

free grant is the month of September, after harvest work in the old settlement is over. There is time to put up a house, and get comfortably settled before the winter sets in; and during the winter, the work of chopping and clearing can go on. In this way, a crop can be got in the first spring, and some return be received from the land. The operation of putting in the first crop is a very simple one. Ploughing is at once impracticable and unnecessary. The land is light and rich. All it needs is a little scratching on the surface to clear the seed. This is done with a drag or harrow, which may be either a very rough, primitive instrument—a natural crotch with a few teeth in it—or it may be carefully made and well-finished."

MANITOBAH AND THE NORTH-WEST TERRITORY.

The newly organized Province of Manitoba, comprising the settled part of the newly acquired North-West Territory on the Red River—for summary of Act organizing this Province see LEGISLATION in this *Year Book*)—forms but a small portion of that vast tract of country. The question, Is it fit for settlement? is one that not only affects the welfare of Canada, but modern civilization.

A committee of the Senate, at Ottawa, during the session of Parliament in April last, took occasion to examine a number of persons from that region who happened to be then at the Seat of Government. The committee, after reporting that they had taken the evidence, go on to state:—

"2nd. The vast extent of country capable of cultivation, the favorable accounts uniformly given of its agricultural qualities, and the salubrity of the climate, leave no room for doubt on the minds of the committee that the region north of the *United States* boundary, west of the watershed of *Lake Superior*, and extending north of the northern banks of the *Saskatchewan River*, is a good wheat and vegetable-producing territory.

"3rd. The principal drawbacks would seem to be distance from navigation and railway communication, absence of markets for agricultural products, occasional visits from grass-hoppers, and the cold of winter. But the testimony of all the witnesses examined upon this latter point tends to establish the fact, that although the thermometer indicates a much lower degree of temperature at *Red River*, in winter months, than in *Ontario*, yet the cold, in its effects upon individuals, produces scarcely, if at all, more inconvenience in the former than in the latter country.

"4th. The committee are satisfied that if measures are taken at an early date to afford facilities for access through British territory to the *Red River*, it will be found to be not only a very desirable home for immigrants, but will materially enhance the prosperity and promote the best interests of this Dominion."

We will give a summary of some of the evidence:—

MR. SETTER'S EVIDENCE.

John James Setter—Is a farmer and a school teacher, who lives at Portage La Prairie. He was born at Red River. Has resided there since, except that he lived during the years 1856-7-8 in the State of Minnesota. He had travelled about 110 miles west on the Assiniboine in the territory, and between the Assiniboine and the boundary line seventy or eighty miles. The country that he has seen is pretty equally divided between wooded and prairie land. The woods are invariably found on the banks of the streams. They consist of oak, ash, elm and poplar; and he would call large timber there, trees a foot and a half in diameter. There is pine, but not the white pine; and there is white cedar, but no red. The streams have generally muddy bottoms; there is very little rock. These are not generally difficult to cross. The bottoms are soft. The alluvial deposit varies in depth. On the Red River it is about a foot deep, whilst up on the Assiniboine and in the neighbourhood of the Portage, it is about three feet in depth, and in some places six. White mud underlies the alluvial deposit in the Portage section, and clay in the Red River. Colour of this clay is lightish. Gophir mounds are very common on the Assiniboine. The belts of timber are wide on the south side of the Assiniboine. That river is from 150 to 200 yards broad where it joins the Red River. Red River is navigable from Winnipeg to Fort Abercrombie, for vessels drawing four feet. Average width of belts of timber is about 4 miles, but does not state this of his own knowledge. Prairies are 12 or 14 miles wide on north side of the Assiniboine. He has a farm 25 acres under cultivation. Soil alluvial. It was a prairie and virgin soil. Light colour. But it is in some places black. The wild grass on it is the ordinary prairie grass. It grows in the bottoms so tall that you can tie it over a horse's back in riding through it; but the ordinary grass is short. He raises wheat. This weighs 64 lbs. to a bushel; but he has seen it weigh 68 lbs. This is spring wheat; fall wheat is a failure. Barley, oats, peas, potatoes, turnips, and carrots are also raised. A variety of Indian corn is raised. It might be generally raised, but the people don't care about it. They generally put crops in from middle of April to middle of May, and harvest in August. They have never had the potato disease, nor the weevil in wheat. He does not think there are any farms on the wooded lands, but the soil in the woods appears to be richer than in the prairie. He spoke of fall wheat not answering on prairie lands, but stated that Canadians were of opinion that it would answer if farms were opened on the timber land. Water can be found on the Assiniboine at 8 or 10 feet. Water is generally hard. There is abundance of limestone in the lower part of Red River, and in places near the Assiniboine. There are hills or bluffs on the south side of Assiniboine, which he states is a beautiful country, as well as on the west of Red River. There are some boulders but no stratified rocks in the country. There is no fuel on the prairie, but on one side of the line there is plenty of timber for fuel and building houses for some time to come. Timber has to be brought five or six miles to the prairies of which he is speaking. Coal has been discovered by Indians, about 40 miles from Portage La Prairie, cropping out on the river banks. They have frosts in September, but not sufficient to blanch