

of all kinds, while for grazing purposes it is unsurpassed, the climate being suitable for stock-breeding, and the pasturage excellent and almost unlimited. West of the Rocky Mountains is another great tract of forest land, the timber on which is invaluable, while the soil is very fertile, and the country, as it becomes cleared, is found to possess great agricultural capabilities.

13. The northern part of the centre of the Dominion, The Mac-kenzie Basin. extending from the Rocky Mountains to Hudson's Bay, is very extensively wooded, and has generally been considered for the most part unfit for settlement, and only useful as a preserve for fur-bearing animals. But during the Session of Parliament of 1888 a committee of the Senate held an investigation into the capabilities of these regions, the result being that all previous ideas have been upset. The area inquired into was about 1,260,000 square miles, and of these it was estimated 860,000 square miles were fit for settlement and about 400,000 square miles useless for cultivation; 656,000 square miles were suitable for potatoes, 407,000 square miles for barley and 316,000 square miles for wheat. There is a river navigation of about 2,750 miles, 1,390 miles being suitable for stern-wheel steamers and 1,360 miles for light draught sea-going steamers. There are large auriferous deposits, as well as silver, iron, graphite, ochre, brick and pottery clay, mica, gypsum, lime and sandstone, "while the petroleum area is so extensive as to justify the belief that eventually it will supply the larger part of this continent." Furs are at present the chief commercial products of this region, which is the last great fur preserve of the world, and in view of the great danger of the extinction of animals whose furs become fashionable, the committee suggest the leasing of fur districts by the Government, with a limitation as to the catch of certain kinds of furs. Some idea of the size and importance of the fur trade may be obtained from the fact that the