

MARTIN MOUNTAIN.

This natural district is bounded on the north by the northern edge of the high land forming the Martin Mountain elevation, approximately half-way up township tier 77. It is bounded on the east by the Driftwood river valley, on the south by the Lesser Slave River valley, and on the west by a line drawn north from the mouth of Martin creek.

The district includes the Martin Mountain plateau proper and the lower spur-ridges surrounding it. The plateau proper is in the shape of a triangle whose base extends from Martin creek on the west to the west branch of Muskeg creek on the east. The Martin Creek valley forms the west side, and a line northerly from the west branch of Muskeg creek to Divide lake in township 76, range 4, west of the fifth Dominion meridian forms the east side. This country has an average elevation of about 800 to 1,000 feet above Lesser Slave lake. It is broken by steep, deep, creek-valleys, running mostly into Martin creek.

The edge of this plateau country is distinct on three sides, on the north, south and west. On the east it descends more gradually into the height-of-land type of country forming the head-waters of Driftwood river.

Martin creek divides into two branches about fifteen miles from its mouth. Of these, the north branch has its origin in Divide lake, in the northwest corner of township 76, range 4, west of the fifth Dominion meridian. This lake also drains north into the Wubiskaw waters. The south branch drains the northern end of the plateau. Fringing this main elevation are subsidiary ridges, especially on the north and southeast. Those to the north form the north side of the valley of Martin creek, and those to the southeast form the north side of the Lesser Slave river valley. The latter extend from the west branch of Muskeg creek eastward to the Driftwood river.

The agricultural land north of Saulteux landing mentioned before is included in this district. This patch of good land is about eight miles long by three wide. It consists of gently rolling country, covered with poplar from four to fourteen inches in diameter at breast-height, with scattered older spruce. A low ridge near the northern end bears thicker patches of scattered spruce, about one million feet in all. The soil is a rich clay loam, with a few gravelly ridges and scattered sloughs, the latter well adapted for hay meadows, if drained.

This country is much better farm land than that surveyed along the Lesser Slave river, but is, unfortunately, cut off from all access to the government roads and river transportation by five miles of very bad muskeg. To the north of this region of agricultural land is a tract of non-agricultural poplar country stretching from three to five miles farther north. It extends from the west branch of Muskeg creek to the Driftwood river valley. The soil is stony boulder-clay. The poplar is small and badly defective; scattered spruce occurs along creek gulches, &c. No spruce reproduction occurs under the poplar here, largely owing to the depth of humus, which here averages six inches.

Towards the east end of this region, areas of jack and lodgepole pine, mixed with black spruce, occur. There is a transition to the height-of-land type which floors the Driftwood river valley.

The first rise from the lake towards Martin mountain occurs at a distance of about two miles back from the lake. This increases towards the east. There are two to three miles of side-hill, gentle at first and steepening towards the top. This land is non-agricultural, covered with a dense stand of poplar in which are interspersed scattered spruce.

The poplar is in most places a temporary type, but on some of the more gravelly ridges has evidently been established through several rotations. In general, however, with proper treatment, the whole south slope of Martin mountain could be reforested with spruce.