

scarcer and at last almost disappears. For eight miles west of Rat creek to where we camped, the trail was for nearly the whole distance through brulé, on the remains of what was probably a spruce swamp, as the ground was everywhere wet. This was due in part to recent rains, but the plants showed that the ground is naturally damp. The soil was a shallow clay-loam with a clay subsoil. Travelling westward from our camp, the trail now used by Indians is north of that shown on the maps, the route having evidently been changed on account of burnt and fallen timber which blocked the road. With the exception of small patches of poplar woods the whole country has been burnt in recent years, some of it several times and as the amount of fallen timber will increase with every strong wind there will always be a considerable amount of chopping necessary in travelling by this trail. About 16 miles east of the British Columbia boundary the trail crosses to the south side of Bear creek, re-crossing to the north about six miles further on.

The soil over which the trail passed was thin and wet, though it will of course be drier when it is transformed into prairie. There were no bogs or muskgs, but the characteristic plants were all those that grow in cold undrained soil, *Nardosmia*, *Epilobium* and *Heracleum* being abundant everywhere. We camped at the last crossing of Bear creek. From this point to the junction of Bear creek and Pouce Coupé or l'Echafaud river, a distance of about ten miles, the trail for the greater part of the way kept close to Bear creek, the banks rising from about 25 feet at our camp to over 200 at the junction of the two streams. Near the edge of the valley and for a very short distance back, the country was dry, but as soon as the bank was left the ground became wet and marshy—not boggy—and the whole country from the trail north to the Peace river is probably of this description. It has all been burnt over. When cleared and drained, most of it will be suitable for such agriculture as the climate will allow of, but it is not attractive now. In the valley at the junction of Bear and Pouce Coupé creeks there are about 100 acres of open or bluffy land which would make a fine homestead.

County east of
Pouce Coupé
prairie.

Though the country was very wet between Spirit river and Pouce Coupé river, this was due in part to recent rains and even in wet seasons loaded pack animals can be taken over the trail. A wagon road could not be made without great expense, as there are wide stretches where the passage of a few loaded wagons would make the road unfit for further travel.