

vation in that region. Vegetables, such as potatoes, turnips, beets and carrots were a good crop. Potatoes at the end of August were full-grown but very wet; the stalks were still green. Garden peas had ripened, but beans, cabbage and cauliflower amounted to nothing as they were planted late. The condition of the crops at Spirit river in 1903 could hardly be taken as a fair test of the capabilities of the region, for as there is no market, most of the planting was only done for seed and fodder, so that there was very little careful farming. The soil in the vicinity of the Spirit River prairie is in general lighter and deeper than on the north side of Peace river, but the elevation is about the same, and I could discover no reason why the climate should be better here than on the plateau a few miles to the north. That it is better is the universal belief of those who have lived in the country and this belief must be accepted until it has been proved to be unfounded. It was hoped that reports on this year's crop that were to be sent to me by settlers would have been received in time for inclusion here but only one of these has reached me.* My correspondent is absolutely trustworthy but prefers that his name should not be used. He says:

"We are in a bad way here. Little hay and less grain. Hard frost on the 4th of September. We were encamped at Saddle mountain on our way to Grande prairie. There was about an inch of ice in our teakettle. Rained on the 5th, snowed on the 6th and 7th. Rained every day until the 12th, then it snowed again. It was a terrible week. On the 14th (at Spirit river) we had 12° of frost. All was over with the grain. The crop at Burnt river still stands, or lies flat. The continued rain and the dillydallying of the halfbreeds has lost my crop for me. It was ripe before the spell of bad weather came on."

The crop referred to here consisted of about 20 acres of wheat, oats and barley on new "breaking" on Burnt river, about seven miles S.E. of the main settlement at Spirit river, and though not so far advanced when I saw it as others nearer Spirit river, was in other respects the best looking crop in the region. That this crop was fit to cut before September 4th is satisfactory evidence that the more advanced crops were harvested before that time.

Most of the settlers at Spirit river have a few head of cattle and horses—Mr. Bremner more than a hundred, I was told. Sufficient hay must be cut to feed these cattle for more than four months. Every one at Spirit river in 1903 agreed that this was absolutely necessary. In rare seasons the cattle may be able to run longer than usual in the autumn, but hay for the full season must always be cut. It is

* See later letter on page 48.