

SETTLEMENT IN SASKATCHEWAN
WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE INFLUENCE OF
DRY FARMING

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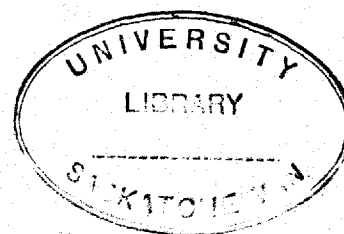


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INTRODUCTION

"I have been assured that the British public do not care much about Canada, except as a refuge for the superfluous population. It is quite satisfied, say my informants, with pamphlets on the subject distributed by the Canadian Pacific Railway Company and other emigration agents. This is doubtless true of a large class. The pamphlets in question record only the successes of the British settlers in Canada. It is no business of theirs to give the many losses, their cause, and how to avoid them. A boy is backward at school - he cannot pass an examination for a profession; why trouble, says a sanguine friend, to work up for a second attempt? Why don't you go and make your fortune in Canada? How this fortune is to be made, or even how the small capital which the boy perhaps takes out with him is to be safely invested and kept from melting away, does not seem to occur to his adviser. So an inexperienced sanguine youth sets forth from his home - credulous because he has lived among honest people, unacquainted with any species of labour except cricket and football, but confident in his own judgement - to fall an easy prey to those unscrupulous gentry who in every colony are prepared to welcome the novice and dispose of unprofitable land, unsaleable machinery, worn-out cattle, and anything else they want to get rid of - at his expense. This is the commonest way in which fortunes are made and lost in Canada.....

"Yet we have heard men, who have started a son with £500 or a £1000, speak as confidently of a certain interest on that sum within a year or two, as if it had been invested in British consols. If farming is hazardous and slow to bring a profit in England, it is much more hazardous and experimental in the most uncertain climate of the North-West; but then many of us cannot afford to indulge in farming at all in England, and it can be enjoyed by everyone for a comparative trifle in Canada, if a man farms on Canadian soil in the Canadian way."(1)

But to farm on Canadian soil in the Canadian way was exactly what the early settlers failed to do; and it was not

(1) Johnstone, Winter and Summer Excursions in Canada, p.xii-xv

until this simple truth was brought home to them, after years of failure, that settlement on the western plains made any progress.

Ignorant of the true conditions of the country, the people, not only of Great Britain and Europe, but of Eastern Canada, had flooded upon them a mass of propaganda in the form of pamphlets, books and lectures, telling of the wonderful opportunity awaiting them in the country west of the Red River. According to the propagandists, all that was necessary in order to grow wheat in this distant land was to turn the sod over and plant the seed - the crop would never fail. The larger the quantity of seed planted the more fabulous would be the proceeds. After a few years farming the settler would be able to return to his native land and spend the remainder of his life a retired man. Unfortunately all this propaganda was believed by many people. Leaving their old homes, and often good positions, they set out for the land of "milk and honey", unprepared for the problems with which they were to be confronted but confident that in a very few years they would be wealthy, and, if they desired, would be able to return home and live at ease.

The vicissitudes which these people experienced in the country of their adoption will be told in the following pages. Although the arrival of the Canadian Pacific Railway in 1883 solved, in some measure, the transportation question,

there still remained the problems of drought and frost and for some time it seemed that the statement of Sir George Simpson, made before the Select Committee on the Hudson's Bay Company in 1857, would be borne out. He had said: "I do not think that any part of the Hudson's Bay Company's Territories is well adapted for settlement; the crops are very uncertain." (1) Ridiculed by propagandists of the 'seventies and 'eighties, and even by present day writers (2), this statement has been interpreted as dictated by his interest in the fur-trade. His modern critics, in claiming that the west to-day has given the lie to his contention, forget that Simpson spoke before the discovery of an early-maturing wheat and dry land farming. He could not foresee that agriculture science was to revolutionize the possibilities of the west. In his day, besides the lack of transportation facilities, there were no means of coping with the problems of drought and frost; both of which constituted the barrier to the settlement of the west, as he well knew. The propaganda of the immigration officials and railway agents made no mention of either of these; and, as a consequence, the settlers did not come prepared to guard against them. Located along the railway line, their one and sole aim was to produce thousands of bushels of wheat and they sought to

(1) Report of the Select Committee on the Hudson's Bay Company, 1857, p.45, Question No. 716

(2) c.f. MacInnes, In the Shadow of the Rockies, p.252-3

increase the acreage of this grain at the expense of proper cultivation and other branches of agriculture. A visit of drought or frost meant complete failure, and, in most cases, bankruptcy. Only after years of bitter experience which often resulted in the depopulation of whole districts did the settler learn the lesson of proper farming. To guard against drought he must practice better methods of land tillage and to guard against frost he must diversify his farming operations and grow less wheat. The failure of the settler sooner to learn this lesson and the consequent ill-effects on settlement was caused largely by the false impression given him by the eastern propagandists.

CHAPTER I

SETTLEMENT AND AGRICULTURE BEFORE THE RAILWAY

The Canadian North-West embraces that vast alluvial plain, drained principally by the Mackenzie and Nelson river systems. It is bounded on the south by the 49th parallel of latitude, the boundary separating Canada and the United States, to the west by the Rocky Mountains, and to the east by the province of Ontario. The total area of this region is 758,817 square miles, not including the vast expanse lying north of the 60th parallel of latitude. Beginning at the Red River, where it is fifty miles wide, the Prairie land extends westward to the Rocky Mountains, gradually increasing in breadth, till it is about two hundred miles in width. Looking westward, this immense stretch of treeless land is strictly three terraces which are covered with a growth of grass of varying thickness and, if not level, are slightly rolling country, with the monotony broken by a few scattered hills, and by occasional deep valleys, the former beds of great rivers. Looking northward, it is a triangular prairie gradually passing into a country which may be described as park grass-land, where the intermittent groups of trees and stretches of prairie give the landscape a very beautiful appearance. Farther northward the groups of trees become more numerous and larger, until forests of merchantable timber are reached. Due to climatic and general physiographic

factors, the greater part of the extreme north region is admittedly a land not adapted to agricultural development; but in the prairie and park belts of the country the soil is admirably suited to the growth of grain and the climate is less rigorous. Especially is this true of the prairie belt where warm winds from time to time soothe the winter weather and the bright sunshine in the summer dispells the frost at an early date and extends the mild season well into the autumn. But where the danger of frost is least the lack of moisture is greatest while, proceeding northward, the precipitation becomes greater but the autumn frosts become earlier. Outside of these drawbacks, however, the southern part of the North-West presents an excellent field for agricultural settlement; and, as man gradually achieved his conquest over nature, the disagreeable features of the climate were mitigated in their influence.

For many years the great North-West, or, as it was called by the Hudson's Bay Company's charter, Rupert's Land, remained an unknown and unexplored waste. With the exception of the explorations of a few men connected with the Hudson's Bay Company and of La Verendrye, nothing was done in the way of penetrating the inland regions of the country before the last quarter of the 18th century. In the first years of the 19th century, however, the country was being gradually opened up by the fur-traders of the North-West Company. The

North-Westerns had no fur-trade monopoly, as did their rivals the Hudson's Bay Company, and consequently they were forced to extend their field of operations to the inmost depths of North America in order to intercept the trade between the Indians and the English Company. The result was the establishment of posts as far north as the Peace and Mackenzie rivers. At each of these posts was stationed one or more clerks, some of whom, in order to make life more pleasant in their isolated position, cultivated a small garden. In time many fur-trade posts had such a garden which supplied, in small measure, the provisions for the forts as well as a food supply for the canoes when the quantity of pemmican became low.(1)

That the policy of the North-West Company in carrying on garden operations about the posts proved highly successful is shown by the fact that its policy was adopted by the Hudson's Bay Company when that organization decided to extend its field of operations farther inland after 1774 and more intensively after 1821. In the forty-five years following the fusion of the two companies this policy was deliberately extended. In reviewing the report of the Select Committee on the Hudson's Bay Company in 1857 we find much evidence which proves that at many of the Company's trading posts vegetables and coarse grains were grown and with

(1) c.f. Cox - Columbia River, p.253
Franchère - Narrative of a Voyage &c. p. 326, 331, 335 and 341-3
Coxes, New Light on the North-West &c. -Throughout the journal of Alexander Henry the Younger there are entries describing garden operations about his various posts.

considerable success. The reports of Palliser's Explorations from 1857 to 1860 and of Hind's explorations in 1860 point to a similar conclusion.

Nevertheless the cultivation of wheat was extremely limited and where it was grown the crop was very uncertain. It was more often frozen than not and we hear of very few instances of its being cultivated with any degree of certainty. These early attempts at cultivation in the North-West proved that the country was not a barren waste incapable of producing grains of any kind; but at the same time they gave no guarantee that it would support an agricultural settlement which depended for its subsistence upon the production of wheat. Rather they gave a warning that only by improved methods of agriculture and the discovery of an earlier-maturing wheat could the cultivation of this cereal be successful. Unfortunately no heed was taken of this warning by the settlers coming in after 1880.

As early as 1812 on the banks of the Red River an attempt was made to establish a colony which would be dependent upon the produce of the soil for its subsistence. Lord Selkirk was aware that on the treeless prairie country the soil could be turned over immediately and seed committed to the ground. No doubt this factor influenced him in making the site of the Red River Valley his choice. He was anxious that his colonists should not be under the same handicap that faced the pioneers of Ontario - the task of clearing the

forest before cultivation could begin. However in letting this factor weigh heavily in his choice, his Lordship neglected to consider an even more serious problem, that of transportation. (1) The exportation of produce out of the country was not a question of concern for some years to come; but the bringing of goods and domestic animals in was acute from the beginning.

What with the opposition of the North-West Company, the lack of co-operation from the Hudson's Bay Company, the locust pests and the floods, the absence, until after 1823, of adequate farm implements (2), and the ignorance and

(1) There is reason to believe that Lord Selkirk had given considerable thought to river transportation. Opposition from the North-West Company and frigidity on the part of the Hudson's Bay Company, however, prevented him from realizing his scheme.

(2) Macdonell's Journal, October 8, 1812

Gunn, History of Manitoba, pp. 106 and 144

It seems incredible that Lord Selkirk should have failed to provide the settlement with the necessary implements for cultivation. It is quite probable that he had secured the services of a blacksmith who was to go out and construct the plows and harrows and that this worthy gentleman was among those whom the North-West Company had persuaded to desert when the ship took off from Stornoway.

indolence of the settlers themselves (1), the progress of the colony during the first years of its history was anything but satisfactory. After twelve years of failure the colonists, in 1824, reaped the first truly satisfactory crop of grain and the flood two years later ushered in a period of prosperity for the settlement.(2) Frost checked this unprecedented prosperity in 1836(3) and between the years 1836 and 1868 the colonists faced good and bad crops alike. With their crops destroyed in 1867 and 1868 by the locusts and with the fall buffalo hunt and fisheries, in 1868, proving a failure the people of Red River, for the first time in many years, faced the dreadful prospect of starvation. Subscriptions for their relief were solicited in Great Britain, the United States and Canada. The relief from Canada, coming in the form of an ambitious scheme for road building, ushered in a new phase in the development of the Red River colony. Misunderstandings between the

(1) Macdonell's Journal, Dec.18, 1812; Sept.8, 1812; May 28, 1813; June 28, 1813

(2) On June 14, 1829, George Simpson wrote: "This settlement is in the most perfect state of tranquillity, 'peace and plenty' may be said to be its motto and the prospect of crops most flattering." Selkirk Papers, p.293

(3) Ross, Red River Settlement, p.187
Gunn, op. cit., p.293

Canadians and the half-breeds brought about the disturbances which pass under the inappropriate name of the Riel Rebellion. The object of the movement was achieved and the people were admitted by agreement as the Province of Manitoba into the Dominion of Canada.

In spite of the fact that Lord Selkirk had expended so much money and effort in an attempt to bring cattle into the colony, stock-raising never became a popular enterprise among the settlers. In 1827 Governor Simpson, in a second attempt to divert the energies of the farmers into channels other than the production of wheat, sought to arouse their interest in the growing of flax and hemp(1); but, due partly to the ignorance of the producers and partly to mismanagement by those at the head of affairs, the attempt was a failure.(2) Following this came the formation of the "Fallow Company" but, whether because of the loss of a market or sheer miscalculation, the scheme proved a fiasco.(3) The Governor then turned his attention to the development of sheep farming in the colony.(4) Sheep were imported from the United States but, although this industry expanded for a time, the fall

(1) Selkirk Papers, p.8404

(2) Gunn, op.cit., p.270

(3) Ibid, p.271-3

(4) Selkirk Papers, p. 8436, 8473, 8478, 8500

in the price of wool due to the competition in the domestic market of imported ready-made clothes, brought about a decline so that by 1869 the raising of sheep was anything but common. (1) Thus in 1869 the Red River farmer still placed his chief reliance on wheat, a product which was harvested with uncertainty and for which the market was limited.

By 1870 only one attempt had been made at settlement in the North-West. The venture would hardly warrant the exaggerated accounts of the North-West which became common in the early 'eighties. Progress on the banks of the Red River had been slow and we have left the colonists, in the winter of 1868, seeking relief from Great Britain, the United States and Canada. Outside of the colony we have found that a few attempts had been made at agricultural cultivation about the fur-trading posts but these proved little or nothing. Due to the absence of a market, the early frosts and occasional droughts the west was not yet an hospitable land for the agriculturists. The coming of the railway solved the transportation problem; but only after years of privation and failure on the part of the early settlers were the problems of early frosts and drought to be partially solved.

The progress of the province of Manitoba, during the

(1) Nor'Wester, May 14, 1860

first few years of its history, was little different from that of the Red River Colony from which it had developed. Settlers were gradually pushing westward but it was not until rumors of the arrival of the railway began to fill the air that there was any rapid movement of settlement. After 1878 Manitoba passed into a period of speculation which saw cities rise over night and whole country sides peopled within a week. With the completion of the railway the "boom" crashed to be followed by a period of stringent depression which slowly gave way to progressive settlement.(1)

Farther west the end of the rule of the Hudson's Bay Company in 1870 marked the beginning of a period of lawlessness which continued until the coming of the North-West Mounted Police in 1874. Unprepared for the administrative task which it had taken over the Canadian

(1) As Oliver writes: "The coming of the railway in the early 'eighties produced a 'boom' in Manitoba which promised to make a city of every hamlet fortunate to find itself on the railway.....When the Canadian Pacific Railway arrived unrestrained advertising, unscrupulous mishandling of public confidence, subdivision exploitation, sudden opulence, later so familiar to the west, disturbed the little prairie communities as train-load after train-load of speculators was dumped down.

".....Though immigration was for a time stimulated, depression followed when the boom broke. Only slowly and by painful efforts were general credit and industry re-established." The Settlement of the Prairies, Cambridge History of the British Empire, Vol.VI, p.523

Government failed to provide the necessary machinery for keeping law and order with the result that "beyond the province of Manitoba westward to the Rocky mountains, there (was) no kind of government.....whatever, and no security for life or property beyond what people (were able to do) for themselves."(1) Conditions rapidly changed, however, with the coming of the police force and in a very few years law and order were once more established.

The establishment of law and order gave birth to the ranching industry.(2) To encourage the growth of ranching the Government, in 1880, revised the land regulations (3); and on January 20, 1885, the Deputy Minister of the Interior was able to report that the success of this industry in the Fort Macleod district, and generally along the base of the

(1) Report of Colonel Robertson-Ross on the North-West Provinces and Territories of the Dominion for 1872, p.25 (Fleming Collection, Pacific Railway and the North-West Territories, Vol.III, 1872-3

(2) The first domestic stock to arrive in the neighborhood of the Canadian ranges were brought in 1871 and when, in 1877, Fred Kamouse turned a bull and 21 cows loose on the open prairie, Alberta ranching came into being. Kelly, The Range Men, p.111-120

[1880]
(3) The new regulations provided for the leasing of government land up to 100,000 acres, not liable to cancellation, at an annual rental of \$10 a year per 1,000 acres, later revised to \$20. Lessees were given the privilege of importing their cattle free of duty. MacInnes, op.cit, p.201

Rocky Mountains to Calgary, was assured. There were 41 companies and individuals engaged in that business, holding under lease from the Department, an area of 2,782,690 acres, on which they had placed a large number of cattle, horses and sheep.(1) With the completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway and with it the assurance of a market, the ranching industry was definitely established and in 1888 William Pearce reported that 5,000 cattle had been shipped from the Calgary district to England that year.(2)

The early expansion of the ranching industry in the North-West is explained largely by the different requirements of this industry in regard to transportation as compared with farming. Cattle, horses and sheep could be driven a hundred or more miles to a point of shipping. Consequently ranching was engaged in even before the advent of the railway and, with the coming of the railway in 1884, its expansion was assured. Generally speaking, stock was only marketed once a year and the whole herd which was to be sold would be brought to the railway at one time. The transportation requirements of the agricultural industry were entirely different. Before the advent of the railway the successful prosecution of farming was almost impossible since, to thrive, an agricultural community must have some means of shipping out its surplus produce. Although the rivers

(1) Report Department of the Interior (Ottawa) 1885, p.xii
(2) Ibid, 1889, Part I, p.10

sufficed in regard to the fur industry, the products of the farm were too bulky to be transported in this manner. Even with the coming of the Canadian Pacific Railway agricultural settlement was confined, speaking generally, to within thirty or forty miles of the line. To haul the products of the farm further than this distance proved too expensive to guarantee any profit to the producer. Thus ranching was the fore-runner of agriculture; where distance from transportation facilities precluded the prosecution of farming, ranching was engaged in.

In many parts of the west, however, there were several settlements which sprang up before the advent of the railway. In such colonies cereal crops were produced only for home consumption while the importing power was secured by the exportation of other products - furs, stock and timber, to mention a few. They were essentially self-sustaining agricultural communities and, while few products were exported, the necessity for imports was kept at a minimum.

As early as 1862 an half-breed settlement had been founded at St. Albert by the Roman Catholic Church and another was established four or five miles east of Fort Qu'Appelle.(1) As the Province of Manitoba became more settled, a westward exodus of the Metis began. After selling

(1) Papers Of William Pearce, No.11, p.1 - c.f. Population Map of 1881 for the location of Fort Qu'Appelle.

their small plots of land to new-comers, they set out, with their remaining possessions in their old carts, in caravans of thirty or forty families for "that land of milk and honey where life seemed so easy and attractive, where the herds of bison, excessively exaggerated by the imaginations of those hunters, appeared to them a never-failing and ever-ready resource."(1) Some drifted as far as northern Alberta to join their compatriots at St. Albert; others formed a settlement near Wood Mountain Post; others added to the one at Qu'Appelle(2); and still others established themselves about the posts of Fort Pelly and Touchwood Hill(3). In 1870 a large caravan of half-breeds stopped on the banks of the South Saskatchewan and founded the settlement of St. Laurent. Between the years 1874 and 1886, missions were established at Duck Lake, Batoche and St. Louis de Langevin; and this whole area became a solid community of French half-breeds, a few retired Hudson's Bay Company men being the only English speaking element in the population.(4)

Besides these settlements there was a good sprinkling

- (1) Rev. Father J. Le Chevallier, St. Laurent De Grandin p.19
- (2) Trow, Manitoba and the North-West, p.50 - c.f. Population Map 1881.
- (3) Report Dept. of the Interior (Ottawa) 1881, Part I, p.93
- (4) Chevallier, op.cit., p.19-41; Trow, op.cit., p.70; Spence, The Saskatchewan Country, p.9; Tasse, The North-West, p.28-9; McPhillip's Business Directory of Saskatchewan.

of half-breeds in both Prince Albert and Battleford, whither they drifted between the years 1874 and 1885. In 1881 the population of Battleford was approximately fifty per cent half-breeds and the proportion in Prince Albert was almost as great.(1) In 1883 and 1884 another large influx of half-breeds from Manitoba brought about the settlement of Bresaylor, 25 miles west of Battleford.(2)

The occupation of the half-breeds was divided between that of hunting and farming and, save in exceptional cases, the greater attention was devoted to the former pursuit. When Trow visited St. Laurent in 1878 he found everybody, with the exception of a few old women and small children, away to the plains hunting the buffalo and preparing their winter supplies.(3) Farming, as a result, was done very indifferently and the main reliance of the settlers was placed on the hunt. It could hardly have been otherwise. With agriculture on such an uncertain basis, due to the lack of transportation facilities, the settlers were enabled, by means of the chase, to supply themselves with provisions which would not have been forthcoming from their farms.

(1) Census, 1881 (Ottawa)

(2) Clinkskill - The settlement was founded by three families - the Taylors, the Saers and the Bremans - after whom it was named.

(3) Trow, op.cit., p.69

Made up partly of half-breeds and partly of white people, Prince Albert and Battleford had been founded before 1880. As early as 1866 A Presbyterian Missionary, Nesbitt by name, had established a church and school at what was to become Prince Albert and ten years later Captain Moore, an enterprising and wealthy Irishman, brought machinery from Winnipeg to construct a grist mill.(1) For some time the settlement remained predominantly half-breed in character but, after 1880, a large influx of settlers from Ontario began, in anticipation of the railway passing through this place on its way to the Pacific Coast.

(1) Report Dept. of the Interior, 1881, Part I, p.97; Macoun, op.cit., p.96; Interior 1877, Part III, p.13; Trew, op.cit., p.67-8; Spence, Canadian Prairie Lands, p.40.

In 1877 there were about 100 houses in and about Prince Albert and the settlement had a population of 500 souls. Besides the steam saw and grist mill there were, in the town two general stores, a water power grist mill, Church of England Bishopric, Presbyterian Mission and school, blacksmith shop &c. Over 1,200 acres were under crop in 1877. The surplus produce in 1878 amounted to 15,000 or 20,000 bushels and the cattle and horses in the settlement numbered from 8,000 to 9,000. There were in the settlement 14 reapers, and three threshing machines, and almost every farmer owned a mower while buggies and carriages were in abundance. Sheep and hogs were scarce, and there were but few domestic fowls, wolves and Indian dogs being too fierce enemies to allow them to exist.

By 1881 the settlement extended a distance of about 30 miles on the south side of the North Saskatchewan river, and numbered over 1,000 settlers.

Buoyed up with the prospect of railway communication in the near future and possessing already a market, although an uncertain one, for its surplus produce at the fur-trading posts, the colony prospered during the early years of its existence. But as the settlement grew, and the Government changed the route of the railway to the south of the Qu'Appelle Valley, the lack of a market caused a fall in prices for farm produce with the result that little progress was made after 1880.(1)

Besides the lack of a market, the production of wheat

(1) "No general advancement," wrote the Prince Albert North-West Mounted Police Inspector in 1888, "has taken place during the year in the prosperity of this district, which is entirely due to want of railway communication. New settlers cannot come in, and those already here find no markets for their produce. A feeling exists among the farmers that it is useless to grow more grain, or raise more cattle than can be profitably disposed of; consequently the acreage under crop is not, this year, nor has it ever been, proportionate to the population, nor has cattle-growing developed in the manner which can fairly be expected with an enlarged market. No decided increase in the wealth or prosperity of the district can be looked for until railroad connection is made with outside markets.....The prices of all cereals are very low. Wheat is 75 cents per bushel, a price which compares unfavorably with the \$1.10 reported as received by the more fortunate settlers along the railway line. Oats sell for 25 cents or 30 cents per bushel. There is no sale for barley. Beef cattle are selling for \$25 to \$30 per head." (N.W.M.P. Report 1888, p.94).

was retarded by the danger of early frost.(1) This encouraged the raising of stock with the resulting contraction in the acreage of wheat. The danger of a complete loss was thus removed should the crops be visited by an early frost and, at the same time, the problem of a market was partly solved. Prince Albert became a characteristic mixed-farming community.

In 1874 Battleford was founded by engineers of the Canadian Pacific Railway. Situated partly in the valley, and partly on the high ground to the south of Battle River, it was chosen as the site of the new capital and seat of government of the North-West Territories, and also as headquarters of the North-West Mounted Police.(2) In 1883 a rival town was commenced on the high plateau between the Battle River and Saskatchewan and in the rebellion of 1885

(1) For instance, in 1880, the wheat crop was completely ruined due to an early frost, Interior 1882, Part I, p.100
 (2) McPhillip's Directory, p.53; Sutherland, A Summer in Prairie Land, p.192-3. By 1881 the population of the settlement was about 800. On a level bottom, on the south side of the Battle river, there were about 15 or 20 buildings. On the hill south of the business part of the town were the residences of the Governor, the stipendiary magistrate, the registrar and other public functionaries. Across the Battle river and between it and the North Saskatchewan were located the police barracks.

the old town was destroyed and never rebuilt (1). Besides the lack of transportation facilities the Battleford settler was faced with the combined problems of drought and frost; but, forced by the absence of a market for wheat, to divert his energies into stock-raising these latter problems were, in large measure, solved, since he remained no longer dependent upon his wheat crop. Battleford, as Prince Albert, became a predominantly stock-raising community.

In the southern part of the province the railway preceded the settler and settlers were not confronted in the same way, with a serious transportation problem. Consequently with a ready market for their wheat, they devoted all their energies to the production of this grain with results which proved disastrous to many. That mixed farming is not, in all cases, a means of solving the problems of drought and early frost, is admitted; but until dry-land farming and an earlier-maturing wheat made the production of this cereal possible, mixed farming or ranching appeared to be the only way out. By the curtailment of the acreage of wheat and the raising of stock, the gambling chances of the farmer were greatly increased. In many parts of the province, however, the country was totally unsuited to the

(1) By 1885 the new town had developed to considerable proportions. Besides the police barracks there were the Hudson Bay store, A. Macdonald's store, the Roman Catholic mission, James Clinkskill's new store and about 20

raising of stock, due chiefly to the lack of water; while the soil was admirably adapted to the production of wheat. In these parts drought and early frost did not influence the type of farming practiced, they prevented settlement altogether.

To some extent the settlers of Assiniboia were faced with problems over which they had no control. The climatic conditions were among the chief causes of poor crops, and unfortunately they are largely beyond man's power to change. But, although the undesirable features of the climate could not be avoided; its favorable aspects could be taken advantage of. After years of bitter experience, years which could largely have been avoided, the settlers were to learn that they were not absolutely helpless at the hands of their natural enemies. How different might have been those early years of settlement had the settlers come prepared for the serious problems of drought and early frost!

CHAPTER II

THE ERA OF SPECULATIVE SETTLEMENT

What is now the province of Saskatchewan was, before 1905, comprised in the two administrative districts of Assiniboia and Saskatchewan. Bounded on the east by the Manitoba boundary and on the west by the line dividing Range 10 and 11, west of the 4th Meridian, the district of Assiniboia extended from the International Boundary north to the north limit of township 34, which is near to the 52nd parallel of latitude. The district of Saskatchewan, lying to the north of Assiniboia, was bounded on the north by latitude 55 degrees, .06', 46", on the east by Lake Winnipeg and Nelson river flowing therefrom, and on the west by the line dividing the 10th and 11th ranges, west of the Fourth.

The land of what was the district of Assiniboia is mostly flat or rolling prairie, covered with a growth of grass, with here and there small elevations such as Moose Mountain, Wood Mountain, the Cypress Hills and the Sand Hills and the large area north of the Qu'Appelle river, comprising the Beaver, Touchwood and Pheasant Hills. The southern part of this area is drained by two small streams, the Qu'Appelle and the Souris, which join the Assiniboine in Manitoba, which carries its waters to the Red River at Winnipeg. The northern and western parts are drained principally by the south branch of the Saskatchewan river.

The area which was formerly the district of Saskatchewan is a mixed prairie and woodland country and is drained almost wholly by the north and south branches of the Saskatchewan river, only a small corner in the north-west part being drained by the Mackenzie river system.

Speaking generally, the area which comprised the districts of Assiniboia and Saskatchewan, and which is now part of the province of Saskatchewan, can be divided into two agricultural regions, the one subject to drought and the other subject to early frosts, although in neither region was the drawback of the other totally absent. The chief concern of this thesis rests with the first of the agricultural areas indicated. Roughly this area "is bounded on the south by the International Boundary, on the east and north by a line commencing at the intersection of longitude West 102 degrees with the International Boundary, and from thence north-westerly to latitude 51 degrees, 30' and thence west....."(1) More particularly it includes all the territory west of Indian Head on the main line of the Canadian Pacific Railway and south, the country about Alameda and Estevan, together with the districts of Saskatoon and Battleford.(2) The country east of Indian

(1) Dennis, General Report on Irrigation and Canadian Irrigation Surveys, 1894, Ottawa, 1895

(2) c.f. Population Map, 1891, Appendices

Head on the main line of the Canadian Pacific Railway, the country in the most south-eastern corner of Assiniboia and the district of Yorkton fall more into the region affected by early frost while the Prince Albert district and the country east very definitely does so. The region described as semi-arid is marked by low precipitation and hot, dry winds which make evaporation very great. While precipitation is not so much more in the frost ridden region - in some cases not any more - hot, dry winds are almost unknown and consequently evaporation is not so great. It is not the total amount of precipitation which determines the productiveness of a given region but the "net" precipitation, which is the total less the evaporation from the soil. In the semi-arid belt net precipitation is considerably less than in the more humid belt lying north and east.

The settlement of Assiniboia was an outgrowth of that movement which came with the arrival of the Canadian Pacific Railway. As the line of steel rapidly pushed itself westward, people poured into the country. "These," wrote Powers, "were the days when lynx-eyed conductors were little feared, and when train fare merely amounted to a bagatelle. Every west-bound wight, speculator, navvy or bum, boarded the cars 'to work at the end of the tracks'. He coolly got off where he pleased or remained on the road to shoulder

ties or drive spikes."(1) During these years the settlement of the country was directed by but one thing - the railway; and at every siding a village sprang up about which, for miles, all the available land was feverishly claimed by land-seekers. In Assiniboia the "boom" did not reach the same proportions as in Manitoba but to some extent the craze spread to this district. Thousands of acres along the line of railway were claimed by men who never intended to settle. The result was that large tracts of the very best land lay idle for years, their owners waiting for a rise in land values before disposing of them. The effect was wholly bad. The bona fide settler had to locate miles from the railway and often found himself in a township owned almost entirely by land-speculators. Thus he remained isolated for years to come, denied schools for his children, roads to haul his farm products out and churches for prayer of a Sunday; or, if such things were procured, the rate of taxes imposed a heavy burden on the shoulders of the struggling settler.

It was not until 1882 that Assiniboia began to feel the effect of the immigration movement. Before this time Prince Albert, Battleford and Edmonton were the only parts affected beyond Manitoba. The original plan of the Government had been to build the railway through the northern parts of the Territories, via Battleford and Edmonton;

(1) Powers, History of Regina (1887), p. 12

and it was not until construction had actually begun west of Winnipeg that the route was changed to the south. Consequently before 1882 settlers went north rather than south and the railway was on its way to Pile of Bones Creek (1) before the incoming settlers awakened to the fact that the Qu'Appelle Valley was a rich field for settlement and investment. The result was that in the north rather than in the south were to be found isolated communities which were artificially boomed under the idea that a railway was to be built through them and then left to struggle along for years without transportation facilities.

In 1882, there were 822 entries granted in the Qu'Appelle land district while there were only 299 in Prince Albert.(2) This year marks the turning of the tide in settlement. Although there probably were a larger proportion of bona fide settlers among the Prince Albert than among the Qu'Appelle entrants, nevertheless, the fact that there were almost three times as many in the latter district is significant. By 1883 the tide had set in very definitely in favor of the southern region. In that year, 2,268 people filed for homesteads in the Regina district while only 106 did so in the Prince Albert.(3)

An attempt was made in this year to bring in settlers

- (1) Wascana River, running through Regina
- (2) Report Dept. of the Interior, Part I, p.142-3
- (3) Ibid 1883, Part I, Appendix A.

through Colonization Companies, which contracted with the Dominion Government to people reserved areas at the rate of \$120 for each settler. Twenty six of these companies were organized and granted land in Manitoba and the North-West Territories to the extent of 2,973,978 acres.(1) Their success, however, was short lived. Most of them proved financial failures, and none succeeded in placing any considerable number of permanent settlers upon their lands. The majority were dissolved in 1886, and none remained in operation after 1891. Looked at from the point of view of number of settlers brought in, the results are negligible; but the fact that some of the colonies which they established, though they remained for several years small in numbers, eventually became the centres of important communities, renders their position in the history of settlement of considerable importance.

Among the most important of the districts so colonized were those of Yorkton, Crescent Lake and Kindbrae, the first by the York Farmer's Colonization Company (2), the

(1) Report Dept. of the Interior, 1883, p.xiii

(2) In 1883, the total number of settlers in this colony was 155 (Interior, 1883, Part I, p.9); by 1884 there were in the town a post office, a general store, several offices of professional gentlemen and a very comfortable stopping house for travellers (Interior, 1884, Part I, p.22). By 1887 the agent estimated that the total product of wheat throughout the colony would amount to about 25,000 bushels, besides oats, barley, potatoes, etc. (Ibid, 1887, Part I, p.33-4)

second by the Saskatchewan Land and Homestead Company (1) and the third by the Montreal Colonization Company(2). On the south branch of the Saskatchewan river the Temperance colony, which found its centre in the village of Saskatoon, was established in 1882, although the first settlers did not arrive until 1883. At the end of the following year the progress of the colony had been considerable: already there had been erected on the town-site "several substantial and handsome buildings, viz. school house, stores, private residences, etc. while a good ferry (had been) provided for crossing the river."(3) Other colonies founded during these years were: the Primitive Methodists Colony, situated in Pheasant Plain (4), the Dominion Lands Colony (5), the Touchwood Qu'Appelle Colony (6), the Fertile Belt Colony (7), and the Qu'Appelle Colony (8). By 1885 none had advanced

- (1) In 1883 the total number of settlers was 44 (Interior, 1883, Part I, p.7); in 1884, 75 (Ibid, 1884, Part I, p.20)
- (2) In 1883 there were 61 settlers (Ibid, 1883, Part I, p.8); in 1884, 82 (Ibid, 1884, Part I, p.21).
- (3) There were 80 settlers in 1884 (Ibid, 1884, Part I, p.18) and in 1887 there were 90 (Ibid, 1887, Part I, p.31-2).
- (4) In 1883 there were 91 settlers (Ibid, 1883, Part I, p.6); in 1885, 113 (Ibid, 1885, Part I, p.27).
- (5) In 1883 there were 83 settlers (Ibid, 1883p Part I, p.7); in 1884, 100 (Ibid, 1884, Part I, p.22); and in 1885 there were 123 settlers (Ibid, 1885, Part I, p.27).
- (6) There were 77 settlers in 1883 (Ibid, 1883, Part I, p.12)
- (7) 24 miles north of Whitewood, no estimate an number of settlers given (Ibid 1883, Part I, p.7)
- (8) East of Long Lake. There were 88 settlers in 1883 (Ibid, Part I, p.6). In 1885 the number of settlers was 103 (Ibid, 1885, Part I, p.28). During the following two years, however, the crops were dried out and the few colonists who remained tried stock-raising (Ibid, 1887, Part I, p.32-3)

beyond the formative stage - very few of them had more than 100 settlers - and after this time, with one or two exceptions, their connection with colonization companies ceased and henceforth they became the nuclei of prairie settlements.

There were a few attempts to promote settlement along the line of the Canadian Pacific Railway other than by Colonization Companies. In 1883 there was established by Lady Cathcart at Bénébecula, near Moosomin, a colony of Crofters.(1) In the following year a colony of East-End Londoners was founded near the same town. Owing its origin to a drawing room meeting of the Baroness Burdett Coutts, under the inception of Sir Francis de Winton, it consisted of nineteen families (fourteen from the East-End and five from Westminster). (2) At Indian Head was established, in 1882, the celebrated Bell Farm which, though not organized on the same lines as the Colonization Companies, was, nevertheless, instrumental in bringing a large number of settlers to the country. As the farm increased in size, portions were sold off to newly arrived settlers. (3)

Colonization promoted by companies or other agencies, however, was inconsiderable when compared to the undirected settlement which was going on in these years. The movement of settlers was steady and each railway train brought in

(1) A Canadian Tour, p.26 - c.f. Population Map, 1885, for location of various colonies and towns mentioned.

(2) Report Dept. of Agriculture (Ottawa), 1888, p.107

(3) A Canadian Tour, p.26

families or speculators, who dropped off at one station or another and went into the interior. Settlement rapidly spread out north and south of the Canadian Pacific Railway line from the Manitoba boundary as far west as Moosejaw. Moosomin, Whitewood, Broadview, Indian Head and Regina were the favored centres. The town of Moosomin had a population of some 300 people at the end of the year 1885.(1) The country in all directions was taken up by settlers or speculators. Not far distant were the colony of East End Londoners and Lady Cathcart's Colony of Crofters. The next town of any importance was Whitewood, happily located in the centre of important settlements. Broadview, situated at the head of Weed Lake, consisted in 1882 of only a few tents and roughly boarded houses, but by 1885 had become a well laid-out town, the marketing centre of what appeared to be an excellent farming country. In the surrounding district were to be found the York Colony, the Saskatchewan Homestead Colony, the Fertile Belt Colony and the Montreal Colony, as well as the large settlements south of Pipestone Creek and Moose Mountain. Situated in the centre of the "Bell Farm", with its 64,000 acres of land, was Indian Head. The establishment here of the Government Experimental Farm and the early introduction of dry-land farming gave this district the lead in wheat production which it was to

(1) A Canadian Tour, p.25

maintain throughout the remainder of the century. The town of Qu'Appelle was also the centre of a fairly large farming community and its proximity to Fort Qu'Appelle added to its importance. Beyond Qu'Appelle there was no station of any account between it and Regina, although the "New Tulscha" colony of Roumanians and Germans was soon to convert Balgonie into a promising town. Regina, after 1882, the capital of the North-West Territories, early became a centre of attraction for incoming settlers.(1) By 1883 lands for twenty miles around were taken up and the district was one of the largest blocks of wheat growing land in the country.

Westward from Regina the Canadian Pacific Railway passed few places of importance on the prairie. The stations were too young and the settlement of the country too sparse for the little villages to yet show any growth. Divisional points had been established at Moosejaw and Swift Current and

(1) Mr. Edward Carss claims to be the pioneer settler of this district. Having sought and found what he believed to be a splendid ranching country, he settled at Carsdale, at the junction of the Wascana and Qu'Appelle rivers, in September, 1881. In May, 1882, an advanced party of settlers arrived at the Pile O'Bones Creek. On the 10th of June a second party arrived and camped on the banks of the Wascana. The party at once secured the services of Surveyor Gore in locating several half-sections; on these were built sod shanties, and possession was taken in squatter fashion. (Powers, History of Regina, p.10-11).

By 1886 there were some 300 buildings already constructed and the population was about 1,000 souls. (A Canadian Tour, p.28).

about these, especially the former, were to be found a few homesteaders. "The intermediate prairie in the three hundred miles from Regina to Medicine Hat," wrote the Special Correspondent of the Times in 1886, ".....is so entirely unoccupied the sensation of the want of inhabitants becomes positively painful.....The train moves along for miles without showing any sign of human life. Here is a vast region awaiting population; but, unfortunately, the lands are too poor to attract it until the more fertile regions elsewhere are peopled."(1)

The rapidity of settlement within Assiniboia in the years 1882, 1883 and 1884 is clearly shown by a comparison of the census reports for 1881 and 1885. In 1881 the population of the district of Assiniboia was 9,795, of whom only about 105 were other than Indians or half-breeds; in 1885 the population of the same district was 22,083, of whom 16,574 were other than Indians or half-breeds. In other words the white population increased from about 105 to 16,574 - a phenomenal development! (2) In 1881 there were only 138 occupiers of land in Assiniboia, in 1885, 5,147. In 1881 the total acreage sown to wheat was 173, in 1885, 61,060. Within the short space of four years the district of Assiniboia had been transformed from a sparsely populated self-sustaining agricultural community to a comparatively thickly populated wheat growing domain.

(1) A Canadian Tour, p.29

(2) c.f. Population Maps 1881, 1885 - Appendices

The early years of settlement may well be described as the era of speculation. Every settler, whether bona fide or not, had come west to gamble on the potentialities of the prairies. Their one and sole aim was to make a fortune - the land speculator by waiting for a sudden rise in land values, the bona fide settler by the production of thousands of bushels of wheat. Few farmers, in the early years of settlement, made any attempt to improve their methods of husbandry. The sod was hurriedly turned over, seed committed to the ground by means of the broadcast seedew, and from this they expected to reap a bountiful harvest. In exceptionally good years, it is true, they did obtain a substantial yield from their land; but most settlers were to learn, to their sorrow, that exceptionally good years in Western Canada were few and far between.

Believing that the value of their farms would rise fifty-fold and that their crops would never fail, they mortgaged their future for years to come in order to buy expensive machinery with which to rapidly increase their acreage under cultivation. Few had reaped any returns from their farms by 1885. Instead they had made large capital investments and incurred heavy debts in the hope that crops would continue to be good and that they would soon realize substantial proceeds. Fate, however, blew an ill-wind and the decade following 1884 was a very trying one. Drought, hail, wind and frosts devastated the crops. Many settlers

lost heart, sold their possessions for what they could get out of them, and left the country. Many more would have gone but they had not the means with which to get away.

That conditions after 1885 were adverse to agricultural operations is partly true but, nevertheless, the one chief cause of the crop failures and general distress was the inefficiency of the settlers themselves. For the first few years Assiniboia became a land of "wheat-miners" rather than of farmers. The term "mixed-farming" was regarded with a feeling more or less of repugnance, partly because of the fact that exclusive wheat farming meant the possibility of big returns, extensive operations, the opportunity to play the role of farm manager with a certain amount of leisure; and partly because the term "mixed-farming" suggested interminable chores, hard work during the whole twelve months of the year, cleaning out stables, to say nothing of the general disfavor with which the latter type of farmer was often looked upon by his more pretentious but frequently less substantial wheat growing brother. In short, in pursuit of the desire to get rich quickly, many were induced to throw all their energies into wheat growing, regardless of attendant risk. When the Deputy Minister of the Interior visited the West in 1884 he found privation and want on every side.

"However profitable the growing of wheat may be," he reported after his return to the east, "in a country so well adapted as the North-West for the production, at very

small cost, of enormous crops, it is better that the bulk of the population should not be entirely dependent upon that one industry.....I am convinced that mixed farming would, in the end, prove most profitable to the settler, and most advantageous to the country. The recurrence of the disaster of last year would in this way be avoided.....The average homesteader has, in too many cases, neither cows, sheep, pigs nor poultry; and the consequence is that almost everywhere throughout the (West) the products of these animals are scarce and dear...."(1)

In 1888 the Commissioner of the North-West Mounted Police stated that "failure of the crops in any portion of the Territories is due generally to poor farming." The majority of settlers, he went on to say, "are, in my opinion, poor managers, and their homes could be made much more comfortable and happy by devoting more time to vegetable and flower gardens, by keeping more poultry, pigs and sheep. Many of them buy nearly everything at the store, which their farms and gardens could and should supply. Want of means and time are the excuses given generally, but want of method, application and misdirected energy are frequently the cause." (2) Even as late as 1893 methods of husbandry were somewhat crude. When the Michigan Delegates visited the North-West in this year, they found the crops around Regina mostly a failure. "The fault," they believed, "is not so much in the soils as in the man who tills it." (3) In the same year the Minister of Agriculture reported:

(1) Report Dept. of the Interior (Ottawa), p.15-16

(2) Report N.W.M.P., 1888, p.22

(3) Report Dept of the Interior, Part III, p.155, 1893

"I made during the autumn.....an extended tour of the province of Manitoba, the Territories of the North-West, and the province of British Columbia.....I found that in Manitoba and the North-West the attention of farmers, generally speaking, had been mainly fixed on the raising of wheat. When no drawbacks happen to prevent the large yields from this grain.....and when fair prices can be obtained for the product, the production of wheat is lucrative, and there is a strong temptation to farmers to follow it in preference to other branches. But drawbacks sometimes arise.....as it happened during the year of my visit to (the West), the large promise of the early spring sowing was materially checked by the influence of the hot dry winds.....which occurred during the summer; a drawback which was followed by the unusually low price which prevailed for wheat.....The circumstances impressed on my mind the importance of what is called mixed farming for Manitoba and the North-West.....I found in many parts of the North-West, so exclusive was the devotion of the farmers to the production of wheat, that generally speaking, they had not bestowed attention to such details as butter, cheese, eggs, poultry, swine, sheep, etc., for the supply of their own needs. A farmer raising all these things is naturally in a better position and more independent when the accident of a more or less serious drawback arises, than another who has devoted the whole of his attention to one crop, the subject of such accident....."(1)

The failure of the farmer to diversify his agricultural operations, as his failure to appreciate the value of proper cultivation, is explained largely by his illusive idea of the fortune to be made out of growing wheat. It is true that many of the obstacles facing the early settler could not readily be overcome. Ill-devised farm implements were all that were available and proper cultivation was not possible until an improvement was made in this field. Further, little experimenting had been done in agricultural science

(1) Report Dept. of Agriculture (Ottawa), 1893, p.vi-vii

and only by the trial and error method were these settlers able to learn the tillage best adapted to the country. Again, many parts of the country were totally unsuited for mixed farming. Throughout a large portion of the district of Assiniboia neither the soil nor the climate was adapted to the growth of grasses suitable for pasture purposes; while the same land was naturally adapted to the growth of cereals. Dairying, while it might be practicable in some districts, was absolutely impossible in others. As it requires cream to make butter and cows to make cream, and pasture, water, hay, fencing and stabling to raise cows, it can readily be seen that only where these basic necessities were procurable, was dairying possible. Consequently the failure of the settlers in the early years, in those parts not adapted to mixed farming, was not due to the fact that they raised wheat exclusively but to the fact that they failed to give proper care to cultivation. In those parts of the country adapted to stock-raising, however, the settlers were guilty not only of improper cultivation but the failure to appreciate the advantages of mixed farming.

The years following 1885 were to give the lie to the immigration propaganda. Settlers learned that the West was not that land of "milk and honey" which so many bill-boards had described it to be. Wheat-mining, as gold-mining, was

to prove a losing game. Years of drought and early frost drove away the speculator and the gambler; the real farmer remained, faced the realities of the situation, and adapted his methods to suit the conditions of the country. Settlement and agriculture was not an impossibility in the West - the type of settlement and agriculture which came before 1885 was however. These years of drought clearly proved that in several regions of the North-West wheat production was not practicable until improved methods of agriculture were introduced. Not until after years of education on the part of the Indian Head Experimental Farm were these changes brought about.

CHAPTER III
THE ERA OF RE-ADJUSTMENT

The year 1885 definitely marked the end of the era of speculative settlement. In that year only 1,858 entries were granted by the Dominion Land Office as compared with 3,753 in 1884, 6,063 in 1883 and 7,383 in 1882. More significant still was the fact that 1,288 entries were cancelled in 1885 - only 570 less than the number granted. In the district of Coteau (1) 21 homesteads were granted and 46 cancelled, in Qu'Appelle, 140 granted and 294 cancelled. In the whole of Assiniboia, including the land districts of Qu'Appelle and Coteau, 204 homesteads were entered for, and 330 cancelled.(2) The marked decrease in the number of homestead entries is explained partly by the North-West rebellion of that year and partly by the failure of the crops in 1884 throughout Assiniboia. One crop failure, however, would not have permanently affected settlement; but, during the next five years, very few farmers harvested a successful crop of wheat as "the seasons were either very dry or the frost came so early in the fall that the wheat was only fit for seed and many of the farmers had nothing to feed it to."(3) Two features are noticeable within these years; immigration, though faltering considerably, was by no means negligible, due to the fact that the outside world

(1) South-East Assiniboia, c.f. Population Map, 1891

(2) Interior 1885, p.xi - It should be pointed out, however, that many of the cancellations were of homesteads entered for in 1882 and 1883 by men who had no intention of settling on them.

(3) Story of the Life of A.B.Bompas, (Library Manuscript).

was kept ignorant of the true conditions in Western Canada; and, secondly, those settlers within the country were either forced to move away or to curtail their acreage of wheat and raise livestock.

Due to crop failures the settlers in the districts of Prince Albert, Battleford and Regina had to be supplied with seed both in 1886 and 1887.(1) In the spring of 1886 the Government spent \$46,884 and the farmers were supplied with the best of Red Fife wheat. The action of the Government is important for two reasons: first, it shows that conditions within the country were not very good; and, secondly, it marks the beginning of the production of Red Fife wheat in the northern settlements of Prince Albert and Battleford.

A feature of settlement after 1885 was the establishment of foreign colonies.(2) Between this year and 1893 about 6,700 foreign settlers were located in Assiniboia.(3) The number is not large, hardly 1,000 a year, but it becomes so in contrast with the immigration from the British Isles and the Eastern Provinces in these years. The years 1882 to 1885 were marked by immigration of British-born subjects, Ontario supplying the largest share of the influx. These settlers, not meeting with the success which they had anticipated, warned their friends at home that the North-West was not a place in which to settle. The result was that between the years 1885 and 1891 the increase of the British population was almost negligible. From the census reports of

(1) Report Dept. of the Interior, 1886, p.xvii

(2) C.F. Population Map, 1891

(3) Interior, 1893, Medicine Hat not included.

1885 and 1891 we find that the population of Assiniboia increased by 7,705 and, when the population of the foreign colonies is subtracted from this, very little over 1,000 is left.(1) Here we find the effect on settlement of an energetic immigration policy. While few people in the Eastern Provinces and in the British Isles could be persuaded to emigrate to Western Canada, the immigration of foreigners was large because these people knew nothing of, and were kept ignorant of, the true conditions in the country.

Another interesting - and significant - fact is that over one-half of the foreign colonies were located north of the Qu'Appelle River, in the country traversed by the Manitoba and North-Western Railway, rather than along the line of the Canadian Pacific Railway, where settlement was directed between the years 1882 and 1885. North-Eastern Assiniboia, and not the Qu'Appelle and Regina districts, were the favored locations for new settlers within these years.

Giving birth to the two towns of Esterhazy and Kaposvar was the Esterhazy colony of Hungarians founded in 1886.(2)

(1) The population of the foreign colonies is at the end of the year 1892. On the other hand this figure only includes the foreign population settled in colonies. Scattered foreigners are not included.

(2) Interior, 1886, Part I, p.13 - By 1891 the population of this colony consisted of about 350 souls, and was composed of Hungarians, Bohemians and Russians, with a sprinkling of Germans and Roumanians. (Report Dominion Dept. of Agriculture 1891, p.171).

The Thingvalla colony of Icelanders, with its centre in Churchbridge, was founded in 1885 by Mr. Henry Johnson, editor of the Leifur Newspaper, published in Winnipeg.(1) The colony had two serious drawbacks: first, the scarcity of water made impossible the keeping of stock; and, second, the annual occurrence of summer frosts prohibited the growing of wheat. As a result many of the settlers moved out and joined their friends at Gimli, Manitoba.(2) In 1886 there was established near Langenburg the nucleus of a German colony, called Hohenlohe (3) and various other German colonies - Landshut, Bregesina, Riversdale, Landestrew and Hoffenthal - were founded in the vicinity of this town between the years 1889 and 1891.(4) Not far distant from the Esterhazy settlement there was founded, in 1886, the New Stockholm colony of Scandinavians.(5) With the crops destroyed by drought during the first four years of its existence the progress of the colony was slow.(6) About the town of Yorkton there were established, in 1888, the Austrian colony of Ebenezer, in 1890 the Danish colony of New Denmark and in 1891 the small Icelandic settlement.(7)

(1) Dept. Agriculture, (Ottawa), 1890, p.148, by 1890 it had a population of 280 souls.

(2) Interior 1893, Part I, p.5

(3) Ibid, 1886, p.5; Ibid, 1893, p.13-16

(4) Ibid, 1893, Part I, p.13-16

(5) Agriculture (Ottawa), 1886, p.77

(6) Ibid, 1891, p.171. By 1891 it had a population of 250.

(7) Interior 1893, Part I, p.13-16

Forced by years of drought to abandon their farms, a large migration of Dakota farmers to Assiniboia took place in 1891. Most of them located forty-five miles north-west of Yorkton and founded the "Dakota Colony", which soon became known as "Sheho".(1) The absence of railway facilities however, made impossible the raising of wheat and those who disliked ranching became discouraged and moved out.

In the neighborhood of Saltcoats was located, in 1889, a colony of Scotch Crofters, consisting of forty-nine families, about 300 in all.(2) The progress of the colony was slow due partly to the drought and partly to the dilatoriness of the people themselves and in a few years time it had practically disappeared.(3)

Although settlement between the years 1885 and 1891 was largely in the North-East of Assiniboia, there were many colonies founded along the line of the Canadian Pacific Railway and in South-Eastern Assiniboia. Eight miles north of Balgonie was located the "New Tulscha" Roumanian colony, established August, 1886. (3) In the same year a colony of Germans was founded at Strassburg, east of Long Lake. Two German colonies, one south of Grenfell called Josephsburg and the other north of Grenfell called Neudorf, were established in 1887 and 1890 respectively. In south-eastern

(1) Agriculture (Ottawa) 1891, p.202-206

(2) Interior 1889, Part I, p.9

(3) Ibid, 1886, p.13

Assiniboia the only foreign colonies of importance were the Jewish settlement of Hirsch, near Alameda and the French colonies of St. Maurice and St. Raphael near Reston and Camdelf respectively.

These colonies, and others of lesser importance which we need not mention, developed into the cultural centre of their individual nationality. As such they kept alive in the new country many of the traditions and customs which they had brought over with them from the old; and the task of assimilation, as a result, was made much more difficult and at times verged on the impossible. Their economic effect on settlement, however, was undoubtedly for the best. By the formation of comparatively populous communities those social necessities, such as roads, schools and churches were made possible which were so long denied to the isolated settlers; and herein lies the justification for their formation.

The distribution of the foreign population is interesting. At the end of the year 1892 the population of the foreign colonies, including the Crofter settlement at Saltcoats, totalled 7,267 souls. Of this number 3,452 were located in North-Eastern Assiniboia and an additional 368 in the district of Saskatchewan about Duck Lake and Rosthern, making a total of 3,820, or almost exactly one-half of the total foreign population; while the population of the foreign colonies along the Canadian Pacific Railway line

amounted to 2,492, or about 1,000 less than in North-Eastern Assiniboia. Although there was every outward inducement for new arrivals to settle along the Canadian Pacific main line - populous communities, convenient railway facilities, open prairie land rendering the task of breaking the sod comparatively easy - the tide of settlement, even of the foreign population, had definitely swung northward.

The northward trend of settlement is even more clearly illustrated by the census reports of 1885 and 1891. The following is the population for the various districts for these years: (1)

	<u>1885</u>	<u>1891</u>	<u>Increase</u>	<u>P.C.</u>
Broadview	6,844	11,924	5,080	74
Qu'Appelle, Regina-Moosejaw	9,506	12,131	2,625	27
Prince Albert	3,628	4,974	1,346	37
Battleford	650	1,112	462	71

From this table we see that the population of Broadview increased by 74 per cent, Battleford by 71 per cent and Prince Albert by 37 per cent, while the population of the Qu'Appelle, Regina and Moosejaw district increased by only 27 per cent. These facts become more significant when it is remembered that neither Prince Albert nor Battleford had railway communication before 1890 and that that the district of Broadview, with the exception of south-east Assiniboia,

(1) c.f. Population Maps 1885 and 1891 - Appendices

lay outside the semi-arid belt and extended from the International Boundary north to 52 degree latitude, or, in other words, included all the territory traversed by the Manitoba and North-Western Railway. Pausing once more in our enquiry, we find that 2,474 foreign settlers entered the district of Qu'Appelle, Regina and Moosejaw between the years 1886 and 1892 to form the various colonies. (1) This increase in foreign population - 2,474 - is significant when it is compared to the total increase in population - 2,625. If we assume that the only foreign immigrants who entered this district joined one or other of the colonies even then the increase in British population is but 151.

While the population of the Qu'Appelle, Regina and Moosejaw^{district} did not actually decrease between the years 1885 and 1891, the number of agriculturists and acreage of improved land did. Those settlers who remained curtailed their acreage of cultivated land, by letting much of it go back into prairie, and began to raise stock. The following tables show the number of occupiers of land, the acreage of improved land and the acreage under crop for the two years 1885 and 1891:

(1) Report of the Dept. of the Interior (Ottawa), 1893, Part I, p.13-16

Occupiers of Land

	<u>1885</u>	<u>1891</u>	<u>Increase</u>	<u>Decrease</u>
Broadview	2,465	2,968	504	
Qu'App., Regina, M.Jaw	2,593	2,502		91

Acreage of Improved Land

	<u>1885</u>	<u>1891</u>	<u>Increase</u>	<u>Decrease</u>
Broadview	59,447	71,413	11,966	
Qu'App., Regina, M.Jaw	99,112	75,142		23,970

Acreage under Crop

	<u>1885</u>	<u>1891</u>	<u>Increase</u>
Broadview	41,042	70,826	29,786
Qu'App., Regina, M.Jaw	64,054	74,767	10,713

The number of occupiers of land increased in the Broadview district by 504, decreased in the district of Qu'Appelle, Regina and Moosejaw by 91; the acreage of improved land increased in the Broadview district by 11,966, decreased in the Qu'Appelle, Regina and Moosejaw district by 23,970; and, finally, the acreage under crop increased in the Broadview district by 29,786, in the Qu'Appelle, Regina and Moosejaw district by 10,713. The great difference between the acreage of improved land and the acreage under crop in 1885 is explained by three facts: first, 1885 was the year of the rebellion and many farmers hired their horses to the Government to transport supplies north with the

result that a greatly reduced acreage was sown to crop that year; secondly, the drought in 1884 caused a serious scarcity of seed throughout the West and the rebellion prevented the Government from supplying these settlers with the seed which was promised (1); and, finally, much breaking was done in the early years of settlement and consequently the acreage of broken sod would be much greater than the acreage under crop. It is probably safe to assume, therefore, even after making allowances for the third factor mentioned, that had 1885 been a normal year the acreage under crop in the district of Qu'Appelle, Regina and Moosejaw would have been greater than it was, might even have exceeded the acreage in 1891 - 74,767. At any rate, regardless of whether or not the acreage under crop in 1885 was normal, the acreage under crop in 1886 should have exceeded 90,000, and should have steadily advanced therefrom. As it was the acreage only equalled 74,767 in 1891. The table showing the acreage of cultivated land gives a much clearer picture. The enormous decrease in this acreage in the Qu'Appelle, Regina and Moosejaw district can only be accounted for by the drought which brought about almost successive crop failures during these years; similarly the increase in the acreage of cultivated land in the Broadview district is accounted for by the fact that most of this district lay outside of the semi-arid belt.

(1) Report Dept. of the Interior, 1886, p.xvii

especially the region traversed by the Manitoba and North-Western Railway.

The same facts are illustrated by comparing the population with the acreage of cultivated land. The following table shows the acreage of cultivated land per capita for the years 1885 and 1891:

	<u>1885</u>	<u>1891</u>
Broadview	1:8.6	1:6
Qu'App., Regina, Moosejaw	1:10.4	1:6.1

In Broadview there were, in 1885, 8.6 acres of cultivated land per capita, in 1891, only 6 acres; in the district of Qu'Appelle, Regina and Moosejaw there were 10.4 acres per capita in 1885, in 1891 only 6.1 acres. Had the development of the country been natural the acreage of improved land per capita should have increased during these years. The noticeable decrease suggests that, owing to drought, settlers, even in the Broadview district, were abandoning the growing of grain and trying their hand at something else.

The decrease in the acreage of improved land stands in marked contrast with the increase in the number of cattle between these years. The development of diversified farming in the North-West came only after many years of failure in the production of wheat. In the more northerly regions where the absence of transportation facilities and the prevalence of early frosts made the raising of wheat

for export virtually impossible, the settlers soon learned that there was more money in the raising of stock; but in the southern part of the country the settlers, not faced with the transportation problem, placed their sole reliance, even after repeated failures, on the production of wheat. During the years from 1885 to 1896, however, they were rudely made conscious of their mistake and began to accumulate small herds of livestock around them, while others gave up farming entirely and went into ranching. In 1890 the Moosejaw agent reported that "during the past two years several ranches on a small scale have been started" and this was generally true throughout the country.(1) By 1896 the Commissioner of Dominion Lands was able to report:

"There is abundant evidence throughout the country that settlers have adopted the principle of mixed farming with advantage to themselves and the community at large.....From every agency reports are being received of the amount of stock being shipped to the European markets, and this trade is steadily on the increase. Heretofore our settlers have to a great extent imported pork and bacon. The raising of pigs is now receiving attention, and farmers find themselves able to dispose of a surplus each year."(2)

The following table shows the number of cattle per occupier of land in 1885 and 1891:

- (1) Report Dept. of the Interior, 1890, p.x
- (2) Ibid, 1896, Part I, p.17

	<u>1885</u>	<u>1891</u>
Qu'Appelle, Regina & Moosejaw	1:3	1:13.9
Broadview	1:2.4	1:8.7
Prince Albert	1:7	1:12.4

The increase in the number of livestock is most remarkable in the district of Qu'Appelle, Regina and Moosejaw where in 1885 there were only three head of cattle per occupier of land and in 1891, 14. Although the increases in the districts of Broadview and Prince Albert were quite substantial, they were not so great. Nothing illustrates more clearly the change in the type of settlement in the district of Qu'Appelle, Regina and Moosejaw than a comparison between this table and the one showing the acreage of improved land. While there was a marked decrease in the acreage of cultivated land there was an equally marked increase in the number of cattle. Wheat farming was rapidly giving place to mixed farming or ranching.

The tendencies in settlement illustrated by the census reports of 1885 and 1891, find expression in many a story of an old-timer who experienced these early years. We quote from some of them:

"In the year 1886," Mr. Bompas, a Wolseley pioneer, tells us, "we had no rain for 72 days and a settler who lived nine miles north of me told me that he had not seen water drop off his house the whole summer. All the sloughs dried up.....We threshed our crop by hand, 20 bushels of wheat and 100 bushels of oats. Many farmers about Wolseley were so discouraged that they went away.

Some returned to the eastern provinces and some moved up to the northern part of the country where it had not been so dry."(1)

Mr. Alexander Kindred, pioneer of Moffat, relates a similar experience:

"(In 1885) we had only 10 bushels of very badly frosted wheat. I took some to Indian Head and traded it for flour, shorts and bran. I had no money to pay expenses.....

"In 1886 we had 80 acres under crop. Not a drop of rain fell from the time it went in until it was harvested. I sowed 124 bushels and threshed 54. We threshed it in July at the end of the month. In 1887 we had a partial failure and in 1888 we began to think we could not grow wheat in this country. I had now 120-5 acres under cultivation. We put in 25 acres of wheat, 10 to 15 acres of oats and let the rest go back into prairie. That year we got 35 bushels to the acres so we went to work and ploughed up again. The next year wheat headed out two inches high. Not a drop of rain fell that whole season until fall. We summer-fallowed that year (1889) for the first time, and to show the optimism we put in in 1890 every acre we could. We had wheat that year standing to the chin but on the 8th of July a hailstorm destroyed absolutely everything. My hair turned grey that night. We were getting history hard.

"The crop left would be what we would call to-day No. 6. In 1891 I sowed 1½ bushels to the acre of this No. 6. Just one blade came up here and there we thought, but we got 35 bushels to the acre.....

"In 1892 we had only a partial crop but by this time we were beginning to see the mistakes we had got into every year. We had put "poor stables for our stock - just apologies for shelter. I now decided to build a good barn.....The years 1893, 1894, 1895 and 1896 were just a repetition of former years.....I was now able, (however), to stock enough feed for a whole year and from that time we began to make money. We made it in mixed farming and Scotch thrift."(2)

From Mr. D.W. Caswell, of Adair, we learn:

"(The year 1885) was rather an unfavorable season. On the 21st of June we had a hard frost, after a dry spell, that froze the crop.....1886 was a dry summer and the crop

(1) Manuscript in Library, University of Saskatchewan.
(2) Ibid

was a failure. The spring of 1887 the Government supplied the farmers with seed grain. This was a favorable season. The crops were good but on the 23rd of August a hailstorm passed over the district and destroyed the crops of a few farmers and I happened to be one of them and my crop was completely destroyed. 1888 was a favorable season. 1889 was a very dry summer and a very short crop. 1890 and 1891, especially the latter season, the wheat yielded 35 to 45 bushels to the acre of the best grade...
Once cause of crop failure was a lack of knowledge of western conditions as these so differ from that of the east. Fall ploughing looked alright to us, we did not take into consideration the moisture that was necessary to produce a crop and not until Angus Mackay of the Indian Head Experimental Farm advocated summer-fallowing to hold the moisture in did we become reasonably assured of getting a crop. Another disadvantage we were up against was proper implements as nothing but broadcast seeders were used that left a lot of the seed on top of the ground to be covered by a cultivator or flat harrow. A lot of the seed was carried off by the birds and gophers."(1)

Dr. T.A. Patrick, in private correspondence, stated:

"I arrived in Saltcoats on April 29, 1889, and have no personal knowledge of meteorological conditions before that time except such as were indicated by dry sloughs on the old Felly-qu'Appelle trail which showed old cart trails going around the dry sloughs, unused, and used trails going right through where water had been; and such evidences as the sand dunes at the north end of Yorkton and the exposed lake bottom around the margin of the water; and the evidences of rings showing the variations in the rate of growth in different years which were exposed by cross sections of tree trunks.

"From 1885 to 1892 a migration had occurred from the plains along the qu'Appelle west of the Fort. The immigrants had been dried out and came north where dried out sloughs produced abundance of hay. They came along the old trail referred to seeking ranching locations and some of them wintered near Swan Lake which empties into Winnipegosis through Shoal river. These men left me with the impression that drought had driven them into cattle raising and continued drought had driven them north in search of hay."

(1) Library Manuscript, University of Saskatchewan.

The above statements, though they relate only the experiences of four individual pioneers, accurately describe the conditions throughout Assiniboia at this time. The movement of settlers out of the country, pictured by Mr. Bompas and Dr. Patrick, and the curtailment of the acreage of improved land, as indicated by Mr. Kindred in 1888, has been substantiated by the census reports of 1885 and 1891 - the area of improved land in the Qu'Appelle, Regina and Moosejaw district having decreased by 22,970 acres between the years 1885 and 1891. The practice of dry land farming, first tried by Mr. Kindred in 1889 and by Mr. Caswell a little later, became general throughout the country in the next decade. Finally we have the substitution of mixed for wheat farming, as in the case of Mr. Kindred. The abandonment of farms by the settlers, the curtailment of the acreage of cultivation, the diversification of agricultural operations and the introduction of the summer-fallow are the effects of the drought which played havoc in the early years of settlement in Assiniboia. Drought forced the settler either to move out or curtail the acreage under cultivation and raise live-stock; while, with the introduction of dry land farming, also forced upon the settler by drought, the growing of wheat was once more made possible.

The period from 1891 to 1896 was largely a repetition of that from 1885 to 1891. Although the crops of 1890 and 1891 were good, they were dried out during the three following

years. Unfortunately no complete census was taken of the Territories between 1891 and 1901 but the North-West Mounted Police census of 1895, incomplete though it is, reveals the fact that there was little more progress in settlement in the years from 1891 to 1895.

The following table shows the comparison between the population, not including the Indians, for 1891 and 1895:

	<u>1891</u>	<u>1895</u>	<u>Increase</u>
Assiniboia	26,448	34,792	8,344
Saskatchewan	8,230	9,931	1,701

The population of Assiniboia increase approximately by 2,000 souls per annum. When this is compared with an annual increase of 3,000 souls between the years 1881 and 1885, it will be seen that the progress of settlement in the later period was not as great as it should have been.

The following table shows the number of cattle per capita in Assiniboia and Saskatchewan for 1891 and 1895:

	<u>1891</u>	<u>1895</u>
Assiniboia	1:2.39	1:2.61
Saskatchewan	1:1.89	1:2.07

From this table we see that the cattle industry gained rather than lost ground between these years. Unfortunately there were no statistics taken of the acreage of wheat in 1895, the first being in 1898. The following table shows the

expansion of the wheat acreage between 1891 and 1898: (1)

	<u>1891</u>	<u>1898</u>	<u>Increase</u>
Broadview	49,618	135,314	85,696
Regina-Moosejaw	26,686	42,859	16,173
Total for all Assiniboia	103,928	258,549	154,621
Saskatchewan	4,769	17,704	12,935

Here we see that in the district of Broadview which, as we have already indicated, lies largely outside of the semi-arid belt, the expansion in the acreage of wheat was quite large - 85,696; while in the district of Regina and Moosejaw it was quite small, only 16,173, and this increase, it is almost safe to say, came largely after 1895.

With the completion of the Souris branch of the Canadian Pacific Railway in 1892, a great influx of settlers took place into the district of south-eastern Assiniboia, bringing about a "boom" such as had been in evidence in Manitoba and along the main line of the Canadian Pacific Railway west in the years from 1878 to 1883. In 1892 homestead entries amounted to 522 in the Coteau land district while there were some 700 new settlers, totalling 2,000 souls. (2) Towns sprang up along the line and before the summer was half spent Estevan had taken on all the appearances of a future city. The prairie sod was hurriedly

(1) The figures for 1891 are from the Dominion Census, for 1898 from the report of the Regina Dept. of Agriculture.
 (2) Interior 1892, p. xxxi

turned over and that precious seed - wheat - was committed to the soil. Hopes ran high and the settlers looked forward to a bountiful harvest as the reward for their somewhat hurried labor. But the drought came and the crops of 1892 were a complete failure except in those isolated cases where the settler had paid proper attention to the cultivation of the land. This year the agent reported:

"The rainfall was below the average but where the crops had been properly put in the yield was good; on the other hand where the farmers had simply scratched in the seed the yield was practically nil, and on a whole this year has proved beyond a doubt that, ^a paying yield can be assured provided the farmer will exercise reasonable care in the preparation of his land and not expect nature to do everything unassisted; the great curse of this country being the attempt of many to farm more land than they are able to manage; instead of a smaller number of acres thoroughly worked."(1)

The truth of the agent's contention was to become abundantly evident as succeeding years proved as unfavorable as that of 1892. In 1893 the crops again failed and the North West Mounted Police Inspector reported that "Estevan and the surrounding country has made little progress during the year."(2) The report of the same official in 1894 was equally discouraging. "The crops (in Estevan and the surrounding districts)", he wrote, "were not such as to justify any continued attempt at farming, several settlers who had taken up land left during the summer having abandoned their homesteads."(3)

- (1) Interior, 1892, Part IV, p.91
- (2) N.W.M.P. Report, 1893, p.63
- (3) Ibid, 1894, p.61

The Estevan land agent again summed up the problem in his annual report of this year.

"I can only repeat what I have repeatedly stated in previous reports as very largely answerable for this state of affairs, and that is the attempt of so many settlers to crop too large an acreage in a rough way, and so go into debt to the implement dealers. I believe if we could only get settlers more into mixed farming and only cultivate what they can afford to, their position would be materially changed for the better."(1)

In these reports we have unfolded the story of settlement which was equally true in the central part of Assiniboia. One or two good years would cause a great influx of settlers, drought followed and the settlers, unable to cope with this problem, met with failure.

In 1895 homestead entries in the Estevan (Coteau) land district amounted to only 31 - as compared with ~~232 in 1892~~ - and there were 71 cancellations.(2) The situation was well summed up by the North West Mounted Police Inspector in his report of 1897. "A large number of settlers," he wrote, came to the immediate vicinity of Estevan in 1892.....A succession of bad years right after settlement discouraged them, and nearly all left."(3)

Estevan, in 1892 a booming prairie town, was, in 1896, practically only a railway siding. Nearly all the settlers had moved to other parts of the Territories, principally to

- (1) Interior, 1894, p.165
- (2) Ibid, 1895, p.26
- (3) N.W.M.P. Report, 1897, p.122

Prince Albert (1), and the few who were left, finding the taxes too great a burden to carry, were forced to follow.(2) Unlike many other districts the settlers of Estevan never attempted to engage in ranching. The North West Mounted Police Inspector reported in 1893 that "there are no ranches in this district"(3); and three years later that "there are but two or three small ranches."(4) The result was that the settlers remained wholly dependent upon the production of wheat and when that failed, in 1892, 1893 and 1894, they were face to face with ruin. Some held on and, by improving their methods of cultivation, were able to raise fair crops in spite of the unfavorable climatic conditions but many, especially those about Estevan itself, became discouraged and moved out. Estevan had proved itself to be among the finest wheat producing districts in Saskatchewan but the history of the first four years of its settlement shows unmistakably that it could not have become so without a great improvement in the science of agriculture.

Before leaving this period of settlement in southeastern Assiniboia we will quote from another report of the Estevan land agent, made in 1895.

".....It was very unfortunate, and deeply to be regretted, that the advent of excellent railway facilities now enjoyed by the southern and western portions of this

- (1) N.W.M.P. Report, 1895, p.77
- (2) Ibid, 1896, p.77
- (3) Ibid, 1893, p.63
- (4) Ibid, 1896, p.77

district should have been followed by two seasons of extreme drought, not only here, but all over the greater part of the continent of America. And what made it particularly felt in this newly settled portion of Eastern Assinibolia was the fact of the settlement being so new and ill prepared to stand the siege of two or three seasons which, in some cases, left absolutely nothing by way of crop to sustain the population that had so lately come in.

".....I am convinced that had this.....district been populated in ordinary wet seasons there is no land in the country more productive, or that will raise a fairer sample of the very best number one hard wheat. It only requires a little more experience on the part of the farmer, and a more thorough knowledge of the benefits to be derived from deeper and better cultivation of the soil, to demonstrate the fact that this land is alright and to bring to it a population that will make it one of the most flourishing and prosperous districts to be found in the whole North-West.....

"The tendency of farmers throughout this whole country has been to try to do too much, and to do it in a careless and slipshod way, and expect to reap an abundant harvest nevertheless; but if they could be brought thoroughly to understand that 'anything worth doing is worth doing well' they would always have a crop of some kind and never an entire failure. I have heard some people remark that this country, especially this district, is a failure; but I am of the opinion that time will see this one of the fairest and most prosperous portions of our great North-West." (1)

The year 1896 marked the end of the depression in the district of Estevan. Better crops and a higher price for wheat brought about "a decided change for the better" and, although immigration remained light - there were but 31 homestead entries and 49 cancellations - a hopeful sentiment began to prevail among the settlers. (2) Many factors were influential in bringing about the change - the rise in the price of wheat and better climatic conditions

- (1) Interior, 1895, p.136
- (2) Ibid, 1896, Part IV, p.147

being not the least among them - but the improvement in the methods of agriculture, consequent upon the introduction of the summer-fallow, was unquestionably one of the most decisive.

It was not only in the Estevan district that drought forced the settlers to abandon their homes. From the census reports and from statements made by individual settlers we have learned already something of the effects of the drought in the country along the Canadian Pacific Railway line. Although the years 1890 and 1891 were more successful in regard to raising crops there was little evidence of an improvement in the condition of settlement. Mr. Johnstone, an English traveller wrote:

"A sad fact was elicited from a government official in 1891, that he passed between thirty and forty deserted settlers' huts within a space of about 35 miles, and about the same distance to the north-west of Qu'Appelle. Most of the owners are supposed to have migrated to British Columbia, hoping to gain a fortune rather more speedily in some other line of life. Two years of drought drove them away."(1)

In 1893 the crops were good along the Manitoba and North Western Railway, but along the Canadian Pacific Railway they were only fair and, in some places, notably about Moosejaw, they were a complete failure.(2) Add to this the low price paid for wheat - the very best grade was selling for from 38 to 50 cents per bushel (3) - and one can readily picture the condition of many settlers during the

- (1) Johnstone, op.cit., p.16-17
- (2) H.W.M.P. Report, 1893, p.39
- (3) Ibid, p.70

winter of 1893-4. The drought played even greater havoc with the crops in 1894. About Balgonie, Regina, Wolsley and in the Strassburg settlement much of the crop was not worth cutting. The result was that many of the settlers left the Regina district to try their fortune in the United States.(1) The agent for that district reported: "With reference to the general condition of the settlers in the districts administered by this office, I may state, in the first place, that, owing to the scarcity of the rainfall during the spring and summer, the crops in the vicinity of Regina and Moosejaw were almost a total failure, consequently the settlers in these neighborhoods are in rather straightened circumstances."(2) To relieve the most pressing wants public ^{works} were undertaken by the North-West Government but the amount expended was not large and a good deal of hardship existed during the winter.(3)

The following year (1895) the crops were considerably better, although frost did some damage. There was no advance in material wealth, however, since, although the wheat crop averaged 25 bushels to the acre, the price was only from 35 to 40 cents for the best grade.(4), which left but a very small margin for the farmer above the cost of production. Elevator charges, freight rates, the profits of the middlemen varied little whether the prices were good or bad,

- (1) Interior 1901-02, Part II, p.118
- (2) Ibid, 1894, Part I, p.166
- (3) N.W.M.P. Report, 1894, p.69
- (4) Ibid, 1895, p.57

and the farmers alone suffered. Many of the settlers were so deeply involved in debt that they had little or no hope of ever getting out. With only about three good crops in a whole decade they had been left with their farms heavily mortgaged and their machinery unpaid for. Consequently, even as late as 1896, settlers continued to leave the country.

"Some townships," wrote the North West Mounted Police Superintendent in 1895, "which were once well settled up are deserted, and others with only two or three settlers left.....Most of the settlers have changed to better locations, but some have moved away to the United StatesQuite a number of the Germans settled about Balgonie are leaving.....Their crops have been failures until this year, and they have become burdened with debt. Although their grain crops did not grow, the interests crops did, and being unable to meet any payment for several years, small debts have grown into big ones until many of the unfortunate men found themselves submerged....There was a good deal of distress in the districts of Regina and Moosejaw until the crops were harvested. The North West Government expended a considerable sum in public works, but the want was so wide-spread that no great amount fell to the lot of any one person."(1)

The effect of the drought on settlement in North-East Assiniboia, on the line of the Manitoba and North Western Railway, was not so great as in the country traversed by the main line of the Canadian Pacific Railway. Even here, however, it was not a negligible factor. In 1894 the Commissioner of Dominion Lands reported that in the settlement of Langenburg "much suffering has been experienced owing to drought and scarcity of water.....A certain number have abandoned their homesteads discouraged by the want of water, and disheartened by the failure of their crops in past years."(2) During the same season a number

(1) N.W.M.P. Report, 1895, p.57-8

(2) Interior 1894, Part I, p.8-9

of settlers left the Sheho colony and returned to their former homes in the United States (1); while only a few of the Crofter settlers were left in their colony near Saltcoats.(2)

Generally speaking, however, the effect of the drought throughout this section of the country was more noticeable in encouraging farmers to raise stock rather than in forcing them out of the country. In 1894 the Yorkton agent reported:

"In the matter of settlement I must say that there has been but little done during the season.....Most farmers have for the past few years been devoting more time than formerly to stock....."

"In certain parts of the district, that is along the Assiniboine and White Sand Rivers in the Beaver Hills, Fishing and Quill Lakes country, ranching is the main industry, and I understand no attempt is made to grow grain.....Over 4,000 head of fat cattle have already been shipped for the Eastern markets from Yorkton alone this year."(3)

With frost rather than drought the chief drawback of the country, North-East Assiniboia became a typical mixed farming, small-scale ranching district and, although early frost might damage the wheat, this crop was not largely depended on. In 1893 the number of cattle in this district was 10,094 (4); in 1895 it was 17,490 (5) - an increase of about 2,500 per annum. "The cattle industry," reported the Yorkton agent in 1895, "is increasing each year and..... before long it will, I consider, be the main source of revenue."(6)

- (1) Interior, 1894, II, p.7; H.W.M.P. Report, 1894, p.48
- (2) H.W.M.P. Report, 1894, p.48
- (3) Interior, 1894, Part II, p.163-4
- (4) H.W.M.P. Report, 1892, p.67
- (5) Ibid, 1895, p.74
- (6) Interior 1895, Part IV, p.134

In the Prince Albert district, on the North Saskatchewan, frost remained the chief drawback and the drought had not appreciable and so did not affect settlement. The average precipitation was much greater than in Assiniboia and even in the years when crops were completely dried out in the south, there was ample rainfall in these parts. The absence of railway facilities and early frosts had encouraged the raising of stock and wheat was not a crop greatly depended upon. The introduction of dry land farming had little effect on the type of agriculture but the discovery of an earlier maturing wheat in the early years of the present century was to convert this whole northern region into a productive wheat growing domain.

Generally speaking the climatic conditions found at Prince Albert were true of the whole district then called Saskatchewan and which lay above the 52nd degree of latitude; but there were two notable exceptions, the districts of Battleford and Saskatoon. About these centres could be drawn circular lines with a radius of about forty miles and the areas within resembled very closely, in climatic features, the country of central and south-eastern Assiniboia. In both these regions drought, rather than early frost, was the chief factor which prevented the production of wheat.

Battleford, situated one hundred miles north-west of Saskatoon, remained without railway communication until 1905. This, in itself, was sufficient to prevent the rapid

settlement of the district; but there is reason to believe that, even with railway communication, the development would have been very similar to that of Saskatoon. In 1889 Battleford "suffered from drought more than any other part of the country" and only a small quantity of grain was garnered.⁽¹⁾ In 1892 the crops were again a failure and the years 1893 and 1894 were repetitions of 1892, so much so that the Battleford Superintendent of the North West Mounted Police describes the crops of each of these three years in exactly the same manner: "Although the crops have not been all that could be desired or expected as regards quantity there have been no cases of complete failure, where the ground has been properly cultivated."⁽²⁾ In the latter year the land agent reported that "better results might have been attained had the settlers paid more attention to the culture of the soil. Their methods are not up to the mark, and so long as this continues we can scarcely expect the district to make a good show."⁽³⁾ Many of the settlers were abandoning the production of wheat and turning their attention to stock raising.

"The occurrence of several seasons of drought in succession several years ago and the distance from an open market," wrote the land agent in 1897, "led many of the farmers to abandon the growing of grain to any extent beyond what was required for their own necessities, and to turn their attention to the raising of cattle and horses for export. These enterprises were of slow growth, as it took several years to bring their herds up to a point where they could furnish mature animals for export."⁽⁴⁾

- (1) N.W.M.P. Report, 1889, p.14 and 107
- (2) Ibid, 1892, p.121; Ibid 1893, p.129; Ibid 1894, p.127
- (3) Interior 1894, Part III, p.168
- (4) Ibid, 1897, Part I, p.18

The absence of transportation facilities and drought combined converted Battleford into a small-scale ranching community.

The district of Saskatoon, though situated nearer to Prince Albert than to Regina, falls in the semi-arid region which suffered so severely from the drought. The speculative era in settlement in this district began with the year 1883 and ended with the year 1884. In these two years 139 people settled about Saskatoon.(1) The figure appears small when compared to the number which poured into Assiniboia in the same years but it must be remembered that Saskatoon at this time was 150 miles from railway communication. The significant fact to note is that the influx of settlers in 1883 (93 in all) was not equalled until the year 1901, in spite of the fact that the railway reached Saskatoon in 1890. (2) In 1884 the crops failed because of the drought and during the next four years they were either dried out or frozen out and the settlers began to look upon the production of wheat as an impossibility. In the five years after 1884 the number of arrivals into the Saskatoon district was only 81 - less than the number which had arrived in the one year, 1883. At the same time many settlers had become discouraged and moved out.(3)

"After pioneering to the extent of our capital in methods of growing wheat in a new country," related ex-mayor Wilson of his own experiences, "we decided (1888) that the time had come for a change. On an average the people who came in at that time brought about \$4,000 in capital but lost it. There

(1) Narrative of Saskatoon, p.25

(2) Ibid, p.11

(3) Report of the Dept. of the Interior, Part I, p.31

were the expenses of settling. At the time of our arrival and after we paid about \$250 for a yoke of oxen. Wagons cost about \$100. There were frosts and drought. Then, too, their methods of farming and their implements brought no results. They came in expecting that a great migration would follow them as railways were built, but the Riel Rebellion frightened people and the railway did not come as soon as expected. They were face to face with ruin when fortunately they learned to look to ranching for a living."(1)

The story told by Archie Brown, another Saskatoon pioneer, is somewhat similar.

"Farming seemed hopeless as dry years seemed to follow. Part of my homestead was gradually drifting before the wind toward the river. My brother and myself were accumulating a few head of stock and were turning our thoughts to ranching.....The succession of dry years had dried up all the sloughs so that on the prairie it was almost impossible to get hay. That summer (91) Frank Clark, Andrew Blackley, my brother and self decided to move with our stock to the Pike Lake district where hay was plentiful.....I made a trip to Batoche in November and December, each time bringing back a few cows purchased among the half-breeds.....

"When driving back and forth from Saskatoon to the ranch we often wondered if in our life time we should ever see the prairie back of the Sand Hills at Pike Lake taken up by settlers. The Sand Hills at that time we considered, as for all time, hopeless for a farming proposition. Robt. Wilson of Beaver Creek, was a great believer in the future of the prairies and would tell us young people that we would see settlers scattered everywhere. We laughed at the idea. Fancy the stretch on the Moosejaw trail between Beaver Creek and the Elbow, 40 miles and not a bit of scrub or shelter. We had seen it scorching with fire, not a green spark left from the host of grasshoppers, and the wind driving the snow back and forth in the winter blizzards. 'Would any man live in such a spot? How could he? He almost lived to see his prophecy fulfilled in his own time.'"(2)

Between the years 1890 and 1901 ranching was the prevailing form of business in the Saskatoon district. "As late as 1900," wrote Wilson, "it looked as though it would be a good many years before the country would be settled."(3) But within

(1) Narratives of Saskatoon, p.54

(2) Ibid, p.37-38

(3) Ibid, p.54

the next two years hundreds of settlers poured into the district and by 1903 "the range was so restricted it made it impossible to carry on ranching extensively." (1) The phenomenal development of Saskatoon after 1901 will be told in the following chapter. From a sparsely populated ranching community it was to be transformed in less than a decade into one of the finest wheat producing districts in Western Canada.

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It is impossible to state the exact year when the West passed from the era of re-adjustment to the era of progressive settlement. The change was brought about by the introduction of dry land farming and the discovery of an earlier maturing wheat. In the region described as semi-arid, dry land farming was instrumental in bringing to an end the era of re-adjustment while in the more humid region, an earlier maturing wheat was chiefly instrumental. We find, however, even in the frost ridden region, with the possible exception of the Prince Albert district, that dry land farming very definitely affected the type of agriculture practiced. But it was an earlier maturing wheat which played the leading role in transforming these districts into profitable wheat producing areas.

The change in the methods of agriculture came approximately

(1) Narratives of Saskatoon, p.54

between the years 1894 and 1900. While some farmers summer-fallowed in 1888, and a few even earlier, it did not become general until well on to the close of the century and, in some cases, not until the commencement of the present century. In 1885 the speculative era of settlement had given way to one of re-adjustment; and in the later years of the century re-adjustment gave way to progressive settlement. In many respects, however, the speculative era did not end in 1885 but continued throughout the whole period of settlement up to 1914 and even in the years immediately following the War. In other words, the periods of prosperity have been colored, to a greater or less extent, by speculative settlement while those intervening periods of depression may be described as eras of re-adjustment. In one sense this is true but, even though settlement at times was distinctly speculative, the element of gambling was greatly reduced by dry land farming. Before 1896 two weeks of hot winds would completely obliterate the wheat farmer's yearly earnings. The dry land farmer, on the other hand, while still depending to a great extent upon the weather, had so adapted his methods of agriculture that only by an excessive drought would his crop be a complete failure. The element of risk still remained but it was greatly reduced.

From our study of settlement between 1883 and 1895 it would seem that ^{Sir} George Simpson's contention was substantially true, the west was not suited to settlement. The Canadian Pacific Railway had been built across the district of Assiniboia in

1883 and thousands of settlers had poured in only to face privation and want and, in many cases, complete ruin. Seven years later the railway was built through the district of Saskatoon but, here again, after a sudden great influx of settlers, in this case before the arrival of the railway, the drawbacks of the country became so manifest that farming had to be abandoned and the few who remained turned their efforts to ranching. As the Souris branch of the Canadian Pacific Railway was built through South-Eastern Assiniboia hundreds of settlers rushed in - Estevan became a thriving town in a few months time - and the country side was soon dotted with homesteaders' shacks. But three years later Estevan remained merely a railway siding while the settlers in the country about were so few and far between that taxes became too burdensome and they were forced to leave.

It looked as if the districts of Assiniboia and Saskatchewan were to remain predominantly stock raising in character. The country west and south of Grenfell as well as the country about the centres of Estevan, Saskatoon and Battleford, possessed a climate too dry for the production of wheat while in the country north and east of this area the growth of vegetation became more luxuriant but the period between frosts shorter. It, too, became a stock raising district, not because of the drought but on account of the prevalence of frost. But the practice of summer-tillage, instead of fall or spring tillage, was to show the people of the drought area that small grain could be grown there and the discovery of an earlier maturing wheat was to change and enhance the reputation of places like Yorkton and Prince Albert.

CHAPTER IV

THE INTRODUCTION OF DRY LAND FARMING

Little more than a generation ago a large portion of the prairie land of Canada and the United States was spoken of as the "Great American Desert". The rainfall was so little that, as we have seen in the preceding chapter, the practice of agricultural pursuits other than ranching had virtually proved impossible. But within the last fifty years the practice of grain growing in semi-arid regions, - those receiving between 10 and 20 inches of rainfall per year - has developed, until at present much of the so-called "dry land" of earlier days is being successfully cropped as the result of the intelligent application of dry farming practices.

Dry farming, as at present understood, is the profitable production of crops, without irrigation, on lands that receive annually a rainfall of 20 inches or less. The dominant idea in dry farming is in a sense two-fold. Its seeks to secure to the greatest extent practicable the conservation and also the accumulation of moisture in the soil. The particular type carried on depends largely on the characteristic features of the climate. In Western Canada, where the greatest annual precipitation falls in June and the first part of July, the summerfallow became the established practice of dry farming. Its chief function is the storage and conservation in the soil of a portion of ^{of the} year's moisture as a partial insurance against failure in the next year's crop as a result of drought.

the two chief practices of fallowing are (1) ploughing in June and early July so as to make the soil receptive for the heavy rains of the rainy season, and (2) surface cultivating the land to prevent the loss of moisture through weed and other volunteer growth and through evaporation. Although the practice has been developed greatly in the last few years, the principles underlying it were worked out by the early pioneers of Assiniboia and represent their contribution to agricultural science.

It is not easy to trace out the introduction of the summerfallow into farming practices in Assiniboia and Saskatchewan. The Qu'Appelle Valley lays claim to be the first place in Canada where farmers cultivated the land in the summer in order to preserve the moisture for the next year's crop. The benefits of fallowing, however, were not unknown to the Selkirk settlers.

"On finding my crops falling off greatly," wrote Alexander Ross, "I tried the fall ploughing and summerfallow, to some considerable extent, and it generally answered so well, that I became anxious to see it introduced throughout the colony. First, then, I had a small park, which sowed ten bushels of grain, and finding, from year to year, that it was diminishing, till, at last, it only produced 52 bushels in return, after the ordinary routine of spring ploughing, I got it manured and ploughed it in the fall, and ploughed it again before sowing it in the spring. The season being favorable, I had 255 bushels on it. One of my neighbors tried a similar experiment, and had, after six bushels sowing, 140 in return. A second field, sowing 8 bushels, which had been left fallow for two years running, during which time it had been ploughed three different times, and then sown in drills, yielded for a first crop 280 bushels. In addition to these encouraging facts, other instances were not wanting, in course of time, to demonstrate that fall ploughing and summerfallow, yielded by far the better crops." (1)

(1) Red River Settlement, p.112-3

The object of summer tillage in the Red River Settlement, however, was to give the soil a rest, rather than to preserve moisture. The colonists were little troubled with the drought and they did not have to adapt their methods of agriculture to cope with this problem. After successive crops had been raised off the same land, however, soil exhaustion and weeds seriously diminished the yield. The summerfallow was introduced to enrich the soil and eradicate the weeds.

In the Qu'Appelle Valley summerfallowing was practiced on the Bell Farm as early as 1883. In describing the progress which was being made on this farm, the Dominion land agent reported:

"To obtain the best results from the land, it has been found necessary to divide every farm into three parts, two-thirds of which are cropped each year, and one third is summer-fallowed. By this method the whole is given a rest every three years, and the danger of working out the soil is obviated. An immediate benefit arises from thoroughly cultivating a portion of the land, inasmuch as the yield is larger than were the whole farm to be indifferently tilled." (1)

The original object of fallowing on this farm seems to have been the same as in the Red River Colony, that of preventing soil exhaustion, but it soon became recognized as a means of coping with the drought problem.

Three years later the value of summer tillage was brought home to several of the farmers about Indian Head. Writing in Canada and Its Provinces, W.J. Rutherford, late Dean of the College of Agriculture, University of Saskatchewan, related:

(1) Report Dept. of the Interior, 1883, Part I, p.12

"In 1885 the North West Rebellion took place.....Many farmers around the adjoining settlements of Indian Head, Pheasant Plains, and the Qu'Appelle hired their teams to the Government for the purpose of transporting supplies to the front. This left them with few Horses to put in their crops. Some of the land already broken could not be spring ploughed and had to lie idle. In this year a few of the farmers, after they had finished their packing operations, ploughed the balance of their broken land in preparation for the next year's crops. This was done in June and July. The rains came, weeds grew, and they used the harrows to check them. Notably among these farmers were Angus Mackay of Indian Head, W.R. Motherwell of Abernethy, and Harvey of Indian Head. The next year, 1886, was very dry and most crops failed, but these men had over 25 bushels to the acre on their summer-tilled land as compared with 5 bushels on that prepared in the ordinary way. The problem of securing the farmer against drought was solved. Many improvements in implements and methods have been brought about since then, but the principle remains that for successful crop growing, in the southern belt, at least, moisture must be stored in June and conserved by surface tillage afterwards."(1)

When Mr. Angus Mackay became Superintendent of the Dominion Experimental Farm at Indian Head in 1888 he set to work to study and improve the methods of summerfallowing. After a few years experimenting on the farm he definitely proved that the summerfallow would solve the problem of drought. In 1889, a very dry year, he reported:

"The man is devoid of reason that thinks he is sure of a crop without any exertion on his part. It is true that we have had one year since 1882 that required little or no preparation to give a most abundant crop, but only too many know how little was received in the remaining years by poor cultivation/.

"Our seasons point to only one way in which we can in all years expect to reap something.....I submit that fallowing the land is the best preparation to ensure a crop."(2)

(1) Economic Resources of Saskatchewan, Canada and Its Provinces Vol.20, p.539

(2) Report Dominion Experimental Farms, 1889, p.133

In reporting regarding his visit to Indian Head in 1889, William Saunders, Director of Experimental Farms, wrote:

"Some very instructive experiments have been conducted in order to demonstrate the best methods of treating the soil in preparing for crop. Grain grown on large pieces of summerfallowed land has been compared with that grown on fall or spring ploughed land, and the results are greatly in favor of the summer-fallow....."(1)

When drought again played havoc with the crops on the Western plains in 1892 good results were obtained from summer-fallow on the Experimental Farm.

"The general observations, Angus Mackay reported at the end of this year, "of every one travelling through the country last summer was, that wherever crops were put in in good order, they were looking well and when the land was not well worked quite the reverse was the case. Such has been the experience for the past ten years, with one exception, that of last year, in which owing to plenty of rain, the poorest worked land gave as good, if not better returns than the best. The yield of land worked as our soil must be to give regular and satisfactory returns, has borne out the observation of travellers. We have in this district and I doubt not, in others also, farmers who have this year from 30 to 40 bushels per acre on fallow land, while, on stubble land, equally good soil only eight or ten bushels."(2)

When William Saunders returned east from his visit to the North-West Territories in 1894, he reported:

Crops suffered in a (great degree) from the excessive dry weather in the North-West Territories, and those at Indian Head were no exception to the general rule. The good results of summer-fallowing and good farming were very apparent during this visit, for, while the crop on the Indian Head Experimental Farm was reduced to about one-half of the average return, these farmers in the neighborhood who had not followed the good example set by our efficient superintendent Mr. Angus Mackay, had scarcely any crop worth cutting."(3)

- (1) Report Dominion Experimental Farms, 1889, p.12
- (2) Ibid, 1892, p.227
- (3) Ibid, 1894, p.72

The value of the summer-fallow in producing crops when rainfall is not sufficient is well illustrated by the following table, which is based upon a long series of experiments conducted by Mr. Angus Mackay and upon the crop returns of the Motherwell farm where summer-fallowing was practiced.

Year	Rainfall	Fallow	Stubble	Motherwell Farm
		<u>Yield p. acre</u>	<u>Yield p. acre</u>	<u>Yield p. a.</u>
1891	14.03	35	32	30
1892	6.92	28	21	29
1893	10.11	35	22	34
1894	3.90	17	9	24
1895	12.28	41	22	26
1896	10.59	39	29	31
1897	14.62	33	26	35
1898	18.03	32 .....	.. .....	27
1899	9.44	33 .....	.. .....	32
1900	11.74	17	25	26
1901	20.23	49	38	51
1902	10.73	38	22	26
1903	15.55	35	15	31
1904	11.96	40	29	35
1905	19.17	42	18	36
1906	13.21	26	13	38
1907	15.03	18	18	15
1908	13.17	29	14	16
1909	13.96	28	15	23
Average...		32.4	20.5	

The above table speaks for itself. It shows that, whereas the raising of wheat on stubble land was a hazardous business, on summer-fallowed land it almost invariably met with success. Even in the very dry year, 1894, when the rainfall only amounted to 3.9 inches, the yield off summer-fallowed land on the Experimental Farm was 17 bushels to the acre, and 24 bushels to the acre on the Motherwell farm, 25 miles distant.

The practice of summer-fallowing spread slowly and, before 1890, little progress had been made beyond the immediate vicinity of Indian Head. In addition to issuing the annual reports of the experimental farm, Angus Mackay travelled over the country and lectured to the settlers on the advantages of the summer-fallow. In the early 'nineties he visited the various settlements about Yorkton, as Dr. Patrick writes: "The first I heard of summer-fallowing as a means of dry-farming was on the occasion of a visit of the late Professor Saunders and Angus Mackay of Indian Head to Saltcoats." From this time dates the beginning of dry-farming in that region. In the Qu'Appelle Valley the summer-fallow came as a god-send and the practice spread rapidly. In 1893 the Deputy Minister of the Interior reported:

"To the occasional visitor from one year to another there is a very distinct improvement observable in the methods of farming pursued by the settlers. Many of them were not ordinary farmers, and that they had much to learn goes without saying, but it is very satisfactory to find that they are learning and that each year shows an advance."(1)

(1) Interior, 1893, p.xxxii

The report of the Deputy Minister of Agriculture, three years later, would seem to indicate that fallowing the land was being practiced to some extent.

"In the North-West Territories.....the crops, especially in many parts of western Assiniboia, have been the largest on record, in many cases averaging 40 bushels per acre on summerfallowed land."(1)

The following year the same official was more specific. "The practice of summer-fallowing," he wrote, "is now general throughout many parts of the North-West country."(2) The report of the Regina land agent in 1900 bears out the general statement of the Deputy Minister of Agriculture.

".....Although this season has been very unfavorable owing to the shortage of rain, the crop is a very fair one; from 10 to 40 bushels per acre will be harvested on summer-fallow and new land. Stubble-sowed grains are mostly a failure."(3)

The practice was also spreading north during these years. As early as 1896 the Commissioner of Dominion lands wrote:

"In the Prince Albert district the wheat on summer-fallow and new land, and indeed in every case where the farming was well done, is reported as extra heavy, and the sample No.1, with no damage from frost."(4)

In the same year the Battleford agent reported:

"Owing to a favorable season and better tillage by these settlers who had sown grain I have this year to report excellent results in the growth of cereals, both as to yield and quality."(5)

By 1901 Angus Mackay was able to report that it was "very

- (1) Report Dept. of Agriculture (Ottawa), 1896, p.vi
- (2) Ibid, 1897, p.22
- (3) Report Dept. of the Interior, Part II, p.144
- (4) Ibid, 1896, Part I, p.5
- (5) Ibid, 1896, Part I, p.151

gratifying to know that throughout the Territories summer-fallowing is rapidly becoming general."⁽¹⁾ The Director of Experimental Farms was even more specific when he reported in 1902:

"A large part of the crop in the North-West Territories is on summer-fallow and the proportion is increasing from year to year. The demonstrations which have been made on the western experimental farms during the past fifteen years of the great advantages arising from the summer-fallowing of land, have induced farmers generally to adopt the profitable method of treatment of the soil."⁽²⁾

Unfortunately there was no attempt made to collect reliable statistics regarding the acreage of wheat sown on summer-fallow before 1905. The Department of Agriculture of the North-West Territories, though collecting voluminous statistics of the acreage under crop, the yield and the total production, was unable to secure any complete returns of the acreage of summer-fallow. There was some work done along this line, however, which, though far from complete, does show that summer-fallowing was coming into general farm practice.

In the crop district of East Central Assiniboia, lying between Fleming and Grenfell, the total acreage sown to wheat in 1900 was 71,807, of which 23,000 acres, or 32 per cent, was sown on summer-fallow.⁽³⁾ Again we must consider that in 1899, 1,200 acres of new breaking was done, which would also be included largely in the total wheat acreage.⁽⁴⁾ Thus we see

- (1) Report Dominion Experimental Farms, 1901, p.505
- (2) Report of Dominion Experimental Farms, p.50, 1902
- (3) Report Dept. of Agriculture of the North-West Territories, 1899 and 1900
- (4) Ibid, 1899, p.17

that 16.7 per cent of the 1900 wheat crop was grown on new broken land, or 48.7 per cent grown on either new land or summer-fallow. We must conclude that, in this district at any rate, the introduction of dry land farming had made rapid strides.

In North-East Assiniboia, the Yorkton district, 3,000 acres of new breaking was done in 1899 and a "somewhat smaller area of summerfallowing." (1) When compared with the acreage under wheat in 1900 - 12,369 - 25 per cent of it was grown on summer-fallow and 25 per cent on new land. Here, also, the introduction of dry land farming had made considerable progress, especially when it is remembered that this district was not so subject to drought as the more southern regions.

Unfortunately the result of the department's work in collecting statistics during the following years was even more unsatisfactory than in 1899. In 1900 the report from the crop district of Central Assiniboia, which lies between Grenfell and Balgonie, that the crops "sown on stubble gave poor returns. A large amount of land was prepared for cropping next year" shows that dry land farming was practiced. (2) From the district of Regina and Moosejaw, in the same year, came the report that "some good crops were raised on summer-fallow, while those on stubble were in most cases complete failures and not worth cutting. Some farmers ploughed down such crops." (3)

(1) Territorial Dept. of Agriculture, 1899, p.18

(2) Ibid, 1900, p.18

(3) Ibid, 1900, p.18

These reports merely confirm what we have already seen, that in these regions dry land farming was practiced.

In 1905 the first attempt was made to collect full and reliable statistics regarding the acreage of summer-fallow. Below is found the table embodying the results of these attempts for the years 1905 and 1906.

District	Wheat on Fallow		Wheat on other land		Per cent on Fallow
	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Bu. per ac.</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Bu. per ac.</u>	
1905					
Assiniboia E.	117,292	22.42	377,609	19.60	23.6
Assiniboia W.	90,866	31.11	126,311	25.48	41.6
Humboldt	9,352	23.24	62,711	23.31	12.9
Mackenzie	7,284	27.54	29,847	26.70	19.7
Qu'Appelle	105,455	30.83	338,254	22.01	23.7
Saskatchewan	22,016	24.31	89,184	20.27	19.8
Total Prov.	352,365	27.42	1,023,916	21.62	25.7
1906					
Assiniboia E.	123,894	25.45	534,250	20.30	18.8
Assiniboia W.	106,241	30.72	234,941	24.13	31.1
Humboldt	18,033	42.61	165,955	23.63	9.8
Mackenzie	11,129	32.11	47,263	29.28	19.06
Qu'Appelle	128,594	33.78	569,250	21.30	18.4
Saskatchewan	37,605	30.03	140,309	22.92	21.1
Total Prov.	425,496	30.59	1,691,988	21.96	20.69

In 1905 25 per cent of the acreage of wheat in Saskatchewan was sown on summer-fallowed land. Although the percentage is not large it shows, nevertheless, that summer-fallowing had become quite general. Furthermore it should be pointed out that under the head "other land" is included new broken prairie and back-setting as well as ordinary spring ploughing. As this, if properly done, is a type of dry farming, the

proportion of wheat produced on dry farmed land, in some districts, would be considerably over 50 per cent.

The most significant fact is the variation in the extent of summer-fallowing in the different districts. In Assiniboia West, which included the country about Regina and Moosejaw, the percentage is quite large, 41.6 in 1905 and 31.1 in 1906; in Assiniboia East and Qu'Appelle the percentage is quite substantial; while in the districts of Saskatchewan, Mackenzie and Humboldt, where, generally speaking, early frosts rather than drought did the most damage to crops, the percentage was somewhat lower, quite considerably lower in Humboldt.

In 1906 the percentage of wheat sown on summer-fallow, with the exception of the census district of Saskatchewan, was less than in 1905. One explanation of this is that in 1905 as greatly increased acreage of new sod was turned over and, while the acreage of summer-fallow increased by 75,000, the acreage of wheat increased by over 700,000. As large areas of new land were coming under cultivation the percentage of wheat sown on summer-fallowed land decreased pari passu with the percentage of wheat sown on old land. But, although the proportion of wheat produced on summer-fallowed land became smaller during the years of rapid expansion, the acreage of wheat produced on either summer-fallow or new land undoubtedly became greater.

The following table gives the number of acres of new land, summer-fallow, ploughing and stubble land sown respectively to wheat, oats and other grains in the province of Saskatchewan in 1908 (1):

(1) Sask. Dept. of Agriculture. Report 1909. p. 86

	<u>New Land</u>	<u>Summerfallow</u>	<u>Ploughing</u>	<u>Stubble Land</u>
Wheat	1,151,697	950,614	1,091,416	891,273
Oats	425,599	219,815	1,041,112	553,474
Other Grains	144,028	20,816	278,404	134,136
Total	1,721,324	1,191,245	2,406,932	1,578,883

The above table may be summarised as follows:

	<u>Per cent wheat on Summerfallow</u>	<u>Per cent wheat on New Land</u>
Wheat	20.8	23.29
Oats	9.8	18.9
Other Grains	3.7	25.1
Total	17.27	24.9

From this table we see that in 1909, 20.8 per cent of the wheat crop was grown on summer-fallow and 23.29 per cent on new land. Of the oats, 9.8 per cent were grown on summer-fallow and 18.9 per cent on new land and of other grains only 3.7 per cent were grown on summer-fallow and 25.1 per cent on new land. It will be noticed that the greater part of the summer-fallowed land was utilised for the production of wheat. Of a total of 1,191,245 acres of summer-fallow, 950,614 acres, or 79.8 per cent, were sown to wheat. Of the 1,721,324 acres of new land, 1,151,697 acres, or 66.9 per cent, was sown to wheat. In the production of grains other than wheat, dry land farming was unnecessary.

The following table serves to show the extent of dry land farming done in the various districts for the year 1911 (1):

(1) Reports Saskatchewan Dept. of Agriculture - The boundaries of the crop districts are marked on the 1911 Population Map. c.f. Appendices.

District	Ac. Wheat	p.c. Wheat to Total crop	Acresage Summerfallow	Acresage ^e New Land ^d
1 (South-Eastern)	1,697,655	62.7	809,035	417,237
2 (South Central)	738,357	55.4	344,313	361,393
3 (South-Western)	229,939	66.7	37,759	148,846
4 (East Central)	422,889	43.3	138,687	241,580
5 (Central)	1,390,732	69.5	355,008	698,438
6 (West Central)	415,553	62.9	84,548	383,858
7 (North-Eastern)	32,059	36.9	4,428	21,855
8 (North Central)	159,762	59.3	25,753	56,371
9 (North-Western)	140,762	63.02	24,925	113,509
Total.....	5,232,248		1,824,443	2,443,106

Assuming that the same proportion of summer-fallow and new land was given to the production of wheat as in 1909, i.e., 79.8 or roughly 80 per cent of the summer-fallow and 66.9 or roughly 67 per cent of the new land, we obtain the following results:

District	Ac. Wheat on Summerfallow	Ac. Wheat on New Land	p.c. wheat on Summerfallow	p.c. wheat on new land
1 (S. Eastern)	647,223	278,539	38.1	16.4
2 (S. Central)	285,459	242,133	37.3	33.09
3 (S. Western)	30,200	99,727	13.1	33.37
4 (E. Central)	109,949	171,859	26	40.6
5 (Central)	384,002	467,947	20.4	33.6
6 (W. Central)	67,630	257,183	16.2	61.8
7 (N. Eastern)	3,542	14,643	11.06	45.6
8 (N. Central)	20,602	36,769	12.9	23.1
9 (N. Western)	19,940	76,051	14.1	54.02
Total.....	1,459,544	1,636,881	27.9	31.28

The above results are no more than approximately correct. The proportion of summer-fallow and new land given to the production of wheat undoubtedly varied from year to year and, even more, from district to district. In district No. 4 (East-Central), where only 43.3 per cent of the total crop was wheat,

the proportion of summer-fallow and new land given to the production of this grain would be considerably less than 80 per cent and 67 per cent, respectively, and, consequently, the percentage of wheat sown on these would be less than 26 and 40.6 per cent, respectively, the figures secured in the table above. In district No. 5 (Central Saskatchewan), on the other hand, where 69.5 per cent of the total crop was wheat, the proportion would be much greater than the 1909 figure and, consequently, the percentage of wheat grown on summer-fallow and new land would be greater than 20.4 and 33.6 per cent, respectively. It would be almost safe to say that in this district practically all the summer-fallow and new land would be given to the production of wheat and, working on that assumption, we would find that 25.4 per cent of the wheat was grown on summer-fallow and 50.2 per cent on new land. The same applies to district No. 3 (South-Western Saskatchewan), where 66.7 per cent of the total crop was wheat. Assuming, as in the case of district No. 5, that all the summer-fallow and new land was given to the production of wheat, the percentage of wheat on summer-fallow would be 16.4 and on new land, 64.7 per cent. In district No. 2 (North-Eastern Saskatchewan), only 36.9 per cent of the total crop was wheat and here, as in district No. 4, the proportion of summer-fallow and new land given to the production of wheat would be considerably less than 80 and 67 per cent respectively and, as a consequence, the percentage of wheat grown on summer-fallow and new land would be much less than shown by the table above.

The old settled communities of south-eastern and south-central Saskatchewan led the way in the introduction of dry land farming - there being between 37 and 38 per cent of the 1911 wheat crop produced on summer-fallow. East Central (4) and central (5) Saskatchewan followed in third and fourth place, although it is impossible to say, as we have pointed out, which district held the position of third place. It seems probable, however, the calculations in the table above notwithstanding, that East Central Saskatchewan followed after Central Saskatchewan.

In these four districts dry land farming had become quite general by 1911. It should be recalled that each of these districts, except East Central Saskatchewan (4), lies within the semi-arid belt. District No. 1 (South-Eastern) includes the country about Estevan and Alameda and north to the more humid communities of Moosemin and Broadview; district No. 2 (South-Central) the country about Regina and Moosejaw; district No. 4 (East-Central) the country about Yorkton and Saltcoats; and district No. 5 (Central) the country about Saskatoon.

Districts No. 6 (West-Central), 9 (North-Western) and 3 (South-Western) followed in fifth, sixth and seventh positions respectively in the introduction of the summer-fallow. All were below districts No. 1 (South-Eastern), 2 (South-Central), 4 (East-Central) and 5 (Central) by quite a margin. The small proportion of wheat grown on summer-fallow in district No. 3 (South-Western), in spite of the fact that it lies in the semi-arid region, is explained by the fact that this community had only recently been settled and, weeds having not yet become

a menace to the crops, the average farmer would regard his time as better spent when breaking new land than in summer-fallowing land already under cultivation. However, a large percentage of the crop was grown on new land, which if properly prepared, retains the moisture as summer-fallow does. The same applies to districts No. 6 (West-Central) and 9 (North-Western) which were, with the exception of the immediate vicinity of Battleford, newly settled communities. It is more than probable that almost all the wheat grown around Battleford, south in district No. 6 and north in district No. 9, was produced on summer-fallowed land, while in the country west, about Lloydminster, very little, if any, wheat would be produced on summer-fallowed land.

In districts No. 7 (North-Eastern) and 8 (North-Central), frost was the chief drawback. Lying outside of the semi-arid belt, the summer-fallow was unnecessary. The figures 11.06 and 12.9 represent the maximum percentage of wheat grown on summer-fallow and in District No. 7 it is doubtful if more than 7 per cent of the wheat was grown on summer tilled land.

Between the years 1894 and 1911 the practice of dry land farming became more customary among the settlers of the North-West, especially those located in the semi-arid belt. As settlement proceeded rapidly the great amount of breaking done each summer kept the proportion of wheat grown on summer-fallowed land well under fifty per cent but, as the farmers learned from experience, a smaller proportion of wheat was yearly sown on old land which had not been tilled during the summer and left fallow for one year.

CHAPTER V

THE INFLUENCE OF DRY FARMING ON SETTLEMENT

In our survey of settlement between the years 1885 and 1896 we have found that wheat farming in many parts of the country had proved impossible and that the settlers had either abandoned their farms and moved somewhere else, many to the more northern districts, or diverted their energies to other pursuits, notably stock raising. With the discovery of dry land farming the production of wheat was once more made a profitable enterprise with the result that many districts were rapidly filled which formerly appeared incapable of supporting an agricultural population while in those districts where wheat farming had given place to mixed farming or ranching there was a noticeable expansion in wheat acreage, often at the expense of other branches of agriculture. The effect was two-fold; the acreage of wheat per capita greatly increased; and the country rapidly filled up with incoming settlers. Dry farming, in short, ushered in a period of prosperity. Branch line construction was pushed forward, elevators sprang up at every siding, villages grew into towns and churches and schools soon dotted the country on all sides.

However other factors were also instrumental in bringing about a rapid movement in settlement, together with a great expansion in wheat acreage, in the closing years of the last century and the first decade of the present. Among the most important of these was the discovery of an earlier maturing wheat. These two, dry farming and an earlier maturing wheat, were the chief cause of the great revolution in agricultural

science within the last fifty years which has made possible the production of wheat on lands formerly held by geographers as totally unsuited to the cultivation of this cereal.

The farther north man made his abode to seek his sustenance from the soil, the more necessary was it for him to grow early maturing wheats. Although the prairie belt of the North-West was not greatly affected by early frosts the same was by no means true regarding the park country to the north. Here the summer season was extremely short and the period between the last frost in the spring and the first frost in the fall gave little time for the growing and ripening of tender grains. Even in the prairie belt, however, the summer season was very definitely limited in length and the autumn frosts often came in the middle or latter part of August. Although it was impossible to discover a wheat which would not be injured by frosts, it seemed possible to obtain a variety which, owing to its early maturing qualities, would ripen before the usual fall frosts.

Little is known of the type of wheat grown by the early settlers of the North-West, notably by the Red River Colonists. That it was an American wheat has been fairly established and evidently it was of the soft variety. Data regarding its maturing qualities is sadly lacking. From the little information available, however, it seems certain that the wheat grown on the banks of the Red River ripened in about 137 days, a much longer time than that required by the varieties

grown in Western Canada to-day.(1) The following table

(1) In 1816, at Red River, reaping commenced on September 19 and finished on September 23. (Selkirk Papers, p.1711) If we assume that the wheat was sown on May 1, the period of maturity is 146 days. In 1817, Alexander Macdonell writes that on the 14th of September they had such high winds that much of the wheat was blown off the stock. (Ibid, p.4195) Evidently harvest had not commenced at that date and consequently we are able to assume that in that year the wheat was in the ground at least 140 days before it was ready to be harvested. In 1818, wheat was sown on April 28, although some was not sown until as late as May 9. (Ibid, p.5189) Harvest commenced about August 28 and was finished on September 2. (Ibid, p.5336 and 5370) The period of maturity in this case was only 124 days. In 1836 the wheat was standing on August 19, not yet ready to be harvested. (Rass, op.cit, p.187-8) In 1855, the wheat harvest commenced on August 15. (Hind's Explorations, p.144) In the following year wheat was sown on the 29th of April and cut on the 28th of August. (Ibid, p.144) The period of maturity in this case was 128 days. In 1860 an article appeared in the Nor'Wester on September 14, called The Harvest. It seems quite possible that wheat was being cut at this date. If so, the period of maturity would be about 140 days. In 1862 seeding commenced on the 1st of May. (Nor'Wester, May 14) On September 11, the Nor'Wester, in an article, comments on the harvest. Again it is quite possible that harvest operations had just begun, making the period of maturity about 134 days.

George Simpson, in giving evidence before the Select Committee on the Hudson's Bay Company in 1857, states that in Red River, seeding operations commenced about the 1st of May and wheat was harvested in the latter part of August. (Report, p.56) If this evidence is reliable the period of maturity would be about 125 days. It seems quite probable, however, that, speaking on the spur of the moment without thinking, he was at least ten days out in the average time required for wheat to mature at Red River.

At Edmonton, in 1855, wheat was sown on May 1 and harvested on September 25. (Hudson's Bay Company Journal of Fort Edmonton) However it is probable that the harvesting of the wheat was delayed. The Brigade did not return to Edmonton until September 20 and from this time until the 25th it was raining incessantly. So that as it may, the seed was in the ground 147 days before it was harvested. At the Dog Mission, in 1857, wheat was sown on May 18 and harvested on October 15, making a period of maturity of 150 days.

The above information can be condensed into the following table:

compares the period of maturity of the varieties of wheat most commonly grown to-day with that of the Red River wheat. With the exception of the figure for Red Fife, which is based upon the experiments of Professor Bracken who found that the average period for the maturity of this wheat at Saskatoon was four days longer than Marquis, the figures for the present day varieties of wheat are based upon the results of tests made at Saskatoon by Professor Harrington, of the College of Agriculture in the University of Saskatchewan, while the figure for Red River wheat is based upon our calculations, given above.

Red River Wheat	.....	137 days average
Red Fife (at Saskatoon)	.....	115 days average
Marquis ( { " " }	.....	111 " "
R.B. 222 ( { " " }	.....	108.78 " "
Garnet ( { " " }	.....	104 " "

(Foot-note continued from preceding page)

Red River

Year	Date of sowing	Harvest	Time maturing
1815	May 1 (?)	Sept. 19	146 days
1817	May 1 (?)	Sept. 18	145 "
1818	April 18	Sept. 2	124 "
1855	April 20 (?)	Aug. 2	117 "
1856	April 29	Aug. 28	122 "
1860	May 1 (?)	Sept. 14 (?)	137 "
1862	May 1	Sept. 11 (?)	134 "

Edmonton

1855	May 1	Sept. 25	147 days
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Bea Mission

1857	May 18	Oct. 15	150 days
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Here we see that Marquis, the type of wheat most popular in western Canada to-day, ripens on an average 26 days earlier than the wheat grown in the Red River Colony. Other varieties, such as Garnet and R.B.222, which are becoming more common in the northern parts of the West, have an even more considerable lead in the date of maturing.

Red Fife wheat, the variety which was almost wholly grown in the West from the beginning of settlement to about 1914, has had a romantic history. First discovered by an early pioneer of Ontario in 1841 (1), it spread throughout that province

(1) The following is an account given by a son of David Fife, in which he describes how his father and mother found and perpetuated the celebrated wheat:

"The late David Fife, Otonabee, Peterboro county, wished to see the quality of our Canadian wheat improved, and with this object in view, sent to Scotland for samples of wheat. Some were forwarded to Port Hope and lay there in storehouse during fall and part of the winter. Three dollars storage was paid and the wheat was sown, but it came to nothing. My father then wrote again to his friend, Mr. Struthers, clerk in a grain store in Glasgow, for the second supply of wheat. Mr. Struthers noticed a new kind, an excellent sample brought by a ship direct from Danzig. He thought it would be just the kind for Canada and sent two samples, one of fall wheat and the other of spring wheat. These were sown in the year 1841. The fall variety came to nothing, but the spring sample proved superior to any other kind sown. Out of this three ears were saved, But owing to the illness of my mother, who took special charge of this wheat, it was not sown until after the other wheat was above ground. At harvest time the Siberian wheat was badly rusted, whereas this sample was not affected in the least. This crop was gathered by my mother and my brother David in a sheaf and carefully stowed away. They had now realized a quart of seed. This was sown the following spring by my mother and brother, producing half a bushel at harvest time, and from the produce of this half bushel the neighbors were supplied and the country benefitted by the introduction of the Fife wheat."

(Manuscript in library, University of Saskatchewan)

and the United States in the following years and made its way into Manitoba from Minnesota, after the crops had been destroyed by the grasshoppers in 1874. It probably came with the settlers west to Assiniboia after 1883 but did not make its way to the more northern regions about Prince Albert and Battleford until 1886, when the settlers in these parts were supplied by the Government with seed. From this time it became the common variety grown throughout the West and soon made this region famous for its "Manitoba Hard" wheat.

In 1904 Dr. Charles E. Saunders, Cerealist for the Dominion of Canada, discovered a new wheat which, while possessing all the good features of Red Pife, matured in less time. The new variety he called Marquis. In 1909 its distribution to the public began and since then the growing of this wheat has spread enormously, and is now by far the chief variety grown in the West. "The introduction of Marquis wheat," wrote Professor Buller, "is one of the greatest practical triumphs that Canada has ever had, one that is perennially fruitful, not impoverishing but ever increasing the wealth of our country and making it a better land to live in."(1)

But as Red Pife conquered over all other rivals and finally gave place to Marquis, so has Marquis conquered over ^{all} other rivals but is to-day giving place to even earlier maturing varieties. As man moves northward in quest of new fields to

(1) Buller, Essays on Wheat, p.158

conquer, it is necessary for science to come to his aid and produce ever earlier maturing wheats.

The most noticeable of the other factors influencing settlement was the immigration policy of the Dominion Government, after the coming into office of Clifford Sifton as Minister of the Interior in 1896. A vigorous and almost unscrupulous campaign was carried on in the United States, Great Britain and European countries, to persuade people to emigrate to Canada. Again, the United States had become, by this time, a less serious competitor for immigrants. Most of the free land of the western states had been taken up with a consequent greater appreciation of the free land in Western Canada. Also the better climatic conditions and a higher price paid for wheat played no inconsiderable part in inducing settlers to come to Canada. Finally the vigorous construction policies of the railway companies, though partly caused by, was, on the other hand, an added cause of, the increased settlement. All of these factors, together with the introduction of dry land farming, an earlier maturing wheat and others of lesser importance, combine to make the years 1896 to 1914 the most successful in settlement on the western plains.

Although settlement showed no increase in 1896, good crops and a higher price paid for wheat, brought about a definite change in the condition of the country. The Batevan agent reported that "there is a decided change for the better, and, now that farm produce is a better price, a more hopeful sent-

sentiment prevails among the settlers."(1) There was no increase in settlement, however, in this district during the year - homestead entries only amounted to 31, while there were 49 cancellations - but, "although immigration had been light during the season there (had) been more enquiries for vacant lands (during the months of September and October) than any time for two or three years past."(2) Although "the number of immigrants who arrived in the district(of Regina) during the year ending the 31st of October, 1896, (had) decreased in comparison with that of other years" there was a decided improvement among the farmers generally.(3) The same tendencies were noticeable throughout the country. At Yorkton the agent reported that "there has been a slight falling off of new entries granted from last year, and of those made a large proportion were by people who had been residing in the country for some time; those from Europe being very few."(4) The condition of agriculture, however, in this district was in a most satisfactory state. In short, the year 1896 marks the beginning of a period of prosperity within the country but, due to the depression which still left its imprint on the public mind, the influx of settlers was small.

The improved condition of the country was reflected on settlement in 1897. Homestead entries increased from 1,888 in

- (1) Interior 1896, Part IV, p.147
- (2) Ibid, loc.cit
- (3) Ibid, p.149
- (4) Ibid, p.145

1896 to 2,155 in 1897. The increase was not large but was sufficient to show an accelerated movement in settlement. Especially was the increase noticeable in the land districts of Coteau and Qu'Appelle. In the former there were 31 entries granted in the twelve months to December 31, 1896, while there were 61 entries granted in the six months to June 30, 1897; in the latter there were 173 entries granted in the twelve months to December 31, 1896 and 146 entries granted in the six months to June 30, 1897. At Alameda, in the Coteau land district, the agent reported that "the crops throughout the whole of this district during the past season have been universally good, the wheat averaging from 17 to 25 bushels to the acre, and with the present price for produce this has created a widespread feeling of prosperity and confidence in the country." (1) The Regina agent was equally enthusiastic.

"The evidences of prosperity all over this district, during the present year," he wrote, "are exceptionally apparent in every respect. The settlers all express themselves as being fully content with returns for their labours. They have reaped an abundant harvest of excellent grain, most of the wheat having averaged 'No. 1 hard'. The prices received for grain are greatly in excess of those obtained for several years.....In many parts of the district it is observed that the area under cultivation is rapidly increasing, and that the farmers, owing to the favorable weather, have been able to prepare larger tracts of land for next season's crops." (2)

Prosperity also crowned the efforts of the farmers in the Yorkton district.

"There has been," reported the agent, "a considerable increase in the number of homestead entries granted, and the entries still keep on the increase.....The season of

(1) Interior, Part IV, 1897, p. 12
 (2) Ibid, Ibid, p. 15

1897 may be looked upon as the most successful season that there has ever been in this part of the country. The grain crop has been above the average and the price good."(1)

It was in 1898, however, that the really rapid movement of settlement began. The number of homestead entries granted during that year, the largest since 1885, was over twice as large as the number granted in 1897, and over three times that of 1896.(2) A great impetus had also been given to the purchase of land from the railway companies and the Hudson's Bay Company. Total land sales of these amounted to 473,789 acres in 1898 as compared with 222,545 acres in 1897 and 108,016 acres in 1896.(3) Although neither the crops nor the price paid for wheat were as good as in 1897, conditions, generally, throughout the country were satisfactory. The Alameda reported that his "district as a whole has been prosperous"(4); the Prince Albert agent that the year "has been a prosperous one"(5); ~~and~~ the Yorkton agent that "the district is prospering and the settlers are contented"(6); and the Regina agent that "the results of the seasons work has been very satisfactory.(7)

In 1899 the number of homestead entries was the greatest up to that time in the history of the Department, with the

- (1) Interior 1897, Part I, p.14
- (2) Ibid, 1898, p.iii
- (3) Ibid, p.vi
- (4) Ibid, Part I, p.12
- (5) Ibid Part I, p.13
- (6) Ibid, Part II, p.249
- (7) Ibid, Part I, p.15

exception of the year 1882, whose entries were 7,483.(1) Land sales of the Hudson's Bay Company and railway corporations increased from 448,623 acres in 1898 to 553,075 acres in 1899. (2) The total acreage of land disposed of by the Department and these companies amounted to 2,986,966, as compared with 2,177,774 in 1898, or an increase in favor of the later year of 809,192 acres. In the district of Alameda homestead entries showed the remarkable increase of nearly three to one over the previous year (3); and in the Regina agency there were 674 more entries than in 1898.(4)

In 1900, "owing to the lack of rain in many portions of the country the crops.....proved light."(5) However the practice of dry land farming had become sufficiently common for the farmers generally to reap a fair harvest.(6) Settlement, as a consequence, was not materially affected, in fact the steady advance in homestead entries and land sales from 1897 on showed no marked break as a result of the drought of 1900. This fact stands in marked contrast to those earlier years when a year of drought caused a marked decline in immigration and land settlement. The homestead entries granted in the six months ending June 30, 1900, amounted to 4,132 as compared with 6,689 in the twelve months ending December 31, 1899, and

- (1) Interior, 1899, p.viii
- (2) Ibid, p.x
- (3) Ibid, Part I, p.10
- (4) Ibid, Part I, p.16
- (5) Ibid, 1900, Part I, p.4
- (6) Ibid, Part I, p.144

4,848 in the twelve months ending December 31, 1898.

More significant still was the increase in homestead entries the following year. In the fiscal year ending June 30, 1901, there were 8,162 homestead entries as compared with 7,426 in the fiscal year ending June 30, 1900, or an increase of 736. Had the fiscal year been taken up to December 31, the increase could be explained by the fact that the crop of 1901 was a bountiful one. But by June 30 the results of the standing crop could not be certain. However, in the district of Assiniboia, entries did show a slight falling off as compared with the preceding year; but the fact that this decrease was not great shows to some extent the good effects of dry farming on settlement, though we must not forget that the Government was pushing the policy of bringing immigrants in.

During the five years, 1897 to 1901, a total area of 7,255,859 acres of land had been disposed of by the department and railway companies, either by sale or homestead entry. During the fourteen years preceding 1896, the total area of land disposed of by the department and companies amounted to only 2,336,789 acres, or 14,605 farms of 160 acres each, whereas during the following five years an average of 9,069 quarter-sections were disposed of yearly.

The decade 1891-1901 marks the end of the era of re-adjustment and the beginning of a period of progressive settlement. The evidence which we have secured would indicate that the change came about between the years 1895 and 1898. These facts are clearly brought out by the census of 1901. The following table shows the increase in population after 1895

as compared with the earlier periods (1):

	<u>1885</u>	<u>1891</u>	<u>1895</u>	<u>1901</u>
Assiniboia	17,717	26,448	34,732	64,173
Saskatchewan	4,486	8,230	9,931	19,843

In the period 1895 to 1901 the population of Assiniboia almost doubled. The yearly increase of this district was: for the period 1885-1891, 1,455; for 1891-1895, 2,086; and for 1895-1901, 4,897. The yearly increase of Saskatchewan was: for 1885-1891, 624; for 1891-1895, 425; and for 1895-1901, 1,632.

The expansion in the acreage of wheat in the years preceding 1901 is shown in the following tables (2):

I. Acreage of Wheat

	<u>1885</u>	<u>1891</u>	<u>1898</u>	<u>1901</u>
Assiniboia	61,035	103,968	258,549	445,653.
Saskatchewan	3,365	4,769	17,704	41,668

II: Annual increase in acreage of wheat

	<u>1885-1891</u>	<u>1891-1898</u>	<u>1898-1901</u>
Assiniboia	7,155	22,083	62,368
Saskatchewan	234	1,848	7,288

Unfortunately, in neither the census of 1895 nor the crop statistics of 1898, were any figures given showing the number

(1) c.f. Population Maps, 1885, 1891 and 1901 - Appendices

(2) The figures for 1885 and 1891 are based upon the Dominion census, while those of 1898 and 1901 are based upon the reports of the Dept. of Agriculture of the North-West Territories.

of occupiers of land. Consequently we must compare the acreage of wheat per occupier of land for 1891 and 1901:

	1891	1901
Assiniboia E.	18.1	40.1
Assiniboia W.	19.5	39.7
Saskatchewan	4.4	17.1

The rapid increase in the acreage of wheat per farm stands in marked contrast with the period 1885 to 1891 when this increase was very small. The increase in the acreage of improved land in the period 1891-1901 also deserves comparison with the period 1885-1891

I. Acreage of improved land per capita

	1891	1901
Assiniboia E.	5.3	17.2
Assiniboia W.	4.3	14.2
Saskatchewan	.92	1.7

II. Acreage improved land per occupier of land

	1891	1901
Assiniboia E.	25	90.2
Assiniboia W.	29.9	96.4
Saskatchewan	9.4	43.4

In 1891 there were an average of 25 acres of improved land for each farm in Assiniboia East and 30 acres in Assiniboia West; in 1901 this had increased to 90.2 and 96.4 acres respectively. In Assiniboia East the acreage of improved land

per capita increased from 5.3 acres to 17.2 acres; and in Assiniboia West from 4.3 acres to 14.2. The increase in the acreage of improved land in Saskatchewan kept pace with the increase in Assiniboia.

During the same years the expansion in the cattle industry, outside of Assiniboia West, was almost insignificant;

Number of Cattle per Occupier of Land

	1891	1901
Assiniboia East	9.5	11.2
Assiniboia West	16.4	34.1
Saskatchewan	14.3	10.9

While there is an increase in the number of cattler per occupier of land in Assiniboia, especially in Western Assiniboia due to the fact that ranching was becoming popular in the districts of Swift Current and Maple Creek, its general advance was not on a par with the acreage of wheat. In Assiniboia East, there were 18 acres of wheat per farm in 1891 and 40 acres in 1901, while the number of cattle only increased from 9.5 to 11.2 between these years. In Saskatchewan the number of cattle actually decreased from 14.3 to 11. In Assiniboia West, however, the increase in the number of cattle corresponded almost exactly with the expansion in wheat acreage - 16.4 to 34.1 and 19.5 to 39.7, respectively. It is safe to say, however, that in the districts of Regina and Moosejaw the acreage of wheat per farm increased more rapidly than did the number of cattle, while in the districts of Swift Current and

Maple Creek the reverse was true. In other words, outside of the purely ranching country west of Moosejaw, the period from 1891 to 1901 is marked by a more rapid expansion of wheat acreage than of the number of cattle.(1)

The comparison of the tables for 1885 and 1891 with the tables for 1891 and 1901 shows that, while in the former period wheat production was giving way to stock-raising, in the latter period stock-raising was giving way to wheat production. Many factors brought about the change but not the least among them was the introduction of dry land farming. By means of the summer-fallow the production of wheat was made much more profitable, due to lessened risks and greater yields, with the result that farmers began to expand their wheat acreage and, while they continued to raise some stock, they did not place as great dependence upon this industry as formerly.

The period from 1901 to 1906, covered by the census reports of these two years, may fairly be described as falling definitely in the era of progressive settlement. The population increased rapidly and there was a great expansion in the production of wheat.

In 1901 the population of Assiniboia and Saskatchewan was 91,279; in 1906 the population of the new province of Saskatchewan was 257,763, an increase of 166,484, or 182.39 per cent.(2) The wheat acreage kept pace with the growth in

(1) The British embargo on stockers destroyed, to some extent, the cattle trade in Western Canada.

(2) c.f. Population Maps, 1901 and 1906 - Appendices

population. The following table, based upon the returns of the Territorial Department of Agriculture, shows the expansion in wheat acreage between the years 1898 and 1906:

1898	276,253	acres
1899	328,459	"
1900	388,540	"
1901	469,953	"
1902	580,860	"
1903	777,822	"
1904	910,359	"
1905	1,130,184	"
1906	1,730,586	"

When the increase in the years from 1898 to 1906 - 276,253 to 1,730,586 acres - is compared with the increase between the years 1891 and 1898 - 108,737 to 276,253 acres - the comparison between the periods becomes illuminating. In the early period the increase per annum was 24,075 acres, in the latter period, 181,791 acres.

Compared to the expansion in wheat acreage, the tardy progress of the live-stock industry during these years is significant. The following table shows the average acreage of wheat per farm and the average number of live-stock in 1901 and 1906:

	1901	1906
Number of farms	13,380	55,971
Acres wheat	36.4	37.8
Number of horses	6.24	4.30
" " cattle	16.22	8.43
" " sheep	5.46	2.16
" " pigs	2.07	2.21

The above table is illustrative of the different characteristics of the various eras of settlement. Between the years

1885 and 1891 the number of stock per farm increased enormously while the acreage of wheat remained in statu quo; between 1891 and 1901, the acreage of wheat per farm increased rapidly while the number of stock, except in the ranching country of Swift Current and Maple Creek, remained in statu quo; and, finally, between the years 1901 and 1906 there is an increase in the acreage of wheat while the number of stock decreased per farm. By 1906 dry land farming, together with other factors of greater or less importance, had very definitely converted a large section of the districts of Assiniboia and Saskatchewan, after 1905 the province of Saskatchewan, into a wheat growing domain where the production of this cereal was much more profitable than the raising of stock.

Homestead entries and land sales in this period kept pace with the increase in population. During the fiscal year, 1901-02, the number of homestead entries reached the surprising total of 14,633.(1) In the twelve months from June 30, 1902 to June 30, 1903 the Hudson's Bay Company and railway corporations disposed of as much land as they had done for the ten preceding years, while the number of homestead entries increased to 31,383.(2) Of the total number of entries that had been made since 1874, 111,315 were recorded within the five years preceding 1905, or an average of 22,223 for each year, leaving a balance of 88,863 for the previous 26 years.

The years 1897 to 1906 were marked by the immigration of

(1) Interior, 1901-02, p.x

(2) Ibid, 1902-03, p.xxii

peoples from the Eastern Provinces, Great Britain, the United States and Europe. Settlements of foreigners sprang up in all parts of Saskatchewan and Assiniboia. Although it was not the policy of the Government to encourage immigrants of the same nationality to establish large separate colonies, small groups inevitably did form.

In 1897 a large number of Galicians entered the land agency of Yorkton, settling to the north-west and north-east of that town (1); and during the following years the arrivals of these people was undiminished, the chief centres of settlement being Yorkton, Rosthern and Grenfell. In 1899, 600 settled at Yorkton and 680 at Rosthern (2); in 1900, 822 settled at Yorkton and 627 at Rosthern (3); in 1901, 585 settled about Yorkton and Saltcoats and 575 about Rosthern (4); in 1902, 680 settled at Yorkton, 840 at Rosthern and 180 at Grenfell (5) and in 1903, 1,750 settled at Yorkton, 480 at Rosthern and 650 at Grenfell. (6) The Commissioner of Immigration estimated that in the district of Saskatchewan alone, 2,500 Galicians had been settled between the years 1898 and 1902. (7)

Hungarian communities developed within Saskatchewan and Assiniboia. The first colony to be formed was that of Esterhazy in 1886 and in 1892 another was founded at Otthon. In 1901,

- (1) Interior, 1897, Part I, p. 64
- (2) Ibid, 1899, Part II, p. 113
- (3) Ibid, 1900, Part II, p. 118
- (4) Ibid, 1901, Part II, p. 119
- (5) Ibid, 1902, Part II, p. 108
- (6) Ibid, 1903, Part II, p. 99
- (7) Ibid, 1903 Part II, p. 126

2,000 Hungarians settled in either Assiniboia or Saskatchewan, some locating in the Indian Head district and at Zichydsorf, south of Regina, while a new colony was started at Mathiasfeld, in the vicinity of Duck Lake, by Mr. Zoltan Von Rajcs. Others tracked to the Whitewood, Yorkton and Prince Albert districts.⁽¹⁾ In 1902 the number of Hungarian arrivals was only 969⁶ but in the following year it increased to 1,357; most of them settling at Kaposvar and Esterhazy or in the new colony of Mathiasfeld.⁽²⁾ Soon there were settlements at Otthon, Beaver Hills, Melville, Wakaw, Regina, Stockholm, Bukovina, Teuchwood, Esterhazy and Kaposvar.

The Mennonites, the first foreign settlers of the western prairies, began to push westward from Manitoba in the later years of the century. During the years from 1896 to 1900 the country about Rosthern and Hague was rapidly settled with these people. Others settled in the country from Herbert to Swift Current where they converted what had formerly been a semi-arid waste into a productive wheat growing domain.

In 1899 the great immigration of Doukhobers took place, the total number arriving at Winnipeg being 7,427. Of these, 1,472 were settled in the 'Saskatchewan' (Kara) colony, which comprised the villages of Redberry Lake, west of Carlton, and at the elbow of the North Saskatchewan; 1,404 in the 'North Colony' which was settled at Thunder Hill, on the Swan river; and

(1) Interior 1901, Part II, p.120

(2) Ibid, 1902, Part II, p.109; Ibid, 1903, Part II, p.98

4,478 in the 'South Colony'.(1) Owing to difficulties over lands all but one-tenth of the community Doukhobers later moved to British Columbia.

The most striking feature of the wave of immigration into the districts of Assiniboia and Saskatchewan, which began in 1897, was the great increase from year to year in the number of citizens of the United States who came into the country, a large proportion of whom were of North-European ancestry. In 1898, Americans settled about Moose Mountain and in the Yorkton district, forming in the latter a settlement known as Wallace.(2) During the following years they pushed into the Alameda district, along the "see" line at Yellow Grass and Milestone and north to Yorkton and Saltcoats. In 1901 six train loads of German Americans from Kansas, Minnesota, Nebraska settled as far north as Rosthern (3); while in 1902 a large number of Norwegians and Swedes from Minnesota and Dakota located at Glen Mary, in the Prince Albert agency.(4) In 1903 German Americans located east of the Saskatchewan river, in the Hoodoo and Humboldt districts (5); while in the same year a large colony of Swedish settlers from Minnesota and Dakota were founded south of Moosejaw.(6) A great number of Americans were brought in by the Saskatchewan Valley Land Company, which settled the large tract between Lumsden and

(1) Interior 1899, Part I, p.12

(2) Ibid, 1898, Part II, p.247 and 249

(3) Ibid, 1901, Part II, p.131

(4) Ibid, 1902, Part I, p.33

(5) Ibid, 1903, Part II, p.105

(6) Ibid, p.110

Saskatoon.

Immigration from the eastern provinces, especially Ontario, continued throughout these years. In 1898 this immigration amounted to 13,112 souls as compared with 2,373⁷ in 1897.(1) Manitobans, English and Ontario settlers were locating rapidly at Melfort, Birch Hills, Shellbrook and Saskatoon and the country west as far as Battleford. Between Saskatoon and Regina many Canadians took up their location while westward from Regina Canadians did their share in converting the region into a productive wheat growing domain. At times it seemed that Canadian immigration would become negligible when compared with the large swarms that were pouring in from Europe; but throughout the West, in almost every community, a substantial sprinkling of these people were to be found.

Immigration from the British Isles during these years was also large. Some located in the south but the great majority pushed northwards about Saskatoon, Battleford and especially Prince Albert. Possibly the greatest attempt to colonize the western plains with British peoples was that of the Barr Colony. It was in the year 1903 that the "All-British Colony" promoted by the Rev. I.M. Barr, took on definite form, and early in April the party arrived, consisting of about 1,800 souls. Between 300 and 400 were supplied with positions on farms in Manitoba and the balance proceeded to Saskatoon. The lands reserved for the colony were situated between the North

(1) Interior, 1898, Part II, p.214

Saskatchewan and Battle rivers and were traversed by the fourth Principal Meridian, the boundary line between what are now the provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan. Many of the colonists, however, rather than bear the hardship of a 200 mile trek across the prairie, selected homesteads in the district of Saskatoon, others went as far as Battleford and located in the Jackfish Lake country. The main body, however, moved on ^{to} the fourth Meridian and took up their locations about what has become the town of Lloydminster. Disagreements between Mr. Barr and his settlers arose, which culminated in his leaving the colony, and the charge of the internal and personal affairs were taken over by the Rev. George E. Lloyd. The progress of the colony was slow. It was soon discovered that a large number of those brought out by Mr. Barr were not agriculturists in any sense. There were no experienced farmers within 100 miles of the colony from whom the settlers could learn the proper methods of husbandry. In 1904 the reserved area was thrown open to American and Canadian settlers and in 1905 a large number of these came into the district. From this time the success of the colony was assured. The colonists learned from their neighbors how to farm as the country demanded. Railway communication was secured in 1905; and Lloydminster soon became the centre of a thriving mixed-farming community.

Ukrainians, Poles, Bohemians, Roumanians and Moldavians poured into the country after 1900. Some joined the colonies of sister nationalities while others set up separate communities of their own. Scandinavians came mostly from the United States,

but the Icelandic settlements were recruited almost wholly from across the Atlantic. Taken all in all, these various foreign communities presented a serious problem of assimilation. They represent the greatest threat to Canadian national development. But the common economic environment, common political institutions and a homogeneous educational system for children has provided a unifying influence which holds out the promise of building up a Canadian nationality.

The great influx of immigrants between the years 1897 and 1906 follows upon that development which was going on in agriculture on the western prairies. Although the greatest single factor bringing about this movement was the immigration policy of Clifford Sifton, settlement from without was not possible until there was development from within. As dry farming made possible the extension of agricultural operations about Saskatoon, Battleford, Regina, Estevan and Moosejaw and west, the prairies became wider as a result and more room was made for the incoming settlers. Looked at from this light the immigration movement of the early years of the present century is very definitely related to the introduction of dry land farming. It is now necessary to trace out the development in certain districts which, before 1900, were not affected by agricultural settlement.

Battleford, as late as 1900, remained unaffected by the tide of settlement which was rapidly spreading over the prairies.

"The reason," reported the agent for that district, "is easily apparent, for a glance at the map shows that this is the only agency through which a line of railway does not run, and it has seemed to immigrants incredible that so vast an area of fertile lands has remained so long without railway intercourse with the outside world when other districts have accommodation.....Owing to the absence of export facilities, no effort is made to grow surplus quantities of grain. Each settler has a small herd of cattle and horses, and a few conduct ranches in conjunction, and surplus grain is crushed and fed to stock in fitting them for the British beef markets."(1)

The following year, however, a change was noticeable in the type of agriculture practiced.

"Cultivation of land," wrote the agent this year, "is not yet conducted on an extensive scale, though the area under cultivation is now increasing rapidly, as the advent of a line of railway in the near future is assured. Hitherto sufficient grain for local consumption only was grown, and surplus grain was fed to stock in fitting it for the market. It now appears that mixed farming is destined to supplant ranching as the chief industry of the settlers, and when a railroad is projected through the district ranchers will move further back, leaving the lands over which herds are now grazing for those who will obtain homestead entries and proceed to earn their livelihoods by means of farm and dairy products."(2)

Nevertheless, even in 1902, stock-raising continued "the chief industry of the people of this district."(3) By 1903, however, it was evident that the days of the rancher were almost over.

"During the past four years," reported the Battleford agent, "as it became more certain that two or more lines of railway would soon traverse the Saskatchewan Valley, the district has attracted considerable attention. Early in the present year it became evident that the rush was about to set in, and during the past four months the entire population of the district has been almost doubled.....The total area under cultivation is about 6,000 acres, as compared with 4,000 last year."(4)

- (1) Interior, 1900, Part I, p.6
- (2) Ibid, 1900-01, p.12, Part I.
- (3) Ibid, 1901-02, Part I, p.30
- (4) Ibid, 1902-03, Part I, p.12

The district now entered upon a period of rapid development. In 1902-03 the number of entries was 1,246, and during 1904, 1,988, in comparison with a total of only 676 for the sixteen years preceding June 30, 1902. Another evidence of the rapid expansion of the district was the fact that during the two years, 1902-03 and 1903-04, the Canadian Pacific Railway Company sold 630,818 acres of land, a large proportion of which passed directly or indirectly into the hands of actual settlers. However, reported the Battleford agent, "as there is still no means of profitable transportation no farm products are intended for export. But in view of the probable completion early next spring of the line of the Canadian Northern Railway, preparations are now being made by the farmers here for more extensive seeding operations next spring. It is expected that there will be 15,000 acres under crop next year whereas the present area is scarcely 9,000 acres." (1) In 1905, the great event, the arrival of the railway, took place. "The past year," enthusiastically wrote the agent, "will go down as an epoch marking one for this district, owing mainly to the arrival of the Canadian Northern Railway to Battleford." (2) It was estimated that there were 20,000 acres under crop this year with the possibility of double that for the following year. "The cattle industry," the agent reported, however, "continues to be an important one. It is not likely to be seriously disturbed by incoming settlers for several years to come." (3)

(1) Interior, 1903-04, p.12, Part I

(2) Ibid, 1904-05, p.12-13, Part I

(3) loc. cit.

In the short space of three or four years the district of Battleford was transformed from a small-scale ranching, agricultural self-sustaining community to a mixed-farming wheat exporting community. This is clearly illustrated in the following tables:

Homestead Entries, Battleford Land District

1900	1901	1902	1903	1904	1905	1906
6	10	168	1,198	1,774	3,618	7,373

Acreage wheat in Battleford Crop District

1898	1899	1900	1901	1902	1905	1906
702	440	1,165	937	1,347	4,070	27,589

The rapidity of settlement after 1901, as shown by the first of these tables, is reflected in the acreage of wheat, as shown in the second. The number of homestead entries in 1901 was 10, in 1906, 7,373. The acreage of wheat in 1901 was 937, in 1906, 27,589. The chief factor which brought about this change was undoubtedly the railway but it is not too much to say that although settlement would have been greatly accelerated by the railway it would not have made such rapid strides had it not been for the almost simultaneous introduction of dry land farming. It must be remembered that the district of Battleford lies in a semi-arid zone with a precipitation about the same as Regina. It is not unreasonable to suppose, therefore, that the settlers who followed the railway into Battleford would have met with the same obstacles as the settlers following the railway into Regina after 1883, into Estevan after 1892 and into Saskatoon between the years 1883 and 1890 had it not been

that the new science of dry farming had prepared the Battleford pioneers to cope with the problem of drought which baffled the early pioneers of Regina, Estevan and Saskatoon. Thus, although the railway was the prominent, visible factor which gave the impetus to settlement in the Battleford district, behind this was that of the introduction of dry land farming which made possible the production of wheat in this part of the country.

Saskatoon, on the other hand, in spite of the fact that the railway arrived in that district in 1899-90, remained a ranching community until 1901. As a result it is impossible to argue that the railway was a prominent factor in settlement in that district. In Chapter III we have traced the history of the colonization of the Saskatoon district before 1901; and we have found that the production of wheat had proved impossible and that the settlers were forced to resort to ranching.

Few settlers came into this district between the years 1885 and 1901; the population in this latter year only totalled 457 souls. In 1898 the Government and Canadian Pacific Railway Company had sent experts to examine the country north of the Qu'Appelle Valley in order to determine the location of a portion of land which was yet to be made to the Canadian Pacific Railway Company. After a careful enquiry into the soil and climatic features of the country between Regina and Saskatoon a report was sent in that this area was not adapted to agricultural settlement.(1) Three years later Mr. Mellicke, a

(1) This statement, and the narrative following, is based upon a private interview which the writer was privileged to have with Mr. Edward, son of Mr. E.J. Mellicke.

senator of the United States, residing in the state of Minnesota, heard of the large unsettled region north of the Qu'Appelle River and decided to see this land for himself. Mr. Meilicke had, all his life, been in search of a block of arable land where he could locate a large farm. With this object in view he had travelled over the western states of America, across the Rocky Mountains on horseback and through the southern regions of the continent but always came back dissatisfied. In 1898, as the guest of the Canadian Government, he had inspected the land in southern Alberta and north to Wetaskiwin but, because of the prevalence of early frosts, he did not consider any part of this country as a suitable location for large-scale farming. Now he set off to examine the country north of the Qu'Appelle Valley. At Regina he boarded a slow moving mixed train which carried him up through the large unsettled tracts between Long Lake and Saskatoon. As he passed through Dundurn he decided that this was the type of country he had been looking for all his life and made arrangements to be driven around the district. At this time the only settlers about Dundurn were ranchers who ranged their cattle on the grass growing in the marshes. Meeting with these men, Mr. Meilicke was told of the dry years and that it was impossible to grow grain in this part of the country. Even the gophers, the ranchers claimed, were killed off as a result of the excessive drought. But Mr. Meilicke remained unconvinced. Years of experience and study of agricultural methods, especially of the experiments carried on at the Indian Head Experimental Farm, had taught him the value of dry land farming and he believed that, with

this better method of cultivation, the production of wheat in the Saskatoon region was possible.

Consequently he immediately took the train to Toronto, where he secured from the Temperance Colonization Company the option on a large tract of land about Dundurn. Returning to Minnesota he organized a party of settlers and, in April, they set out for Canada. The party was preceded by the oldest son of Mr. Heilicke who brought lumber down from Prince Albert to build shacks for the new-comers. When the party arrived they had nothing to do but unload the farm implements and set to work breaking the land. Instead of the old method of turning the sod over and then, in August, turning it back again, Mr. Heilicke instituted the modern practice of breaking in the early part of June and then surface cultivating to preserve the moisture. During the following years the practice of summer-fallowing every three years was rigidly adhered to, not only on the Heilicke farm, but on those of the other settlers brought out by him. The result was prolific yields of wheat; in some years, on the Heilicke farm, an average yield of 48 bushels to the acre was secured.

In a very short time the Saskatoon district was converted from a ranching community to a productive wheat growing domain. Ex-Mayor Wilson who was a personal witness of this transformation, tells the story as follows:

"In 1901 Mr. E.J. Mellicke and his son stepped off the train at Dundurn. I found them interested in the country and drove them around for two days. Mr. Mellicke would take a handful of soil and go behind some bush or barn and submit it to a test of some kind. He would come back dusting his hands and say: 'This is good wheat land'. Posters were got out in St. Paul which ran something like this: 'You can leave home after Easter, sow your grain and harvest it and come home with your pockets full of money in time for Thanksgiving Dinner'. As a result in September of the same year two special coach loads of people from Minnesota and Dakota came to the district and settled with agriculture in view. The following year people came in in train loads. These people, who came into this country had an advantage over the Easter Canadians, as they understood the production of the soil better, being much the same as Minnesota and Dakota, and they had better implements to work with.....

"In the spring of 1902 the Saskatchewan Valley Land Company was formed.....This Company secured from the Dominion Government a large tract of land extending from Lumsden north to Hanley, contiguous to the Canadian Northern Railway. This company proved to be a very energetic colonization agency. As a result of its activities there was a great flow of settlers from the North Western states and Eastern Canada, and the entire tract was settled up in a couple of years with a first class lot of settlers. Up to that time we allowed our cattle to roam at will over the boundless prairies, but with the advent of the farmers the range was so restricted it made it impossible to carry on ranching extensively. So owing to changed conditions in the spring of 1903 we disposed of our ranch site and stock."(1)

The surprising feature brought out in these narratives, apart from the fact that the district of Saskatoon had been transformed from a ranching to a wheat growing community in some three years time, was that the improved methods of agriculture which made possible the production of wheat were introduced by settlers from Minnesota and Dakota where dry farming had been practiced for years, rather than from the

(1) Narratives of Saskatoon, p.54-5
(2)

Qu'Appelle Valley where this practice was becoming common as a result of the experiments carried on by the Indian Head Experimental Farm. Nothing illustrated more aptly than this the isolation of prairie settlements. [Dry land farming originated in the Qu'Appelle Valley independently of the experience of the settlers in the western states of America, and similarly dry farming was introduced into Saskatoon, not from the Qu'Appelle Valley where one would naturally expect, but by settlers coming up from the western states.] According to Mr. Mellicke, however, the American farmers had learned the value of dry farming from studying the results of the experiments carried on by Angus Mackay at Indian Head and, in this way, the introduction of dry farming into the Saskatoon district came indirectly from the Qu'Appelle Valley.

Within the Saskatoon district, but considerably south and west of the town itself, dry farmers' methods of agriculture converted the country about the towns of Zealandia and Sovereign into a ^{wheat} producing community. Before 1903 only a few ranchers could be found in this part of the country. It was spoken of as within the dry belt and land-seekers passed it over in search for more suitable locations. In 1903, however, a great influx of settlers began, among whom one was Mr. McLean, present Superintendent of the Sutherland Forestry Farm. These people had learned the value of dry land farming from Angus Mackay, at Indian Head, and the practice of summer-fallowing every three years was carried on. Without the

summer-fallow, Mr. McLean said, the settlement of this region would have been absolutely impossible. To-day, in his opinion, some of the best wheat producing land in the province of Saskatchewan is to be found in the vicinity of Zealandia and Sovereign.⁽¹⁾

The year 1902 marked the turning point in the history of settlement in the Saskatoon district. In that year the agent reported that "the crop area next year will show a magnificent increase when the new settlers are in a position to cultivate the land. At the present time there are about 700 acres in wheat."⁽²⁾ In 1904 came the report that "land that was cropped last year has been re-sown and twice as much broken for next year."⁽³⁾ Two years later the agent estimated that over 6,000 souls arrived at Saskatoon during the year. Steam ploughs could be seen at work in all directions, more breaking having been done early in 1906 than in any three previous years.⁽⁴⁾ By 1907 most of the homesteads within reasonable distances were taken and many of the new arrivals went 150 miles west for good lands, whereas four years earlier good homesteads could be had a few miles from Saskatoon. The crop of 1907 was double that of the previous year and the agent believed that this amount would have been still further increased had the railways been able to take care of the products. Land had

(1) The writer spent an enjoyable evening with Mr. McLean and the above is based upon that interview.

(2) Interior 1901-02, Part II, p.124

(3) Ibid, 1903-04, Part II, p.83

(4) Ibid, 1905,06, Part II, p.97

increased rapidly in price and unimproved land sold at \$15 to \$25 per acre. "This," the agent prophesied, "will be a district of large wheat farms, as in many case whole sections are being broken up by steam ploughs."(1)

The rapidity of settlement after 1902 is well illustrated by the following table, showing the number of homestead entries from 1901 to 1905 in the Saskatoon sub-land district:

1901	1902	1903	1904	1905
91	592	1,569	1,236	2,142

It will be seen that the great influx of settlers into the Saskatoon district began in 1903 when entries totalled 1,569. In the Battleford district entries jumped in the same year to 1,198 from 168 in 1902. Although a part of this great increase in both agencies was due to the arrival, this year, of the Barr Colony, it, nevertheless, marks the beginning of a period of rapid development in the country about Saskatoon and West.

The railway, dry land farming and an earlier maturing wheat made possible the settlements stretching from Saskatoon west to the fourth Principal Meridian. In the district of Saskatoon the influence of the railway was small and it was not until dry land farming was introduced that any progress was made in the colony. In Battleford the railway and dry land farming came hand in hand to make possible the flourishing agricultural settlement in that district. Farther west, about Lloydminster, the railway was the primary factor, but it was not until the

(1) Interior 1906-07, Part II, p. 1009

discovery of an earlier-maturing wheat that the production of this cereal was made a profitable enterprise. Ignoring the transportation factor, the introduction of dry land farming was the deciding factor in the districts of Saskatoon and Battleford, while the introduction of Marquis wheat was the deciding factor in the Lloydminster district.

Turning now to the Yorkton settlement we find the same factors bringing about a marked change in the type of agriculture in this community. Yorkton had become the centre of a fairly progressive settlement as early as 1890 but, nevertheless, certain obstacles checked its natural development and kept it for some time a semi-ranching, mixed-farming community. Dry land farming was introduced into this district from the Qu'Appelle Valley and in 1900 we have found that 25 per cent of the wheat crop was grown on summer-fallowed land. With the rapidly increasing popularity of this better method of farming and the discovery, a few years later, of an earlier maturing wheat, the Yorkton district was soon transformed from a predominantly stock-raising to a mixed farming, wheat exporting community. In 1903 the Yorkton agent reported:

"The rancher will soon be a thing of the past in this agency, and stock-raising is not the prominent factor of husbandry as formerly, the large herds disappearing and the smaller herds becoming less. This is the effect of successive years of good crops and the fencing of sections for grain growing, which were a short while ago extensive cattle runs." (1)

Three years later the transformation was practically complete.

"The past year," wrote the Yorkton agent, "has witnessed the complete evolution of the district from stock raising to grain growing. The country for miles around Yorkton is occupied by farmers who counted crop acres by hundreds. One million and a half bushels were exported from Yorkton alone last year." (1)

The increase in the acreage of wheat in the Yorkton crop district is shown thus:

1898	1899	1900	1901	1902	1905	1906
13,487	10,595	12,369	13,592	23,413	52,250	83,697

Between the years 1901 and 1906 the acreage of wheat increased approximately 70,000, or 84 per cent of the total acreage in 1906. Increased transportation facilities in outlying parts of the district was partly responsible for the rapid expansion of the wheat industry but dry land farming and an earlier maturing wheat were the deciding factors. Which of the latter played the most prominent role it is impossible to say, but in view of the fact that this district was more subject to early frosts than to drought, it is possible that an earlier maturing wheat must be conceded first place. Dry land farming, however, was no inconsiderable factor.

West of Moosejaw the country traversed by the main line of the Canadian Pacific Railway as far south as the International Boundary and north to the south branch of the Saskatchewan river, long remained a purely ranching country. There was little

(1) Interior, 1906, Part I, p.36

or no attempt at agricultural cultivation and the few settlers who could be found here and there over the country-side were small ranchers, owning between 75 and 100 head of cattle and a few horses.

"There is little to be said," wrote the North-West Mounted Police Inspector at Maple Creek, in 1897, "regarding any industries engaged in other than the raising of stock. Farming is not indulged in, except in a very small way..... (and) it is all made subservient to the raising and feeding of animals, as the grain used is nearly all imported for local requirements." (1)

In 1898 there were but 28 acres sown to wheat in the Swift Current, Maple Creek crop district and in 1902 this acreage had only increased to 222. (2) While this region lagged far behind all others in the production of wheat, it was the leading stock exporting district in either Assiniboia or Saskatchewan. In 1899, of a total of 22,819 head of cattle shipped from Assiniboia, the three points - Swift Current, Maple Creek and Medicine Hat - supplied 11,317, or approximately one-half. (3)

Settlement proceeded slowly in this part of Assiniboia and

(1) Report N.W.M.P., 1897, p.84

In the same year the Swift Current land agent reported: "Owing to the fact that agriculture, to any great extent, is not resorted to in the Swift Current district, the quantity of grain produced is comparatively less than in some other districts...Large herds of cattle and sheep, as well as bands of horses, are being raised yearly. (Interior, 1897, II, p.17)

(2) Report Territorial Dept. of Agriculture, 1902, p.27

Crop district No. 6 included the country adjacent to the main line of the Canadian Pacific Railway from Rush Lake to Langevin.

it was many years before the transformation from a ranching to a mixed farming community was complete. In 1901 the Maple Creek land agent reported that "homestead entries are largely in excess of last year.....Large numbers of settlers are locating along the Saskatchewan river." (1) Ranching, however, continued the main occupation of the settlers and over 3,000 stockers were brought in from the east this year. (2) In the following six months homestead entries increased 150 per cent and the district immediately about Maple Creek appeared to be developing into a mixed farming community. Nevertheless, 15,000 head of stockers were brought in during the year to place upon the ranges and it was estimated that there were 75,000 head of sheep in the district. (3)

In 1902, 655 acres of land were sown to wheat in the Swift Current, Maple Creek crop districts (4); while cattle shipments from Swift Current amounted to 6,451 and from Maple Creek to 4,939. (5) In this year, however, a decided change was noticeable throughout the district.

(1) Interior 1901, Part II, p.137

(2) Ibid, loc.cit

(3) Ibid, 1902; Part II, p.122; Ibid, 1903, Part II, p.111

(4) Herbert, Swift, Current, Crane Lake and Maple Creek districts Country adjacent to the main line of the Canadian Pacific Railway between Chaplin and Walsh, lying south of the South Saskatchewan river and north of the Cypress Hills. (Report Saskatchewan Dept. of Agriculture, 1905, p.11)

(5) Ibid, p.25

"Swift Current," reported the agent, "has undergone a transformation the past year. Miles of prairie rich in grasses and with soil equal to the best in Manitoba for grain growing is now dotted with settlers' homes, and a large acreage is being broken with steam ploughs, two, four and six-horse teams and ox teams. A steady stream of settlers of a very desirable class is coming to this district."(1)

The increased agricultural activity was reflected in the wheat acreage for 1906. In that year there were 9,444 acres under wheat in the crop district - an increase from 655 acres(2) In sympathy with this expansion in wheat acreage in the Swift Current district the cattle shipments from this point decreased to 5,237 in 1906. From Maple Creek however, cattle shipments increased to 8,456.(3) Obviously agricultural settlement was moving westward from Moosejaw, Maple Creek being the least affected point in the district. In Swift Current and Herbert, a new settlement between the former place and Moosejaw, the transformation from stock-raising was well-nigh completed.

"Herbert," wrote the land agent in 1906, "is a new settlement on the main line of the Canadian Pacific Railway, in a district until a year or two ago was generally considered within the semi-dry belt, but has now a large number of Mennonites from Manitoba and other parts, rapidly increasing in number by the arrival of their friends. The first year very little grain was sown, but the results were good. In 1905, 2,000 acres were in crop, from which 45,000 bushels were threshed. This year about 8,000 acres have been placed in crop, and the prospects are promising. The price of wild land for sale has increased from \$6.50 per acre, to \$10 per acre this year.....This district bids fair to be one of the best in the North-West, because those farming it have prospered and received their successful experience for the most part in Manitoba, before reaching this locality."(4)

- (1) Report Dept. of the Interior 1905, Part I, p.108
- (2) Report Sask. Dept. of Agriculture, 1906, p.11
- (3) Ibid, 1906, p.38
- (4) Interior 1906, Part II, p.88

In 1907 the acreage under wheat showed a still more remarkable increase and the Swift Current agent reported that "the large cattle men are practically out of business as a consequence of the inflow of homesteaders." (1) In that year 19,151 acres were sown to wheat in the Swift Current, Maple Creek crop district (2); while cattle shipments decreased to 58 from Swift Current and 3,739 from Maple Creek. (3) The almost negligible number of cattle shipped from Swift Current is significant.

The development in agricultural settlement is set out in the following table: (4)

	Acreage of wheat	No. milk cows	other cattle
1907.....	11,650	.....	.....
1908.....	62,965	4,477	122,026
1909.....	121,000	6,240	74,420
1910.....	170,644	6,000	60,428
1911.....	229,929	7,035	62,308
1912.....	261,611	...	.....
1913.....	340,094	9,849	61,060
1914.....	428,518	11,168	.....

(1) Interior 1907, Part II, p.90-1

(2) Report Sask. Dept. of Agriculture, 1907, p.117

(3) Ibid, p.26

(4) It should be pointed out that the boundaries of the crop districts were greatly changed in 1908. In stead of 22 districts there were now only 9. However the Swift Current, Maple Creek district was actually made smaller since it now extended from Herbert to the Alberta boundary instead of, as formerly, from Chaplin but it was extended south to the International Boundary instead of, as formerly, just to the Cypress Hills. As a consequence it is necessary to give the wheat acreage of the new district for 1907, in order that a comparison can be drawn. It will be noted that the acreage of wheat in the new crop district in 1907 was considerably less than in the old district the same year. - c.f. Population Map 1911 for the boundary of the 1908 crop district /Appendices.

The above table scarcely requires any comment. From an acreage of wheat of 11,650 in 1907, there was an increase to 428,518 in 1914; while from 122,026 head of cattle in 1908 there was a decrease to 61,060, in 1913.

In 1906 the population of the Swift Current, Maple Creek crop district was 6,344; in 1911 it was 29,227. (1) Unfortunately we have no estimate of the number of cattle in this district in 1906 but we may assume that there were at least 122,026, the number in 1908. Working on this assumption we are able to compile the following table.

Acreage of wheat and number of cattle per capita

	1906	1911
acreage of wheat per capita	1.49 (2)	7.86
No. of cattle per capita	19.37	2.13

From this table we have a clear picture of the transformation of the Swift Current, Maple Creek crop district from a ranching to a wheat producing community. While the acreage of wheat per capita increased from 1.49 to 7.86, the number of cattle per capita decreased from 19.37 to 2.13.

Unquestionably many factors were instrumental in bringing

- (1) Census 1906 and 1911 - The population of the crop district was secured by adding the population of the different towns.
 (2) This figure is slightly inaccurate as the crop district in 1906 was different to that of 1911. The population is that of the 1908 crop district while the wheat acreage is that of the 1906. Consequently the acreage of wheat per capita in 1906 would be even less than shown in the table above. The number of cattle, on the other hand, is based upon the 1908 crop district and therefore is more nearly accurate.

about this change. One which deserves mention is that of the policy of the Canadian Government and Canadian Pacific Railway Company of deliberately discouraging ranching in order to populate the country with agricultural settlers - a thing which they were able to do by cancelling the leases of large areas to the ranchers and thus denying them a range for their cattle. Nevertheless, regardless of how insistent these interests might have been in promoting agricultural settlement in South-western Saskatchewan, it would never have been possible without the introduction of dry land farming. Lying within the semi-arid belt, the precipitation of this region was little more than ten inches per annum. Wheat farming under such conditions was impossible unless there was some method of conserving the moisture of one year for the next year's crop. Until this was done by means of the summer-fallow the production of wheat was absolutely impossible except where irrigation was carried on.

.....

Settlement after 1906 proceeded at a rapid rate in the newly formed province of Saskatchewan. With the introduction of dry land farming, the area of wheat producing land was gradually pushed into these semi-arid regions which were formerly considered only fit for ranching while with the discovery of an earlier maturing wheat, it was pushed northwards. The year 1906 was described by the Prince Albert agent as one "of

marvellous expansion throughout the west."(1) The following year, however, poor crops and a low price paid for wheat caused a falling off in the influx of settlers.

As an indication of the progress of settlement up to this time, it might be mentioned that the only districts where homesteads remained procurable, at a reasonable distance from a railway or a projected line: were: Prince Albert; the country north of the Canadian Northern Railway from Battleford to Lloydminster; along the Grand Trunk Pacific and Canadian Pacific Railways between Saskatoon and the Alberta boundary; along the South Saskatchewan river north of the Canadian Pacific Railway line from Moosejaw to the Alberta boundary; and also south of the same line between the same points.(2) In all other districts throughout Saskatchewan it was almost impossible to obtain a homestead within a reasonable distance of a railway or a projected line.

In the years following 1907 a higher price for wheat and better crops brought about an increased movement of settlement. From some districts unfavorable reports from time to time came in, such as frost damaging the growing crop in Yorkton and Humboldt or drought diminishing the yield in the southern part of the province. From other agencies, however, in the same years, came reports that the year was the most successful in its history. In 1910 the Commissioner of Immigration

(1) Interior 1906-07, Part I, p.21-22

(2) Ibid, Part II, p.89

reported that the past year, (1909), "will stand out prominently as the most prosperous in the history of western Canada." (1) Throughout the country a prolific crop was harvested. In 1910 drought affected the crops in many parts of the province but the Commissioner of Immigration was able to report, nevertheless, that "the stream of immigration not only continues with unabated force, but shows a marked increase over last year." He went on to say:

"While there was a good average crop and while the climatic and other farming conditions were normal, at the same time, there was a shortage of crop from lack of precipitation, and perhaps to some extent from lack of experience and proper methods of cultivation in certain parts of southern Saskatchewan.....Even in these districts, however, where the farmer had spent some years in the country and had adapted himself to its peculiar conditions, fairly good crops resulted. In this part, however, during the last two years there has been a very considerable volume of new settlement, and the consequence was that the dry areas of these sections last year found the new settlers somewhat unprepared, and, as a result, it became necessary for the department to give special attention to the needs of the new-comers in Southern Saskatchewan....." (2)

Here we see that even in the dry year, 1910, those settlers who had been in the country for some time and learned the value of dry farming, secured a good crop. It was an experience, such as the drought of this year, that taught the new-comer the lesson which the early pioneer had learned through many years of hardship.

By 1911 Saskatchewan had become a predominantly wheat producing province. In that year 5,232,248 acres were given to

(1) Interior, 1909-10, Part II, p.93
 (2) Ibid, 1910-11, Part II, p.92-95

the production of this cereal. Beginning at township 46, on the Manitoba boundary a line drawn North-west to township 51 on the third meridian and thence due west to the fourth meridian would mark the northern boundary of the wheat producing area. However production varied in different districts. Over three-fourths of the total output of wheat was produced in three of the nine crop districts and might be included in a rectangular area bounded as follows: beginning at Fleming near the Manitoba boundary north-west to Eastern; south-west to a point about 30 miles south-west of Saskatoon; south-east to Portal on the International Boundary.(1)

The following table serves to show the strides which had been made in the production of wheat in Saskatchewan and the amount of cattle raising and dairying which was carried on for the year 1911:(2)

<u>Districts</u>	<u>Acreage Wheat</u>	<u>Ac.Wheat p. capita</u>	<u>No.Cattle p.cap.</u>	<u>Popul'n</u>
1 { South-Eastern }	1,698,655	16.2	1.2	104,644
2 { South-Central }	738,357	7.78	.44	94,889
3 { South-Western }	239,929	7.86	2.13	29,227
4 { East-Central }	422,889	5.8	1.68	72,751
5 { Central }	1,390,752	15.6	.89	89,161
6 { West-Central }	415,553	10.8	.58	38,485
7 { North-Eastern }	32,059	4.5	1.46	7,077
8 { North-Central }	159,762	5.8	1.48	31,019
9 { North-Western }	140,762	6.6.	1.2	21,167

From the above table many significant facts come to light. The two leading wheat producing districts were South-Eastern(1)

(1) c.f. Population Map, 1901 -Appendices
 (2) c.f. " " 1911 for boundaries of crop districts

and Central Saskatchewan (5), while south-central Saskatchewan (2) followed third as regards total acreage but gave place to both West Central (6) and South-Western Saskatchewan (3) in per capita production. The rise of south-western Saskatchewan to a position of fourth place in per capita production of wheat is instructive. Similarly the fact that Yorkton (4) and Prince Albert (8) held seventh and eighth positions, respectively, as per capita wheat producing districts, indicates that mixed farming was the prevailing form of business in these communities.

Generally speaking the number of cattle per capita in the different districts varied inversely as the acreage of wheat. In districts No. 1 (South-Eastern) and 5 (Central) there were only 1.2 and 8.9 cattle per capita; while in districts No. 4 (East-Central) and 8 (North-Central) there were 1.8 and 1.48, respectively. South-Western Saskatchewan (3), however, still held the leading place in the per capita number of cattle in spite of the fact the per capita acreage of wheat had increased to 7.86.

[Because the boundary line of the 1891 census districts coincide almost exactly with the 1911 crop districts, we are enabled to compare the condition of the various districts in 1891 and 1911.] It will be noted that in the following table the census districts of Broadview and Qu'Appelle have been combined to give a just comparison with a combination of the crop districts No. 1 (South-Eastern) and 4 (East-Central). In

1891 this area was cut vertically to make the two census districts while in 1911 it was cut horizontally to make the two crop districts. The census district of Regina and Moosejaw compare in area and boundary with crop district No.2 (South-Central). The census districts of Maple Creek and Swift Current have been combined to compare with ^[in 1911] crop district No.5 (South-Western). The Prince Albert census district of 1891 is compared with the combination of crop districts No.5 (Central) and 8 (North-Central); and, similarly, the Battleford census district is compared with a combination of crop districts No.6 (West-Central) and 9 (North-Western). Although the Carrot River census district really extended to Lake Winnipeg it has been compared with crop district No.7 (North-Eastern), the area east of this being comparatively unimportant.

	<u>Population</u>	<u>Acreage Wheat</u>	<u>Ac. Wheat p. capita</u>	<u>No. Cattle p. capita</u>
Broadview & Qu'Appelle	1891 280,682	76,067	3.71	1.24
Districts No. 1 & 4	177,382 1911 277,592	2,120,844	11	1.5
.....
Moosejaw & Regina	1891 7,568	26,687	3.52	.96
District No. 2	1911 94,889	738,357	7.78	.44
.....
Maple Creek & Swift Current	1891 1,009	861	.85	7.79
District No. 3	1911 29,227	229,929	7.86	2.12
.....
Battleford	1891 2,790	579	.207	.75
Districts No. 6 & 9	1911 59,652	556,315	8.7	.89
.....
Carrot River	1891 1,484	...	...	.045
District No. 7	1911 7,077	32,059	4.5	1.46
.....
Prince Albert	1891 6,876	4,190	.609	1.055
Districts No. 5 & 8	1911 120,180	1,550,514	10.37	1.185
.....

From the above table many significant facts are brought forcefully to light. Throughout the province there is a great increase in the acreage of wheat per capita while the increase in the number of cattle per capita is very small, while in the two of the districts it actually decreased. In crop district No.2 (South-Central) the acreage of wheat per capita doubled while the number of cattle per capita decreased by one-half. In crop district No.3 (South-Western) the acreage of wheat per capita increased from .85 to 7.86, while the number of cattle decreased from 7.79 to 2.13. In regard to the Prince Albert district, a fairer comparison might have been secured had the 1891 census district been compared with crop district No.8 (North-Central). Although the census district included Saskatoon, the really settled portion of the district in 1891 was contained within the area bounded by the same lines which are the boundary of crop district No.8(North-Central). Comparing these two districts we obtain the following results: the acreage of wheat per capita increased from .609 to 5.1 and the number of cattle from 1.655 to 1.48. This comparison tends to show that the expansion in wheat production in the Prince Albert district was not so great as in other parts. It was the ~~the~~ Saskatoon district which accounted for the great increase in wheat acreage per capita. Similarly in the crops districts No. 1 (South-Eastern) and 4 (East-Central), the increase in wheat acreage was greater in district No.1(South-Eastern), while the increase in the number of cattle was greater

in No.4 (East-Central). This, unfortunately, cannot be shown by the above table.

.....

Settlement proceeded steadily in the years immediately preceding the Great War. From over the Atlantic, from the Eastern Provinces and from the United States immigrants came in undiminished numbers. When Canada entered the War in 1914, her agricultural resources developed in the western prairies in the preceding decade, played no inconsiderable part in helping the allies to ultimate triumph. In 1915 Saskatchewan celebrated her first decennial birthday by a record yield and production of all grain crops. In that year, 173,723,755 bushels of wheat were produced from an acreage of 6,884,874; and 130,910,048 bushels of oats from an acreage of 2,846,949. Saskatchewan had definitely established her position as the premier wheat producing province in the Dominion of Canada.

Bread, the basic food of civilized man, was a supreme necessity during the war. From Saskatchewan came much of the wheat from which the bread was made for the armies in the trenches and for the people of the Allied countries. Four years of warfare finally resolved itself into a battle of economic resources and the vast productive fields in the British Empire finally decided the victory in favor of the Allies. To say that dry land farming was one of the factors which played a part in winning the war for the Allies is no ridiculous statement because by greatly increasing the productive powers of the western prairies it added to the food supply of the British Empire and the nations associated with it.

CONCLUSION

"Anything that is worth doing, is worth doing well. The better you prepare your land the more you will make out of it.....One of the first mistakes many of us make is to attempt to cultivate more than we have the means to carry on or the horse power to handle and work up into a good seed bed in the fall of the year. Half a crop requires almost the same amount of labor as a good crop; it costs nearly as much to harvest as a good crop. I would like to impress this point very strongly, especially upon new beginners.

".....Summerfallowing has been the key to successful wheat growing in the Indian Head district.....

"We have a dry climate and therefore cannot successfully grow wheat without summerfallowing to stir up and conserve the moisture for the following year. This has been proven year after year and is an undisputed fact in this province."(1)

In these words, A.E. Wilson, of Indian Head, in 1909, summed up that which had been brought home to the farmers of Saskatchewan after twenty years of experience in trying to grow wheat. "Farm less and farm better" was the key-note of Mr. Wilson's speech and the truth of this motto was more and more being realized.

With the introduction of dry land farming all the problems of the Saskatchewan farmer were not solved. A fall in the price of wheat might mean ruin for the producer who harvested a bountiful crop as well as for him who secured no crop at all. Hail, the cut-worm, rust, June and August frosts and excessive droughts still robbed him, in some seasons, of his year's labor. The condition of the western farmer to-day bears ample testimony to the fact that he still faces problems over which he has no control. The greatest, unquestionably, is that of finding a market for his produce. Before the western farmer

(1) Report Saskatchewan Dept. of Agriculture, 1909, p.135-6

farmer can have any assurance of financial independence he must obtain a fair return for his labor. The problems of agriculture to-day, therefore, are rather of an economic nature - they are bound up with the system which has engulfed the civilised world. Like all other industries, the problem of production on the western farm has been largely solved. The West can produce millions of bushels of wheat per annum of the very best milling quality. The reason for this greatly increased production is contained in the simple little phrase "better-farming".

Each year a distinct improvement was noticeable in methods of farming; evidences of greater care in the preparation of land for crop and a more earnest endeavor to keep it as free as possible from weeds. In farming, as in any other sphere of activity, "example is better than precept". But if a farmer is to be successful and an example to his fellows he must avail himself of every source of knowledge open to him. The farmer of to-day, or even of 1911, is in many respects more advantageously placed than those of three or four decades ago. The old settler obtained his knowledge in the hard mill of experience. To-day the settler has a system built upon years of experience and experiments to follow. By these means the road has been paved to that "better-farming" which has won for Saskatchewan the enviable position of being the leading wheat producing province in the Dominion of Canada.

Dry land farming, as mixed farming and better seed wheat, has meant better-farming. By paying more attention to the cultivation of the soil and being less anxious to increase his acreage, the farmer has been able to raise larger yields at slightly more cost. That the average farmer has a long way yet to go in improving his agricultural methods is admitted but only by comparing present day agriculture with that of forty some years ago can we realize the great advance which has been made. The farmer of the 'eighties was able to secure only the crudest of implements, his knowledge of agricultural science was extremely limited and his realization and understanding of western climatic conditions very small. To prepare a seed bed the surface was merely scratched and the seed was spread, by means of a broad-cast seeder, over the top, to be covered later by a harrow. There was no attempt at crop rotation nor at preventing the spreading of weeds. With such methods, agriculture was almost impossible in Western Canada. If the birds did not carry off the seed, or the gophers destroy the young plant, drought or early frost was almost certain to leave the farmer with little crop to harvest or a crop of very poor grade wheat. In short, only in exceptional years was a good crop grown. Exceptional years, however, were few and far between and if agricultural settlement was to succeed some means of overcoming the problems which confronted the settlers had to be devised. Improved machinery marked a great step in this advance, as did the discovery of an

earlier maturing wheat, but only with the introduction of dry land farming was the serious problem of drought overcome. To-day only in exceptional years does the farmer face complete failure. The average year, the year which was almost as disastrous as the very bad year to the early settler, may be almost as successful as the very good year to the modern farmer. The risk in agriculture still remains but it has been greatly reduced. Forty years of farming in Western Canada have taught the settlers that agriculture on the prairies is not impossible "if a man farms on Canadian soil in the Canadian way."(1)

(1) Johnstone, op.cit., p.xv (quoted in Introduction)

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- Bracken, The Summerfallow (Circular No. 2, College of Agriculture, University of Saskatchewan)

- Bracken and Henry, Durum Wheat (Circular 2, College of Agriculture, University of Saskatchewan)

- Champlin, Kubanka Wheat (Circular No. 31, December, 1920)

- Reports of the Dominion Experimental Stations 1888-1915 (Ottawa)

The reports of the Director of Experimental Farms and of Angus Mackay, Superintendent of the Indian Head Farm, are extremely valuable in the study of dry-land farming and its influence on settlement.

An Earlier Maturing Wheat

- Reports of the Dominion Experimental Stations, 1888-1915, (Ottawa)

In the reports of the Superintendent of the Indian Head Experimental Farm, yearly data is given of the date of seeding and harvesting the various varieties of wheat.

- Data secured by the College of Agriculture, University of Saskatchewan.

Since 1920 Professor Harrington, of the College of Agriculture, of the University of Saskatchewan, has kept records of the date of seeding and harvesting of different varieties of wheat at Saskatoon.

- Bracken, Crop Production in Western Canada (1920)

Contains some remarks on the maturing qualities of different varieties of wheat.

- Buller, Essays on Wheat (1919)

The author traces out the discovery and introduction of Marquis wheat and also more recent varieties.

- The Story of Red Fife Wheat (Manuscript in Library, University of Saskatchewan)

A letter written by Mr. Sylvester Fife, describing how his father discovered Fife wheat in 1841.

- Hind, Report of Exploration Expeditions (1860)

Data on the period required for wheat to mature at Red River (p.144)

- Palliser, Explorations in British North America (1860)

Data on the period required for wheat to mature at Dog Mission (p.35)

- Edmonton Journal, 1854-1856 (Hudson's Bay Company Diary of Fort Edmonton)

Data on period required for wheat to mature at Edmonton in 1855.

- Selkirk Papers , 1811 to 1830

Data on period of maturity of wheat at Red River in different years.

- The Nor'Wester, 1859 to 1869

Data on the period of maturity of wheat at Red River.

- Macoun, Manitoba and the Great North-West (1882)

Data on the period of maturity of wheat in the North-West.

Miscellaneous Material

- The Story of the Life of D.W. Caswell, Adair, Saskatchewan.

-The Story of the Life of A.B. Bompas, Welsely, Saskatchewan.

- Statement of Alexander Kindred, Pioneer of Moffat and Glenavon

(The above are Manuscript in the Library, University of Saskatchewan)

- Dr. T.A. Patrick, Private Papers (Library Manuscript)
Personal Correspondence

- Mr. Edward Meilicke, (Personal Interview)

- Mr. James McLean, (Personal Interview)

Population Map of Area which became Saskatchewan

1881

Each dot represent 100 persons

Indians not included



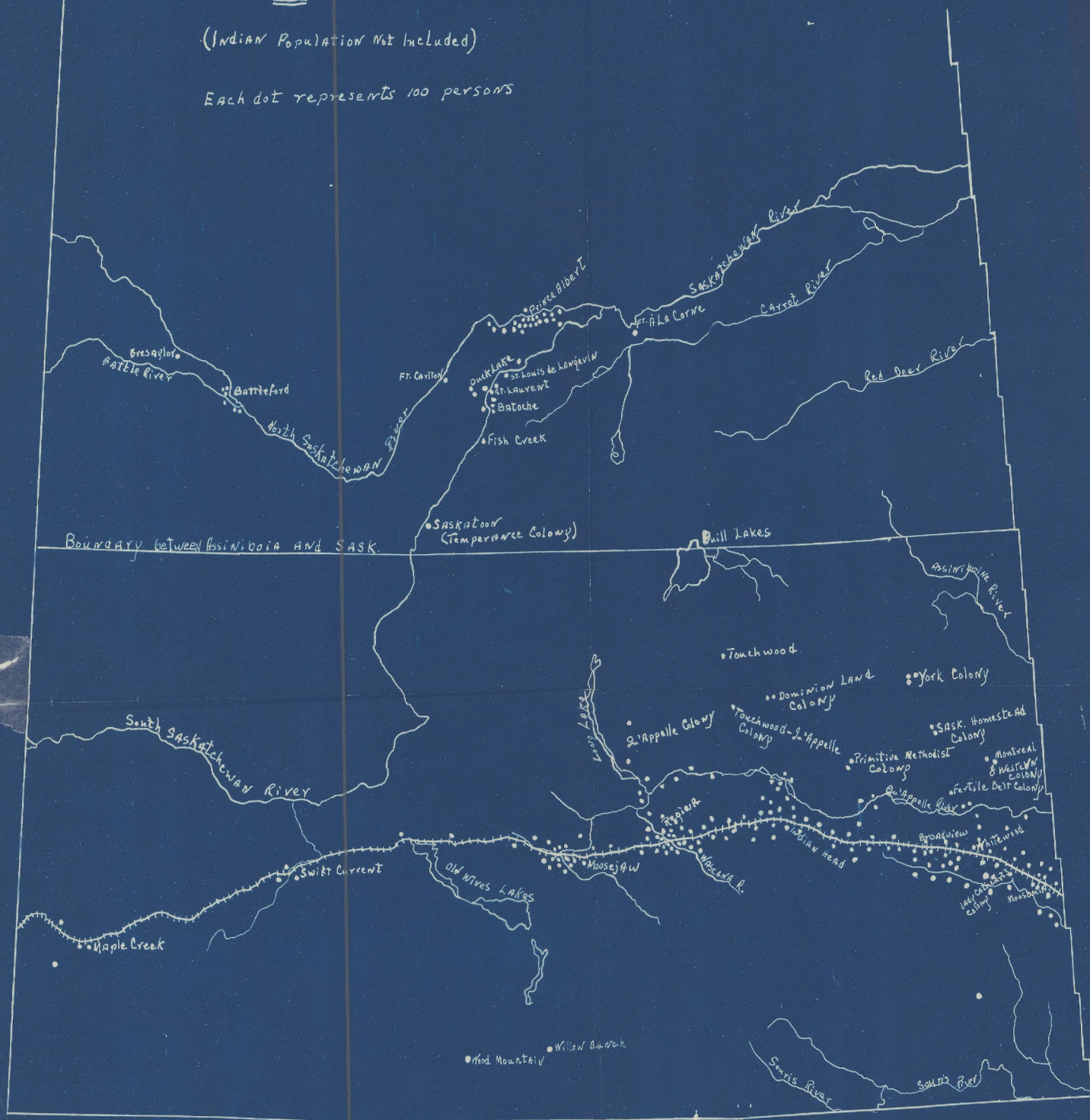
II

Population Map of Area Which became SASKATCHEWAN

1885

(Indian Population Not Included)

Each dot represents 100 persons



III POPULATION MAP OF SASKATCHEWAN

EACH DOT REPRESENTS 100 PERSONS

Indian Population not included

1891

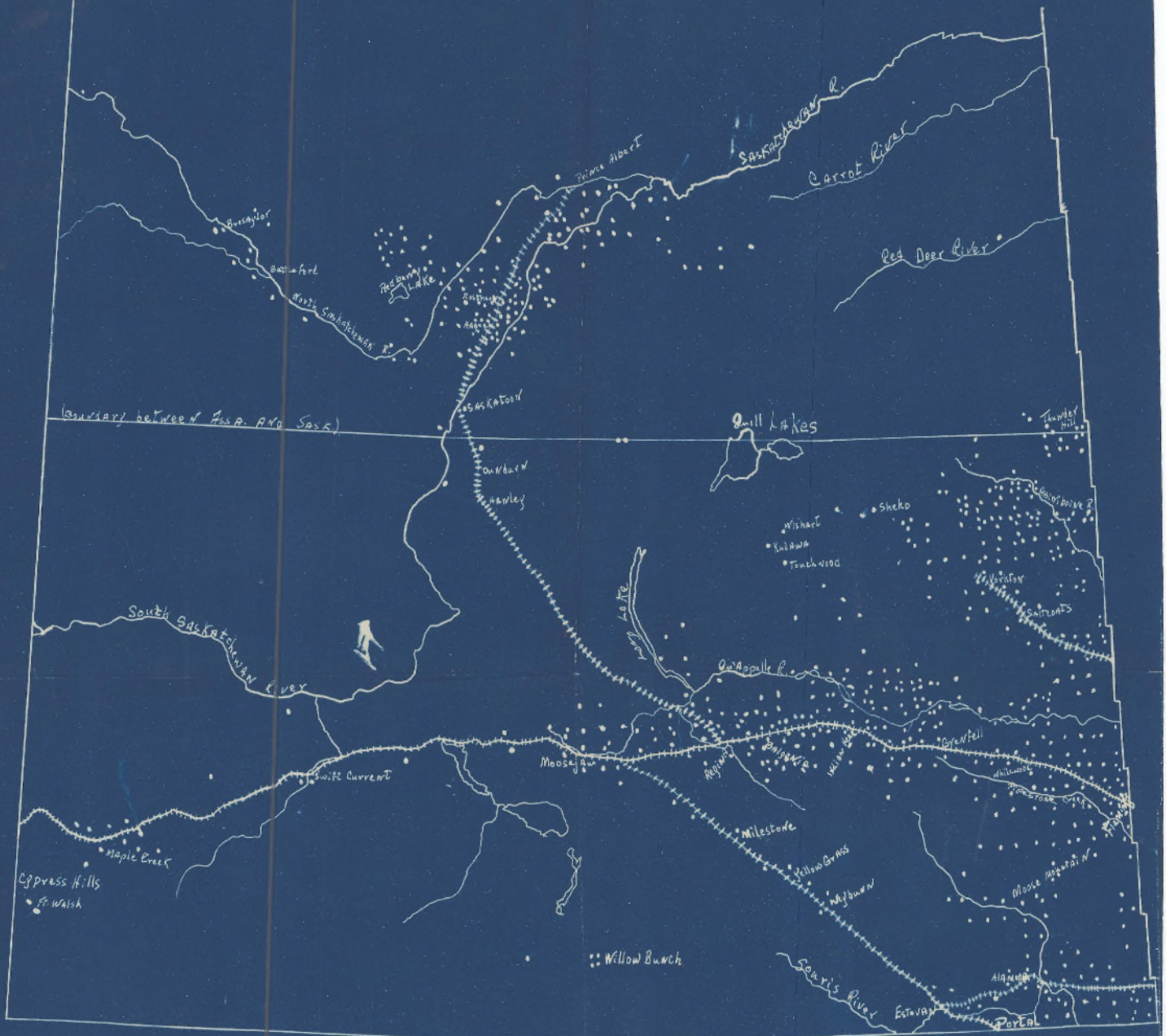


IV

Population Saskatchewan 1901

Urban and Indian pop. not included

Each dot represents 100 persons



POPULATION SASKATCHEWAN 1906 $\circ = 100$ persons
 URBAN AND INDIAN POPULATION NOT INCLUDED

Railways 1882-1885 ++++++
 1885-1891 ++++++
 1891-1901 ++++++
 1901-1906 ++++++



VI

Population SASKATCHEWAN 1911, showing Crop Districts

• Urban & Indian Population not included

Each dot represents 100 persons



- ① South-eastern SASKATCHEWAN
- ② South-Central "
- ③ South-Western "

- ④ East-Central SASKATCHEWAN
- ⑤ Central "
- ⑥ West-Central "

- ⑦ North-Eastern SASKATCHEWAN
- ⑧ North-Central "
- ⑨ North-Western "