

hail was small, but the wind which accompanied the evening storm could be described as nothing less than a tornado. These storms were local and we saw no other hail during the summer. Burnt logs in various parts of the country were often seen spotted where hail had fallen upon them so that such storms cannot be infrequent. They may, however, do little or no damage. The country between Kleskun lake and Bear lake requires no special description, as it is of the same general character as that already described. Travelling over any part of the Grande prairie is so easy, either with pack-horses or wagons, that an intending settler would be very foolish to locate anywhere without first having seen the whole prairie.

In general terms it may be said that the Grande prairie is, as regards ^{Soil and climate.} soil, well suited for agriculture, though even in this respect it has always been spoken of in exaggerated terms. As regards the climate, there is unfortunately little data to go upon. No thermometer readings, of which we have any knowledge, were ever taken there before 1903, except those by Dr. Dawson in 1879. He was on the Grande prairie for a few days in August and on the 21st of that month noted six degrees of frost at Bear creek. This was quite cold enough to seriously injure grain, had any been growing there at that time. It has been cheerfully assumed by nearly everyone that the climate is good, but there seems to be absolutely no foundation for this belief, as agriculture was never attempted. Time and experience will alone show what the climate really is and whether it is suited to the growth of cereals. What is certain now is that the growing and ripening season is short and that in some seasons, at least, there are frosts that do serious damage. It will doubtless prove true that in some seasons, perhaps in most, grain will mature, but until this point has been determined it would be more than unwise for any one to settle on the Grande prairie with the intention of growing wheat as a main crop.

Between Grande prairie and Spirit river there is a wagon road which follows ridges and high ground. There is no good timber along this trail, though house-logs could be got out almost anywhere. The soil is only two or three inches deep above the usual silty subsoil. Where the trail first enters the open country it follows a narrow strip of prairie, which gradually widens. Up to within three miles of the settlement at Spirit river the ground is level, the soil thin, only two inches deep in some places, and *Deschampsia*, indicative of cold, damp soil, is the characteristic grass.

We left Spirit river August 27th for Lesser Slave lake. Going eastward to Burnt river, there is much open country, even after the