

Mr. Stewart did not observe many wild vegetables or pea vines growing about Port Good Hope. The country for pea vine is Lesser Slave and Peace river, Edmonton and Athabaska and all through there. Witness did not know how far it extends down the Peace towards the mouth. The difficulty was that he had not opportunities of travelling much through the woods. He gathered information and took photographs of the timber, and got views of it, but as for exploring the country and keeping up with these things he could not do it. There is only one boat a year and if you miss that you would be left altogether. The country as a whole is not explored. Regarding Mr. Durnford's map before the committee, he thought there should be a great deal more yellow on it. The yellow represents the country which is not known, and witness thought that should be extended, although we have actual information with regard to certain points.

FORESTRY.

After returning from his first trip in 1902, Mr. Stewart wrote his annual report to the Department, and he read a few sentences therein written, as he had prepared his report when the matter was fresh in his memory.

'The principal tree between the Rocky mountains and the plains is the spruce, mostly the white spruce, and from its position near the prairie there is no doubt that it will be more sought after to meet the increasing demands from that quarter.

'The country along the upper waters north of the Saskatchewan and the Athabaska and Peace river is partly prairie and partly wood. The varieties of timber are principally aspen and balsam poplar, the former predominating, and white spruce. The poplars as we go north seem to increase in size and height, and as we approach Lesser Slave lake and between this lake and the crossing of the Peace river. Below the junction of the Smoky they grow very clean and straight trees, not over a foot or fourteen inches, but reaching a height of 17 or 18 feet, making excellent building timber, as well as fencing and fuel. In some parts there are stretches of good spruce well adapted for lumbering purposes. There has so far been but little destruction from fire in this quarter. The land is mostly level, soil excellent, and if the summer frosts do not prevent it, the country will begin soon to settle up and there will be an ample supply of timber for local uses, if not for export to the adjoining prairie regions.'

Mr. Stewart followed the reading of the preceding extract from his report with the remark:—

'I never saw as fine poplar as I saw there. A considerable number of poplars were over a foot, but a foot would be a fair average. I have seen poplar in all parts of the prairie country, but never saw any growing up as straight. The wheat from Vermilion, it is said, took the first prize at the Chicago exhibition.'

The Hon. Mr. Lougheed added: 'Yes, I saw it there myself.'

Mr. Stewart explained that spruce suitable for commercial purposes grows to the Arctic sea. He was astonished to find that the limit of tree growth extended as far north as it does. He thought it extended probably ten degrees further north in this district than in Labrador. The different kinds of trees that we have in the Mackenzie Basin include white spruce, black spruce, the larch or tamarack, which is found as far north as the spruce, the jack pine and the balsam. Mr. Stewart did not see any balsam in the Arctic circle; aspen, white poplar, balm of Gilead and birch are all found down as far as Fort Macpherson. The natives make their canoes out of birch bark at Fort Macpherson. The size of the timber becomes less as you get towards the north. There is timber growing near the junctions of the Peace and Slave rivers, probably 14 inches in diameter. Below Fort Good Hope the timber is smaller. Some of it has been made into flooring and lumber is made from the timber there. There is a large supply of spruce suitable for pulp.