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THE PRIZE ESSAY

Written by Miss Helena Estabrooks that Captured the \$50 in Cash Given by Mr. J. Heber Haslam of the C. P. R.

Western Canada, or as it is commonly called, the Canadian Northwest, includes an area of about two millions five hundred thousand square miles. It is that portion of Canada lying between the rocky mountains on the west and Hudson and James bays on the east, and extending north as far as the Arctic ocean and south to the United States. Previous to 1865 but little was known of the Canadian Northwest, at that time called the Hudson Bay Territory, or British North America. But in 1867, the date of the confederation of the maritime provinces and Canada into one dominion, it became the settled policy of the progressive party then in power to join this territory to the dominion so as to strengthen the British element in the government. To the leading statesmen through whose efforts this scheme was successfully brought about, much honor is due and their names must ever stand brightest among those who have labored for the best interests of the Canadian Northwest.

The Canadian Northwest is divided into the parts known as the Northwest Territory, the province of Manitoba and the districts of Keewatin, Assiniboia, Saskatchewan, Alberta and Athabasca, of which Manitoba and the districts of Alberta, Assiniboia and Saskatchewan are most important, being situated in the southern part of this vast territory and wholly within the great prairie of Canada—containing an area of about 280,000,000 acres of the most fertile lands on the western continent.

Nearly the entire surface of this great country varies from a gently undulating to a high rolling prairie, agreeably diversified by belts of hills, low mountain ranges, numerous rivers, streams, brooks, lakes and valleys. These topographical features render the scenery of this country most charming to the eye of the beholder. The climate of this whole prairie region is most delightful. The summer weather is warm and the autumn magnificent. The atmosphere is clear, pure, light, bracing and salubrious, and without doubt is the most health-promoting in the world. The winters, though cold, are not long, four months being the greatest length in the eastern part, while in the west and near the Rocky Mountains it is so tempered by winds from the Pacific slope that the snow scarcely lies on the ground for any length of time. The absence of humidity in the air prevents the extreme cold from being realized like the same degree would be in the east. Spring commences as early, and even earlier, than in the eastern provinces, and the weather is generally favorable for putting in seeds in April, and this work is usually finished about the first week in May.

The general slope of this great country is north and east, as most of the rivers flow in these directions. The Mackenzie system drains the whole northern section of this country and flows into the Arctic ocean. The Saskatchewan system drains the southern section, and ultimately its waters flow into Hudson Bay.

Hudson bay is a vast, shallow body of water. It constitutes the drainage basin of a wide region of this country. All the waters of the west which do not find their way north to the Arctic ocean through the Athabasca and Peace rivers (affluents of the Mackenzie) flow into it. The principal rivers in the south are: the Saskatchewan, Red and Churchill. The Saskatchewan (North and South) rise at the foothills of Rockies, a considerable distance apart. The South Saskatchewan receive the Red Deer river, and nearer the mountains the Bow and Elbow rivers. The North Saskatchewan receives the Battle river, which drains the country between the Red Deer and the two Saskatchewan. The two Saskatchewan unite their waters at Fort a La Corne in latitude about 53 N., and flowing first northeast and then southeast, enter Lake Winnipeg. Lake Winnipeg also receives Lake Manitoba and Winnipegosis and Red river, which empty all their water into Hudson Bay through the River Nelson. Through most of their courses these rivers flow with great velocity, especially the Saskatchewan (which is an Indian word and means swift-flowing).

The Mackenzie, which is the largest river flowing north, is formed by the junction of the Athabasca and Peace rivers, which rise near the highest summits of the Rocky Mountains, and unite just north of Lake Athabasca. After the junction the Mackenzie flows through Great Slave lake, drains Great Bear lake, and enters the Arctic ocean by a number of mouths. It is navigable for over one thousand miles, but it is of little service to commerce as it is frozen over for a greater part of the year.

Of this vast country drained by the Mackenzie system but little can be said. There are few rock exposures throughout the whole area and only rarely does the surface rise into low hills. It is cold and barren, and there are no forests of commercial value except along the Mackenzie river, which is well wooded. In this northern territory, sometimes called the Lone Land, there are but few inhabitants and these are chiefly Huskies or Esquimaux Indians.

The prairie provinces of Canada are not as well wooded as those in the east, yet along the river courses, near the mountains and on the belts or hills, with which this section is interspersed, there are forests of spruce, pine, oak, elm and poplar. This poplar or aspen, seems to be the characteristic wood of the country, and may be found as far north as latitude 60°, growing in sheltered places along the hills. It is a light, strong wood valuable to the half-breed hunter and trapper for building houses, making carts and implements and for fuel.

That the Canadian Northwest is rich in mineral deposits is no longer a matter of speculation. Gold in paying quantities has been found on the Saskatchewan, Athabasca, Peace and Columbia rivers and their tributaries, and when the country is thoroughly prospected there is every reason to suppose rich mines will be found. Enormous deposits of rich

copper ore are found within a small radius of Copper Mountain, and large deposits of excellent iron ore are to be found in the vicinity of the Canadian Pacific railway in Alberta. Copper and iron are found in greater or less deposits as far north as the Arctic ocean. Veins of galena have been discovered which are known to contain silver, while all the copper deposits are rich enough in silver to pay well for working.

Building stone equal to the best is found everywhere along the foothills of the Rocky Mountains and at Stony Mountain and Selkirk in Manitoba. Clays suitable for the manufacture of bricks and terra cotta have been found in Eastern Alberta and other districts. Lime can be manufactured and is obtainable at nearly all places. Natural gas well as in operation in places along the C. P. R. and will prove a stimulant to manufacturing, as the supply is unlimited.

The Canadian Northwest produces hay, wheat, oats, barley, roots, vegetables, butter and cheese. Horses, cattle, sheep and pigs are profitably raised in some sections. The soil of Manitoba being a rich, deep dark loam, is particularly adapted for the growth of wheat, of which it produces a larger average yield than any other country in the world, and owing to its hardness and superior quality it is much sought after by millers. Other grains grow in profusion and roots generally attain great size.

Of Eastern Assiniboia it may be said that it will one day be as great a wheat-producing country as Manitoba, for it has a deep, rich soil and a climate under which the plant matures with great rapidity, because it receives more sunshine during growth than countries farther south. Western Assiniboia is best adapted for stock-raising and mixed and dairy farming. The hills are thickly covered with nutritious grasses that form an excellent pasture in both winter and summer, and as their elevation makes farming an uncertainty, these pastures will not likely to be disturbed by the plough.

Saskatchewan lies north of Assiniboia and Manitoba and is the largest of the four districts. There are extensive plains in the southern part, but its general features may be described as a mixed prairie and wooded region, well supplied with water and grasses and well adapted by climate and for growing wheat and raising cattle and sheep.

Alberta, the most westerly of the divisions of the Northwest Territory, may be said to have three distinct surface features: 1st, prairie lands in the east which are well timbered in the northern part, 2nd the rolling lands or foot-hills, very heavily timbered also, and 3rd her majestic mountain region. Alberta, embraces an area of about forty-five millions of acres of the most fertile soil on the continent and is well suited to general farming as pursued in the eastern provinces.

Throughout these provinces small wild fruits such as strawberries, currants, gooseberries, raspberries, chokeberries and saskatoon berries grow in abundance and game such as wild ducks, geese, prairie chickens, wild turkeys, moose, deer, etc., are plentiful near the settled districts, while various kinds of fish abound in the lakes and rivers of this whole area.

Nearly forgotten, though not the least of the attractions of the prairie, are the beautiful flowers that adorn it from early spring to autumn. Among the early spring flowers is the little blue violet seen in other lands. June comes with roses. Everywhere this shrub is to be seen with its bright blossoms filling the air with perfume. July abounds in flowers of every hue from the pale anemone, pink and white lilies to that most brilliant flower, the orange red lily which grows in myriads and blooms late in August like many other beautiful and rare flowers of these plains.

The Northwest provinces have been accurately surveyed by the dominion government and divided into townships six miles square. Each township contains thirty-six sections, all numbered. The C. P. R. owns all the odd numbered sections except 17 and 29, which are reserved by the government for school purposes. The sections owned by the C. P. R. are for sale at prices varying from \$3 to \$6 per acre. The even numbered sections except 8 and 28, which belong to the Hudson Bay company are open for free settlements, or they may be purchased from the dominion government for a certain price per acre.

If a settler wishes to obtain land free (this is called homesteading) he must pay the homestead entry fee of \$10 and perform certain duties required under the present law. Nearly all of the best homesteads are taken, but there are still some to be got in different parts of the provinces, and there is plenty of excellent land to buy from the C. P. R. and from private parties.

The resources of the great plains of Canada are so vast, numerous and varied that no other new country in the world can offer such inducements to an industrious farmer, laborer or mechanic wishing to change or better his condition in life. The first is the C. P. R. and its branches, affording better accommodation for colonists than any other route to convey them and goods to or near the place where they wish to locate. Next, etc., a free farm with the best soil in America, well-watered and in the midst of lovely scenery, that will in a short time produce a good living for himself and family; an abundance of fuel, for coal is found in several sections, but chiefly in Alberta where are the greatest coal fields in the world, which owing to their proximity to the C. P. R. are easily used at reasonable prices; stores in every town and village, where he can get the com-

forts and luxuries of life; free schools of a high standard, that are established as soon as they are needed; postal service that is a marvel to so new a country, and telegraph lines that are being constantly extended as they are required; stations with elevators for storing all the grain, and a good market with good prices for the same; and last though not least a civilized, intelligent, Christian people to settle among.

The population of the country is largely of foreign element and contains people from nearly all the civilized nations of the world, but in some sections the native half-breed element prevails. These half-breeds are descendants of English and French officers and servants of the Hudson Bay Company, who married Indian squaws, but they are among the most peaceable and intelligent of the inhabitants of the Northwest. Under the present system of government, "than which none is better," these inhabitants of the plains are a most prosperous, happy and contented people, enjoying all the blessings of modern civilization. Nearly all the Christian denominations are represented here, and many have fine churches and colleges and comfortable houses for their ministers. Manitoba has a deaf and dumb institute, an insane asylum, and other benevolent institutions. Agriculture is the leading and most important industry, but manufacturing interests are increasing with the population; and there are flour mills, paper mills, woollen factories, wooden factories, machine, carriage and harness shops, and shoe factories already in operation in Manitoba and several outside districts.

That there is a grand future possible for the Canadian Northwest not even the most skeptical will doubt, and if the progress of the past ten years is any indication of what the coming years will bring them, indeed we may say that not even the greatest mind can conceive an idea of the glory that awaits the future of the great Canadian Northwest.

R. HELENA ESTABROOKS,
Sackville, N. B.

SCHEME FOR AN OCEAN TROLLEY.

Latest Plan to Send Great Ships Spinning Across the Sea.

It is pretty well understood that the limit of speed in ocean steamers is about reached if the present models are adhered to and that if there is to be any gain in swiftness it must be by the trial of a new form. The difficulty is to devise a vessel of which the structural strength shall be great enough to carry the massive engines requisite for increased speed and at the same time to resist the force of the ocean storms. If the sea were calm there would be no difficulty in increasing the speed of the ocean greyhounds, but with the tremendous force of waves and storms it is not possible to do this with the present models. It is not impossible that the solution of the problem lies in the submarine ship, and that the passenger steamer of the future will go under water instead of across its surface. The advance made in the planning and working of submarine boats in the last ten years makes this seem not wholly impossible, as it must have looked once, and there is no doubt that the freedom from the effects of surface storms would allow a swiftness which could hardly be arrived at on the surface. It may also solve the question of seasickness, as it is probable that submarine locomotion would be much smoother and less disturbing to the stomach than the present method of traveling. All that one can say, however, is that we shall see what we shall see.

Perhaps the steamer of the future will be operated on a trolley by means of a submarine cable. The advantage of this plan would be great, as it would prevent the necessity of carrying immense quantities of fuel and of keeping the vessel loaded down with enormous engines. All the delay and difficulty and expense of managing furnaces and engines on board ship would be done away with by the oceanic trolley system, and the ship could be made so much lighter that it would go whizzing across the ocean in a couple of days. Danger of accident could be brought to be no greater than it is at present by having a sufficient number of repair steamers on the route, which could keep the cables in repair, and in case of any accident to the trolley could bring the passenger boat into port or put it again in connection with the cable.

There can be no question that the proper means of crossing the Atlantic quickly is by some system which will allow the motive power to be applied from the shore, either by a trolley or cable. The limit of speed for ships that carry engines and fuel is certainly practically reached on the surface, and, there are difficulties in the way of submarine navigation which it would be hard to conquer. The trolley system is capable of great extension, and we may yet live to go to Europe by its means.

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