

THE FLORA OF THE PEACE RIVER REGION.

By JAMES M. MACOUN.

There is perhaps no part of Canada in which a greater diversity of plants is to be found than in the Peace River region. Though the number of species is surprisingly small, yet plants characteristic of an arid climate may be found within a few miles of those requiring wet, almost boreal, conditions and a wonderful display of gorgeous prairie flowers may be seen within a few yards of the typical flora of the sub-arctic forest.

For the purposes of this short paper the words "Peace River Region" will refer only to the district drained by about one hundred miles of the Peace River, that is, the country north and south of that river between Peace River Landing and a point about forty miles above Dunvegan. In other words the region bounded on the south and north by Lat. 55° and Lat. 57° , and on the east and west by Long. 117° and Long. 119° . This includes the whole of the area usually meant when the "Peace River Region" is spoken of. Westward from this district the country rises gradually to the Rocky Mountains, the Peace River taking its rise far to the northwest in British Columbia. From Peace River Landing the river flows northeasterly to Lake Athabasca, passing through what is known as the "Vermilion country."

The Peace River flows through the district under discussion in a deep valley, the bottom of which is from 700 to 1,000 feet, or even more below the plateau. The valley itself averages about three miles in width from rim to rim, the river flowing in sweeping bends from one side of the valley to the other cutting into the straight bank on one side while on the other a broad alluvial flat is formed, as is usual with all western rivers. The north bank of the valley is naturally warmer and drier than the south, as the full force of the sun strikes it, and this fact and the presence of a well-travelled trail on the north side accounts for the great difference between the two sides of the river. Repeated fires have almost wholly removed the forest, and the country between Peace River Landing and Dunvegan is almost all prairie, about 400,000 acres in all, while the south side is still clothed with forest. The extent of agricultural land in the valley is not great as the plateau is