers, whose lands are valued to-day at from $15 to $40 an acre, are realizing a revenue from the same, equal to 7% on an investment at more than double this value.

Last year cropped areas under wheat gave a clear profit of over $6 an acre. The average yield was 20 bushels, which at even 55 cents per bushel gave a return of $14.30 per acre. It is conceded that all the labor of plowing, seeding, harvesting and marketing can be hired done at $7.50 per acre. Even allowing $8.00, there is a balance of $6.30 clear profit. This means a revenue of 7% on land worth $90 per acre. Farmers who make this profit can rest assured that their lands will rise in value from year to year.

Buying Manitoba lands to-day is a far safer investment than purchasing any of those stocks that have been taking such high dives lately. The products of our farms—wheat, coarse grains, meat, dairy products, poultry and eggs—are all tangible commodities that are required to supply our daily wants. Prices of these may fluctuate from time to time, but never can a farmer become loaded with any one or more of them to such an extent that he becomes ruined.

Manitoba this season has taken a new leap forward. The largest crop acreage ever sown is now in the ground, and crop prospects never were better. Go where you may, farmers are busy breaking new land. While we all admit that it is our grain crop that has given Manitoba agriculture so much prominence in the eyes of the world, the leaven of mixed farming is gradually but surely permeating the minds of farmers. The general trend of surplus capital and energy is in that direction. If Ontario and the States of the American Union, which at one time were noted for their grain-growing, have changed off to stock-breeding and dairying, and still their lands are valued at from $60 to $100 per acre, there is no reason why Manitoba lands may not be equally valuable in the production of such products. A great step in this direction has been taken the present year in the employment of thousands of farm laborers, new arrivals who have come into our midst. Instead of these men being employed only to take off the harvest, the vast majority of them have been engaged for the year. Employment the year round must therefore be provided, and stock-raising, with grain-growing, only can provide such employment. I consider this one of the brightest features in the present outlook of agriculture in the Province.

The ever-increasing demand for stockers to be put upon ranches in the Territories gives an impetus to stock-raising in the Province. Manitoba farmers provide the necessary shelter for wintering cattle, and the immense crop of coarse grains and fodder which we so easily raise here each year supplies the necessary food to feed all stock under shelter. These conditions will always remain, and there is no doubt but that Manitoba will be the recruiting ground to supply ranches with stockers from year to year. Again, it is only a question of time until Manitoba farmers, with the extra supply of farm help, will direct their attention more and more to the winter-feeding of fat cattle.

In the Government June bulletin, it is estimated that 13,983 cattle were fed for beef during the past winter. There is no reason why this number may not be increased five-fold or more in the near future. It is estimated that we have over 40,000 farmers in Manitoba; if half of these should feed four cattle each every winter, the output would be 80,000 fat cattle, which, at $60 a head, would mean $4,800,000. This is no fancy vision, but a reality, to which Manitoba farmers are to-day fast hastening. This is only one line of expansion. When the labor demand becomes well supplied and efficient, we may expect similar expansion in raising horses, sheep and hogs.

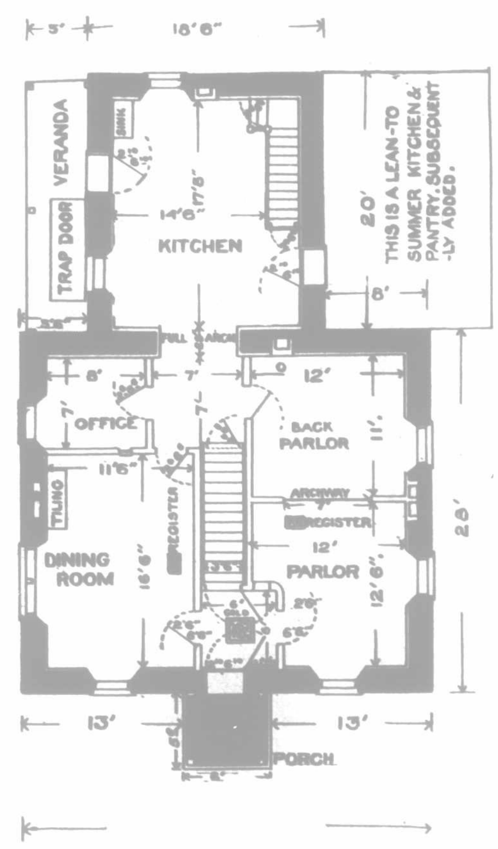
"So you've lost all your marbles, eh? Well, it serves you right. Boys always lose who play on Sundays." "But how about the other fellow who won all my marbles?"

At the Irrigation Center.

LETHBRIDGE AND DISTRICT IN THE SWIM OF SUCCESS.

Just a word about Lethbridge and the south country. Coal is good; crops are good; building operations are good, and beet sugar prospects no worse.

The temporary closing of the Frank mine may have something to do with it, but not much. The increase of settlement all along the line and the excellence of the Galt coal for domestic use is strengthening demand. We never had a better summer, and the output for next winter will be doubled. The stability and steadiness of the coal business is already increasing our permanent population. Business men cannot recall a better summer. Distribution business is sharp. The calls for stuff for growing neighboring centers from the jobbing company, the Bently Co. and other wholesale supply houses, is an index of something doing in the district. The municipality are feeling the hot wave. The final survey has been made for a waterworks and sewerage system; tenders are called for an enlargement of the central school building to almost double its capacity. The Union Bank people simply have to build. It is to be a fine three-story block in addition to a basement. The Montreal Bank is likewise enlarging. Hotel and residence building are both active.



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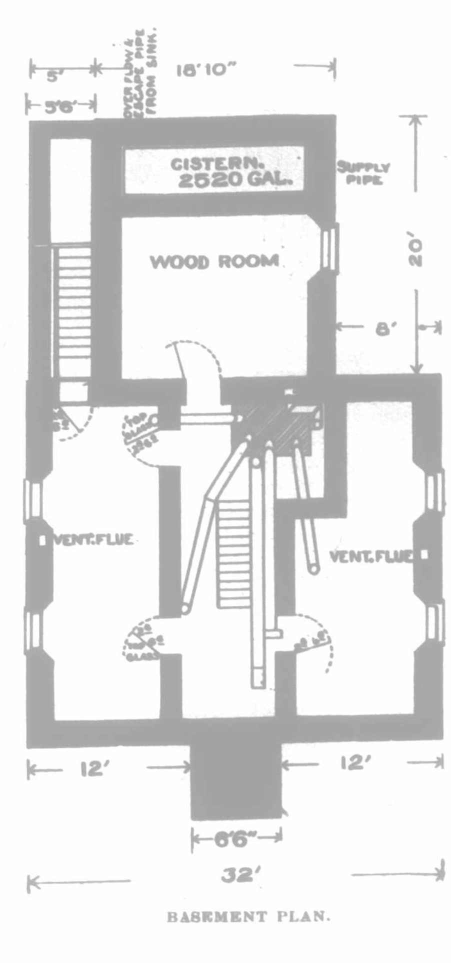

BASEMENT PLAN.

The irrigation company seem to be just beginning. Chief Engineer Anderson sees possibilities for extension that will mean ten years in completion, and then the system will be the giant irrigation enterprise of the continent. The proposed extensions are between the present canal and Milk River and to the east of Stirling in the Chin Coulee country; operations in the latter have begun; the former work will begin in July.

Work is being tendered on for the first half of the Cardston extension of the St. Mary's Railway, and the passing of the Dominion subsidy will make possible the immediate construction of the second half also.

General crops have got just the right amount of moisture to start them well. Irrigation will not be required until July. The three thousand acres of beet land around Raymond, Magrath and Stirling are full of boys and girls doing the thinning of the beets. Lablor is scarce, but not money. The beet people are not booming things. Their land is not in the best of shape this year and they are not looking for chances to tell the newspaper men that they will grow twenty tons per acre. They will be satisfied with ten this year and twelve next year; but this will mean 30,000 tons this year, which at $5 a ton will mean the distribution of $150,000 to the farmers at Raymond for the beets. This will keep the factory going for 75 days at 400 tons a day, and during that time there will be employment for 175 men. Both labor and capital will share well in the enterprise. The 5,000,000 pounds of sugar is worth $250,000, and the beet pulp is all spoken for, and is worth 50c. per ton.

All around them is no kick coming here.

Consolidating the Empire's Trade.

Public thought in Great Britain was lately stirred as it has not been for a generation, by the deliverances of Hon. Joseph Chamberlain, the member of the Government upon whose department devolves the relations of the mother country with the self-governing "Dominions Beyond the Seas," such as Canada, Australia, New Zealand, India and South Africa. Since the jubilee of our late lamented Queen Victoria, and the colonial conference, coming down through the unifying events of the South African war, and the realization of the vastness of the agricultural resources of the Canadian West, of its resources generally, and its industrial possibilities, statesmen and publicists in every part of the Empire have been scanning with serious and studious eyes the horizon of the future.

Considered in all its world-wide parts, the British Empire is the most marvellous product the world has ever seen—strong, progressive, loyal and cohesive, held together by the ties of sentiment, fraternity, business and freedom. Canada contributes nothing to the Imperial naval defence, which safeguards the commerce of the Empire, and she is free to manage her own fiscal and, for the most part, her other affairs as she will. A happy-go-lucky policy, European or Oriental despots would regard it, but in its flexibility lies it safety. Can it always continue thus? What is the present drift or tendency? What will the future evolve? How will the divergent interests of the outlying portions of the Empire, as they grow in power, be harmonized so as to preserve the unity of the whole and keep pace with rival nations? Wrapped up in these enquiries are vast fiscal, colonial and imperial problems that are perplexing the most sagacious statesmanship.

We find our Empire confronted with the militarism of other nations, and hostile tariffs, like those of Germany and the United States, directed against us. Foreign nations buy only £174,000,000 worth of goods from Britain, but sell her £421,000,000 worth, and she must pay, in cash or otherwise, the balance. On the other hand, the colonies take £109,000,000 worth from Britain, and ship her £106,500,000, which is regarded as fair trade. Britain takes the largest proportion of exports from Canada, and Mr. Chamberlain told the colonial conference that she might double or treble the amount taken under a reciprocal arrangement, thus indicating the vast advantage a preferential British tariff would be to the Canadian farmer.

Well might Premier Balfour, on the floor of the British Parliament the other night, declare that he did not belong to that self-satisfied band who thought a fiscal system established fifty years ago, under conditions profoundly different from those now existing, must remain unmodified for all time. While it is true that no tax on food can be imposed without the full consent of the industrial masses of Britain, it is no profanation to frankly examine this traditional policy, with a view to determining wherein the conditions of to-day may suggest modifications. Ere long, Canada will be the home of a vast and aggressive population who will not relinquish self-government, and while putting Canadian interests first, is disposed to do so in a way that will tend to perpetuate and strengthen the Empire. Canada is watching with keen interest the present discus-