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The Far North.

Mr. A. W. Ponton, of Ottawa, a Dominion government engineer, who has just returned from Lesser Slave lake, was seen at the Star-Endon, where he is staying for a few days. In conversation with the Press Mr. Ponton said that he had been out at the lake making a survey of the reserves there which were established in accordance with the terms of the treaty made with the northern Indians by Indian Commissioner Laird, Hon. Jas. H. Ross and Mr. J. A. J. McKenna a couple of years ago. He went up in June and spent about six months in the country. During that time he surveyed two reserves, one at the southwest end of Lesser Slave lake near Saker creek, and another on the south side and divided by the Swift Pile river.

Mr. Ponton said he was surprised to find such a fine climate so far north. "It would make you think you were back in Ontario," he commented, "the days are warm and the nights lack the chill which we experience on the prairies. The climate in fact is admirably suited for agricultural purposes and the Roman Catholic mission at Buffalo lake, which is a continuation of Lesser Slave lake, has a large farm and this year they had 125 tons under crop. The English church mission people at the other side of Buffalo lake ripened tomatoes there in summer and, in fact, the climate is well suited for that sort of thing. Mr. Ponton expressed himself as having been agreeably surprised with the weather. It was terribly wet in June but in July cleared up and for the rest of the summer was good. The people of the district, however, said it was rainier than the usual summer weather they experience.

The country is well wooded and more or less hilly, but there are stretches of prairie and flat lands on which the vegetation is very luxuriant. The grass grows very well and is something of the nature of Blom grass with plenty of vetches. In a number of places it is admirably adapted for stock raising. Mr. Ponton said he did not wish to be understood as speaking authoritatively of the country as a whole as he had visited only a small section of it, but at that he says the country is by no means a desert. The possibilities of vegetable growth is generally judged by the soil and the growth found in a new country is taken as an indication of its fertility. Speaking of the soil itself, he said he found generally a shallow surface loam and beneath this a bed of a white, sandy nature. The country is thickly wooded with plenty of poplar and a quantity of spruce scattered throughout and from this he judges that the land contains much food necessary for plant growth. While up in the bay of the river of the lake, he said that the Hudson's Bay company intends building a steamer to ply from Athabasca. Landing up through Athabasca lake, Little Slave river and Lesser Slave lake, and also that the machinery is now on the way. The main difficulty with these stern-wheel steamers is that they are compelled to carry so much wood for their own consumption as fuel that they have very little space left available for cargo purposes. There is plenty of oak in the country, however, especially at the mouth of the river, which might be used for fuel on the steamers. Mr. Ponton says that he has himself seen good lignite coal in the country ordering on Lesser Slave lake. There is some talk of a railway being built from Edmonton to Athabasca Landing. A line has been located by an Edmonton surveyor, but Mr. Ponton knows nothing whatever about it, or whether it is the intention to proceed with construction work or not. He will remain in the city for a day or two and after reporting to Hon. J. G. Laird, the Indian commissioner, will proceed to Ottawa.

"You'll have to excuse my dilly," said the little four-year-old with great dignity. "She's indisposed."

"What is the matter with her, Kitty?" asked the visitor, with a show of friendly interest and sympathy.

"She's lost all the sawdust out of her stomach," replied Kitty, "part of her left leg's gone, she got nervous prostration, and can't wink her eyes."

—Chicago Tribune.