

by way of Fort McLeod. From Manson to Stuart Lake, a distance of about 125 miles, I followed the Manson-Quesnel trail. The country between these places is of a rolling character, the greater portion having been swept by fires, the result of which is that it is covered with fallen timber and a second growth of small jack pine and poplar. The trail crosses a number of creeks, in none of which, so far as I could ascertain, has gold been found in paying quantities.

The surface shows a heavy wash of boulders and gravel southward from Manson to within about 30 miles of Fort St. James, when the character of the country changes and becomes more level, with large tracts of open prairie and hay meadows. The only considerable height is Lookout Mountain, about 25 miles north of Fort St. James.

From Lookout Mountain to Fort St. James the timber consists of poplar and cottonwood, with a few white birch, some of the latter being quite large. Grouse and fool-hens are very plentiful along the



Gold Commissioner's Office at Manson Creek—Mr. F. W. Valleau in Front.

trail, but we shot very few, owing to most of them having their young with them.

From St. James to Fort McLeod the country is almost level, well timbered with pine, spruce and poplar, and dotted with innumerable beautiful lakes. The soil for 30 miles east from Fort St. James is very fertile, pea-vine and wild timothy growing to a height of four feet in many places. The trail, although grown up with young pines and willows, is a good one, and there is a fine hard bottom for nearly the whole distance. This trail is only used by the Hudson's Bay Co. for transporting supplies from Fort St. James to their outlying posts. A few years ago a small number of prospectors used it to reach the Peace River, but none have passed over it for the last three or four years.

The second day out from St. James we passed Lac-a-Long and crossed the river of the same name. We reached Fort McLeod on August 2nd. Lake McLeod is about 16 miles long, but narrow, and the

shore line is broken by a number of bays, some of which run back for a couple of miles. After purchasing sufficient provisions to last the party to Fort St. John, I left McLeod next morning in a very cranky "dugout." The lake at this point empties into the Pack River, which we descended and entered the Parsnip. The Pack is a small, swift stream, in some places almost blocked with drift-wood.

The Parsnip is a fine river, about 200 ft. wide, the water being clear but of a grayish green colour. Fish are wonderfully plentiful for its whole length, ling, char, trout (rainbow, brook and Arctic), being caught wherever a fly was cast. This river, when in flood, evidently rises very high, as the banks are caving in and driftwood is piled all along, in some places to the height of 25 to 30 ft. The banks are for the most part loam and vegetable matter, yet, on the bars, wherever I panned, I got a large quantity of black sand thickly studded with particles of fine gold. The timber is principally cottonwood and poplar along the river banks, but spruce predominates on the hills.

On Sunday, August 4, I got my first view of the Rockies. Flies of every description had been very bad since leaving McLeod. The timber on this portion of the river is smaller than that higher up, and banks of gravel appear on both sides. We passed the mouth of Nation River, at which point it is not nearly as wide as at the crossing of the Manson-Quesnel trail, some 110 miles further up stream.

The next day, August 5, we reached the confluence of the Parsnip and Findlay Rivers, the headwaters of the Peace River proper. For the last 25 miles the Parsnip is very crooked, and along both banks for this distance tremendous land-slides are met with, which have brought down rocks and trees and piled them on either side.

The view from the confluence of the Parsnip and Findlay Rivers is very beautiful. Away to the west can be seen the high, pointed tips of the Omineca Range, while to the east the Rocky Mountains give one the impression that it is impossible for the Peace River to force its way through them. Looking down the Parsnip River when about 5 miles from its mouth, I imagined its junction with the Findlay was a considerable distance away, but I soon found that I had also been looking up the valley of the latter, whose course, as it approaches the Parsnip, is in directly a straight line with it. The two last-mentioned rivers joining form the Peace. At the time of my visit the Parsnip was very low, while the Findlay was in flood. At the junction, islands have been formed of driftwood and wash, brought down year after year, and below the islands the river is anything but safe for navigating a canoe, as from the foot of these to the Findlay rapids it is one succession of tremendous swirls, requiring that a craft, such as I had, should be very carefully handled.

The Findlay rapids, which we ran, occur about three-quarters of a mile from the junction of the two rivers above mentioned. They are about 220 yd. in length, the river being over a quarter of a mile wide, while large masses of rock are scattered over its bed.