

a mile to a mile and a half or two miles wide, which is very fine soil; but the rest of it is all hills covered by an inch and a half of moss, under the moss being the limestone rock. They raise good garden stuff at Fort McMurray. A party there had good crops for three years.

Wherever there is soil to be found it is very good, mostly old river beds or where eddies have accumulated soil; but the rest is sand and muskeg. At Fort McMurray there is no farming land that witness knew of, nor is there any between Fort McMurray and Lake Athabaska. There may be patches here and there, but most of the land is covered with scrub, small poplars and rough bark cotton wood, or as is sometimes called 'Balm of Gilead.' There are little patches of land here and there, but not much.

Going along to Lake Athabaska there is nothing. East of Fort McMurray there are several lakes, the centre of what is described as fine hay country. The natives there have from 60 to 80 horses, and there are reported to be good grazing patches round the lakes. It is probably a better ranching country than an agricultural one. To the northwest of this district are some muskeg lakes where the natives have quite a few horses and cut considerable hay.

At Fort Chippewyan there is a little garden, but the shores of the lake are sandy, like ocean sand. The Catholic mission are the main crop producers there. They have a garden of about three-quarters of an acre, a little patch in the rocks. They work on it, and tend the plants like sick babies and get some return.

At Fort Smith on the Slave river, is a nice piece of prairie extending in a south-westerly direction to a place called Soiled river, and it is said, right through to Peace Point.

Mr. Von Hamerstein explained that he had been through the Peace river valley frequently, but did not claim to know it very well. It is a nice country, no doubt about it, and a good country for agricultural settlement—as good as any district down in Alberta. The climate and soil are good. The grain comes to maturity in that district, but of course they may sometimes have a bad year. They raise wheat out there, and there are mills which grind the wheat raised in that country to-day. One of these flour mills is at Fort Vermilion, where there is considerable farming in the old river bottoms.

Mr. Von Hamerstein considered the Athabaska and Peace river regions marvellous in the growth of small wild fruits. They grow all over.

In the end of July or the first part of August there are strawberries, and then raspberries and blue berries. Then come the saskatoons, choke cherries, white plums and berries of every description, all over the country. They all have a very nice flavour indeed.

FORESTRY.

Mr. Von Hamerstein stated that he knew that part of Northern Alberta, south of Lake Athabaska very well, because he walked through it every year. From Fort McMurray it is all hilly for the first forty miles, with patches of muskeg. There is timber there consisting of spruce, about half a foot in size. The country has been burnt. Further on there are some lakes which are called muskeg lakes.

From McMurray up in a westerly direction, for about 20 miles there is very good timber. He had seen trees that would make 1,000 feet of lumber. From Athabaska Landing to House river there is timber standing yet. There have been some fires raging, but they have not burned it yet. The timber consists of some patches of spruce, of fairly good size, and the rest is poplar. From House river to McMurray there is no timber left. It is all burned out. There are patches here and there along the river, a couple of trees left standing, and there is some very fine timber in that. There is some timber which Mr. Von Hamerstein used for his work, and he had taken out strips 64 feet long, out of which he had cut his walking beams. There are only patches of this