

# BUILDING HOMES IN THE GRANDE PRAIRIE COUNTRY

The Financial and Commercial

## Bulletin Staff Correspondence.

Grande Prairie, Sept. 14.—Stories of the agricultural development of Grande Prairie were secured from personal interviews with the farmers who have been turning the soil of Grande Prairie upside down to grow grain.

These stories from the farmers are published in answer to the question: "What use is the Grande Prairie?" Is it any good? The men who are here on the upturned soil were not asked what they thought, but what they were doing.

According to the homestead regulations a settler must break up a certain area of land in order to prove up on his homestead or scrip. But the average settler on Grande Prairie seems to be breaking more than he is required by law to do. The reason must be that he is satisfied with conditions and intends to make Grande Prairie his home.

But many are the types of homes. There are certainly some odd ones. But a home is still a home, whether it is a tired plowman and his dream, or a millionaire in a mansion even if it is Grande Prairie and his money and his henchman's dog under a returned wagon box in the half of a tent or under a leaky dog roof.

The women of Grande Prairie all seem happy and are contentedly trying to help make home sweet for husband, father or brother. The life they lead in the trail suggests them the comfort of a home that does not upset.

Interesting stories are told of travel from Edmonton around the long route in a caboose or miniature home on a sleigh in weather "below zero."

A large output of lumber at local mills will help to enlarge the homes of the settlers. But breaking seems to be the rush this summer and autumn. Home-makers seem content to live in the meantime in a tent or a caboose.

At one home the helpmate was helping her husband to build a new log house, but the husband helped to wash dishes in return. Where man and his wife are together, they are attempting to hold a couple of scrips or even four scrips or three scrips and a homestead there are several homes at the same time.

Mr. Gaudin has one of the coziest homes of Grande Prairie in a tent on 1212 feet with a log wall, a log floor and a board floor with an oil cloth mat. The tent roof and walls act as a "rainproof" window which through the tent is a view of the mountains.

The comfortable spring bed is set upon a pile of boxes containing household supplies. At the end of the bed is a pile of trunks and clothing. Beside the door in one corner is a combination table and kitchen cabinet and in the other corner is the cook stove with hot water reservoir. The pantry shelf is around the wall behind the stove. The child's playthings under the table. A mirror and some pictures with the bouquet on the table decorate the snug little home. Mother says: "It is just as much home, sweet home as any modern city mansion with much less work and no rent to pay."

The settlers of Grande Prairie have located in settlements around the lakes and streams. Mr. Bezanon is one of the old timers and has his "Topee" ranch at the Smoky river near where he thinks a railway will cross some day. The old trail down the Simonette river crossed the Smoky river near where the new route is a little, down stream. Mr. Bezanon, who is the author of an illustrated book called "The Smoky River Trail" is now spending the summer in the mountains.

Kiesham Hill, Twin Lakes, Bear Creeks, Bear Lake, Hermit Lake, Cutbank Lake, Saskatoon Lake, Beaver Lodge river and Red Willow river are in order from east to west across the Grande Prairie and thus the reader may better understand the location of the settlers.

It was impossible to find the allotted time to visit all the settlers and get all their stories, but the following are sufficient to give a good general idea of the development in progress in this part of Alberta.

J. S. McKellar has 10 acres in crop, oats looking fair, rather thin, but stout. One end is a little affected by cut-worms. Next year he will try to have 20 acres of crop.

W. P. Bredin, who is now living at Bear Lake, first came to Grande Prairie nine years ago. Along with J. K. Cornwall he had been interested in the trading post of Bredin and Cornwall at Saskatoon, Lake. In order to get supplies to this trading post a sleigh road had to be cut from Spirit River to Grande Prairie. They wintered a bunch of cattle here for five winters and started the first farming on Grande Prairie at Saskatoon Lake.

On the Waddell Farm at Englishman Lake, a field of barley was 68 inches high on July 22nd, with 5 inch head. It is of the headless variety and grown from prize seed imported from Stone Place by Smith Bros. of Saskatoon Lake.

In the pasture of L. H. Adair on Grande Prairie are three moose. The two year old bull moose has been named Bryan. He wears a halter and a bell and is quite tame. When Mr. Adair calls "Bryan," he will lift his head and come across the pasture. Mr. Adair bought "Bryan" from an Indian at Lesser Slave Lake. One Bryan got away, but Mr. Adair tracked

him and hearing the bell soon located him in the brush. After some difficulty the bull moose was roped and led behind a saddle horse. The pasture fence was completed. Bryan was tethered to a hundred feet or inch rope. Now he enjoys the freedom of a 20 acre pasture through which the Fish Creek runs. The moose has made a trail around the inside of the fence which is built of six stout rails topped with four strands of barb wire. The moose pasture also contains some hogs and a Percheron stallion, Lily and Jessie are yearling cow moose, hauled by wagons from Durvegan. The moose feed the browse and the hogs on the grass.

G. P. Hall located on the bank of Fish Creek this spring and expects to have 60 acres broken ready for crop next year. From his building site on the edge of the Fish Creek, Cochrane there is a fine view over the prairie across the broad expanse of Bear Lake.

John A. Wilson and A. H. Sutherland located last fall on the south bank of Fish Creek and have about 14 acres of crop this year with prospect of 20 acres of grain crop next year, besides 8 acres sown to timothy, which was seeded this spring and is doing all right. They have a fine set of log buildings, well built and a nice building site on the edge of the Coulee.

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H. A. Melick located two miles west of Saskatoon Lake in May, 1908. There was no survey then, but his squatters' right was recognized. In 1911 he has about 25 acres in crop. Oats, wheat and timothy started to head out about July 10th, and gave prospect of a good crop. In 1912 he expects to have about 50 acres in crop. Oats, wheat and timothy were sown by hand and in 1910 he sowed by hand and in 1911 shows the benefit resulting from the use of modern machinery.

Stoll Bros. located on Spring Creek in June, 1910, and now have 30 acres broken and will break 30 more on breaking about 20 acres with his six oxen and a gang plow. This means over 100 acres in crop for 1912 where the price of oats drop to 20c per bushel, there would still be money in it. He has erected farm buildings and will go into the dairy business.

L. Lucy arrived at Saskatoon Lake on October 19th, entered for a homestead on 1212 feet, and has 10 acres broken, 40 acres in crop for 1912. He has erected farm buildings and will go into the dairy business.

John Wilson has a farm on the west side of Bear Creek near Grande Prairie. He has 60 acres broken and expects to break 15 acres this year. The Dominion Land Office is at present in the process of building a scrip.

E. R. Anderson and Son have a fine farm near Clairmont Lake, where they settled in April, 1910. He has now about 25 acres in crop. He has a patch of rye about 3 1/2 feet high and in bloom on July 1st. His oats are also looking good. He has 25 acres more already broken and expects to crop 75 or 80 acres next year. He and his son each have a homestead.

M. A. Spencer has a farm on the east side of Clairmont Lake with 25 acres in crop and expects to have about 60 acres in crop in 1912. He came to Grande Prairie about a year ago. Last year he had about 15 acres of crop on spring breaking. He had to haul his sheaves six miles to a threshing machine.

P. Kelly came from Carleton Place, Ont., and says he conscientiously thinks there is no finer land in the Dominion than there is on Grande Prairie. This year he expects to break 15 acres, he is building a good log house. He has only a small acreage in crop this year.

For two families, selling 6 adults and 4 children, Johnston took three teams on a 67 days driving trip to Edmonton for a total outlay of \$1,500.00 for supplies of clothing, groceries, machinery and expenses, and not including even one "permit." During the trip one horse died from lung fever caused by exposure, for horses had to stand out on many a frosty night.

Craig Bros. are three young Scotchmen who practically own the Scotchmen located on Spring Creek in the fall of 1910. They have a garden on spring breaking and had about 10 acres broken before July 1st. They will have 60 acres of crop in 1912. They will continue to break up the Scotchmen as soon as possible and intend to make horse raising a specialty. They have a fine patch of grass showing a fertile soil.

S. McAnland located south-west of Saskatoon Lake in the spring of 1910. He has 20 acres broken ready for next year. His wheat was head-

ing out on July 7th, and was sown about May 15th. Ross Beatty located in the spring of 1910 and has 20 acres crop and will have 50 acres of crop for next year.

H. Howard located in the spring of 1911 and expects to have 38 acres in crop in 1912. E. J. Kline came in last fall and has five acres in crop on spring breaking. His potatoes, peas and

Grande Prairie City last summer after a thorough investigation of the district. Last winter he returned and has since created a house, done fencing and expects to break 10 acres for seeding next spring.

From 2 to 50 in a year. D. H. Axon and H. Johnson have a farm about 5 miles east of Bear Creek and about 2 acres in crop, but over 40 broken already and next year will have 50 acres of crop.

Arthur Gunn lives on the east side of Clairmont Lake and has experimented with alfalfa. It was sown in June, 1910, it wintered well and is now growing fine.

His son, Peter John Callhoun has 12 acres of oats in crop and will try to break 40 acres this summer. Mr. Callhoun is a school is to be started so as to give his children an education.

Mr. Benson keeps a stopping place near Grande Prairie P.O. on the banks of Bear Creek, and Mrs. Benson claims the honor of being one of the first white women to come to Grande Prairie.

The Hotel Bredin. Geo. L. Bredin has resided in Grande Prairie for five years and at Lesser Slave Lake for three years previous. He says this is a good country for mixed farming. He keeps a stopping place known as the Hotel Bredin, and has a blacksmith shop in his quarters is a bunch of forty horses belonging to Bredin Bros. His farm adjoins the townsite of Grande Prairie City. He has 15 acres of crop of spring breaking and a fine barn. He has about 20 acres high.

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Ernest Harvey, located last fall and has about 20 acres broken to be disked and made ready for crop next spring.

From Two to Forty Acres. Arthur Patrick, formerly of Lacombe, located at Fish Creek last summer and has a good crop of two acres of potatoes in blossom early in July. He expects to break 40 acres more for the crop of 1912. He has a good crop of wild hay on a meadow along the creek.

Expecting 700 Acres in 1912. L. H. Adair located in township 73, range 8, west of the 6th meridian, on Fish Creek in April, 1910, and this year has 200 acres of crop on land broken in 1910. About 175 acres of oats are good and began heading out on July 9th. Four acres of fall wheat started to head out on June 27th. A patch of rye was headed out on June 13th. Five acres of timothy is fairly good. His barley was damaged by the cut-worms, which also slightly affected the garden.

After rains there was no more damage from the cut-worms. Up to July 15th he had broken about 225 acres more with three 16-inch sulky plows hauled by five horses. Till the end of the breaking season two sulks will be kept busy in an attempt to complete a breaking record for 1911 of 400 acres. This will mean over 700 acres in crop for 1912. The outlays are averaging about 2 1/2 to 3 acres per day per plow, turning 18 inch sod and hauled by five horses. He feeds no oats, but changes teams at noon.

Between his and his son they hope to have 50 acres in crop next year.

H. B. Clifford, formerly from Boston, has been located at Flying Shot on the banks of Bear Creek. He has seen enough to satisfy him that Grande Prairie will not be subject to summer frosts when the ground is broken up. Generally he speaks, there is ample moisture for the maturing of all crops. The country is being broken up for mixed farming. The last two years has worked a wonderful change with the influx of new settlers and the fencing of grain lands.

Mrs. Clifford was the first white woman to come to the Grande Prairie district, came in the spring of 1905 and has this year broken 10 acres of crop.

A. C. Brooks is disking his breaking—White Mountain looms up in the background.

The first white child born on Grande Prairie. Mrs. Clifford has an interesting collection of wild flowers gathered on Grande Prairie. The collection includes 50 varieties of flowers, including six orchids. This is a surprise, for orchids are usually found in a tropical climate. She found very few noxious weeds.

A. R. Smith came to Saskatoon Lake in September, 1909. He started to break on April 16th; sowed oats on May 15th by hand and oat with a binder on September 7th. The five acres yielded 75 bushels, besides about 120 bushels fed in the shear to the horses. The oat average yield was 2 1/2 bushels sack would weigh 2 bushels. Last year he broke three acres more, when his horses died. This spring 22 acres of spring breaking were sown on May 15th to oats. They are doing fine. Wheat was sown on the three acres of last summer's breaking, and on July 1st a little barley in this wheat was out in head. He has seeded 10 acres to timothy, which is doing well.

C. H. Nicholson has been in the Peace River district for 12 years and at Saskatoon Lake for six years. He has 20 acres broken to be sown in fall wheat this fall. He expects to break up the whole farm. On July 10th spring wheat is over two feet high and heading out. Fall wheat was sown by hand on August 1st, and is all headed out. Oats are also heading out. In 1908 the crop had tomatoes ripened outside. They have been here three years and had a good crop, using their own grain for seed.

O. S. Omstedt, located on Bour Lake a year ago and now has 10 acres broken but none in crop yet. He expects to get 30 or 40 acres ready for crop next year.

W. Whitcomb, also on Bear Lake, has 40 acres broken this season and will prepare it for seeding next spring.

Andrew Reite, near Bear Lake, has five acres broken and is preparing for a crop of spring wheat.

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