

NATURAL RESOURCES OF THE DOMINION OF CANADA.

district between Hamilton and Niagara, where there are many thousands of acres of peach orchards. All the counties bordering on lake Erie are particularly adapted to the production of peaches and grapes. Tobacco of fine quality is grown in these counties. The fruit-growing areas are continually extending in the southern counties of Ontario, lands formerly devoted to grain growing and general farming being planted with orchards. Ontario farmers at one time devoted their lands almost entirely to grain growing, and large quantities of wheat, oats and barley are still produced, but grain growing has to a large extent given place to fruit growing and dairy farming. Ontario leads the world in the production of cheese.

The country stretching from lake Nipissing to the lake of the Woods, and extending from the northern shores of Georgian bay, lake Huron and lake Superior to the Height of Land, is known as the Algoma district, and has often been described by superficial observers as a worthless rocky region, which must always prove an insurmountable barrier between central Canada and the Western Plain. That it looks rocky, whether viewed from a steamship or a railway car, cannot be denied, but throughout this region are numerous little fertile valleys, sheltered from the rough winds by the much abused rocky hills, and watered by swift-flowing rivers and pretty lakes. It must be admitted that these valleys, being small, there is not much good land in any one spot, but altogether there are probably millions of acres available for cultivation between Nipissing and Port Arthur, although the greater part of this area will never be anything more than a lumbering and mining region. The fact that most of the rivers of the province have their sources on the slopes of the Height of Land makes it desirable that it should be maintained as a forest reservation, and if the forests are properly protected they may be made to yield a large revenue to the province. In the vicinity of Port Arthur and along the Rainy river, and about the lake of the Woods, there are large tracts of fertile land. But the wealth of the Algoma district is in the rocks rather than in the soil, for there is reason to believe that it is one of the richest mineral districts of the world.

The country north of the Height of Land is almost a complete wilderness. The Canadian Transcontinental railway and the Canadian Northern railway have recently been constructed through it, but the settlement of the country has hardly begun.

Exploring parties sent out by the Ontario Government have made favourable reports. A summary of these reports issued by the Provincial Government says:

It has been established beyond controversy that in the eastern part of the territory north of the Height of Land there is an immense area of excellent agricultural land, apparently equal in fertility to any in older Ontario, with an equable and temperate climate and an abundance of wood and water. The great clay belt comprises an area of at least 24,500 square miles, or 15,680,000 acres. This almost unbroken stretch of good farming land is nearly three-quarters as great in extent as the whole settled portion of the province south of Georgian bay, lake Nipissing and the French and Mattawa rivers.