

the Province of Manitoba, and is estimated to contain about 7,000 square miles of the best wheat-growing land on the continent, or in the world. The second plateau or steppe has an average altitude of 1,600 feet, having a width of about 250 miles on the national boundary line, and an area of about 105,000 square miles. The rich, undulating, park-like country lies in this region. This section is especially favourable for settlement, and includes the Assiniboine and Qu'Appelle districts. The third plateau or steppe begins on the boundary line at the 104th meridian, where it has an elevation of about 2,000 feet, and extends west for 465 miles to the foot of the Rocky Mountains, where it has an altitude of about 4,200 feet, making an average height above the sea of about 3,000 feet. Generally speaking, the first two steppes are those which are most favourable for agriculture, and the third for grazing. Settlement is proceeding in the first two at a very rapid rate; in the third plateau it is beginning, numerous and prosperous cattle ranches and homesteads having been established.

Physical features, the Mackenzie Basin.

12. The northern part of the centre of the Dominion, 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, it was suggested by the committee that fur districts should be leased by the Government, and a limitation placed on the catch of certain kinds of furs. The lakes and rivers abound in fish, especially whitefish and lake trout. The committee pointed out that the valuable whale fisheries of the northern coasts of Canada were being rapidly destroyed by foreign whalers, and suggested that the Government should adopt some measures for their protection. The climate of this region in some places resembles that of western Ontario.