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Canada's New Wonderland

Continued from Page 7

per trip. But he gets his share of those going up to the town and sometimes he has to make two trips to carry those who wish to ride back with him. The wagons of the merger go back empty.

Deserted Village

When Prairie Creek was the head of the steel, over a thousand people, the larger per cent, of course, men, made their home there. That was in the fall of 1910. On July 1, 1911, there were no more than a hundred residents. The others had picked up bag and baggage, house and horse, and travelled onward to the new "End of Track." All that is left of the Prairie Creek settlement is strung along one so-called street. But far to either side stand the remains of what were once the foundations of tent houses. That is, the logs that were used remain. Every piece of lumber has been taken along with the "steel followers," for lumber is a precious article in the mountains, while logs may be had for the cutting. By the time this is published the balance of the town will have been moved ahead.

Those who chose the location of the settlement had an eye for beauty. The creek from which the location took its name flows noisily between high banks. Just south of the grade, on the east bank of the stream, a high bluff rises. On this bluff the temporary town was erected. The view is superb. To the north, south and west, high foothills scrape the clouds. Beyond them, to the south-west the snowy crest of Roche a Miette ("Roche" is the French for rock; "Miette," the Cree for "sheep." The peak is so-called on account of the fine mountain sheep hunting the Indians enjoyed in the vicinity) towers high above the foot-hills. To the west an opening in the hills shows a view of a distant range. Though twenty miles away, the mountains appear close at hand. The scene is beautiful beyond description. Such things must be seen.

Between Hinton and Prairie Creek is a deserted settlement known as Happy Creek. On each side of the wagon road are as fine log-houses as the writer has ever seen. The houses are built in what city residents would style "terraces," each house being built into the adjoining one. It was raining hard when I passed through. One family, a half-breed with his wife and I don't know how many children, make their home there. "How was this place named 'Happy' Creek?" I asked him. "I don't know," he replied, "I guess he was goin' back East." He spoke volumes in those few words. The settlement was made and the place named before the track was laid.

The most important summer output of Prairie Creek is flies. In one store, made of logs with a canvas roof, were as many flies as could be gotten into the place. I had read about the prodigious increase that a single fly family was capable of and before that visit had had the idea that the multiplying qualities of the "Musca domestica" had been exaggerated. But then and there was I convinced. The ceiling of the place contained 1200 square feet. On a random square inch I counted no less than ten flies. The balance of the ceiling was as densely populated. That figures out to 1,728,000 flies on the ceiling alone. Everything in the shop was covered besides, and hundreds of thousands buzzed through the air unable to find a resting spot. There must have been over ten million flies in that one place. And every place in the settlement was as well supplied. The fly population of Prairie Creek must have reached well above the billion mark and more hatching every day.

Biters Bitten

But in spite of the discomforts of the journey, yes, even in spite of the flies, the trip was well worth taking. These dwellers on the outskirts of civilization are more than kind to the stranger within their midst. That is, all but a certain class of the traders, those that are there for profit and for nothing else; not the trader that for years has followed such projects and would be happy nowhere else, but the one who is there with the idea of getting as much as possible of the floating currency and "beating" it back to civilization. It was amusing to hear one of the latter class call the bus driver a robber, while he, himself, was selling a dollar overall jumper for three dollars and a half. And in turn another, while dispensing a ten cent package of tobacco for a half-dollar, termed the clothier a thieving scoundrel.

But all these things will soon be of the past. In a couple of years at the most, the tourist will view the erstwhile sites of these settlements, from the observation ends of solid vestibuled Grand Trunk trains. Where now are collections of tents, he will see prosperous villages; in a day he will traverse a sweep of country that now requires weeks to cover. But the wonders he views will remain the same now and henceforth until the mountains are made low and the waters pour in and Old Earth is no more.

Grant's Tribute

The real entrance to the mountains is a short distance west of Prairie Creek. Roche Miette is probably the most distinctive peak of this section of the Rockies. The late Principal Grant of Queen's University, while on an engineering expedition some years ago, camped in the shadow of the Roche and there wrote an unrivalled description of it. In part it followed:

"The summits on one side of the Athabaska were serrated, looking sharp as the teeth of a saw; on the other, Roche a'Miette, immediately behind the first line, reared a great, solid, unbroken cube, two thousand feet high, 'a forehead bare,' twenty times higher than Ben An's; and, before and beyond it, away to the south and west, extended ranges with bold summits and sides scooped out, and corries far down, where formerly the wood buffalo and the elk roamed, and where the moose, big horn and bear now find shelter. There was nothing fantastic in their forms. Everything was imposing. The mighty column of Roche a' Perdrix towered a mile above our heads, scuds of clouds kissing its snowy summit, and each plication and angle of the different strata up its sides boldly and clearly revealed. Miette is the characteristic mountain of the Jasper valley. There are others as high, but its grand bare forehead is recognized everywhere. It is 5,800 feet above the valley or over 8,000 feet above the sea.

"The most wonderful object was Roche a'Miette. That imposing sphinx-like head with the swelling Elizabethan Ruff of sandstone and shales all around the neck, save on one side where a corrugated mass of party strata twisted like a coil of serpents from far down nearly half way up the head, haunted us for days. Mighty have been the forces which upreared and shaped such a monument. Vertical strata were piled on horizontal, and horizontal again on vertical, as if nature had determined to build a tower which would reach to the skies.

"There is a wonderful combination of beauty about these mountains. Great masses of boldly defined bare rock are united to all the beauty that variety of form, color and vegetation can give. A noble river with many tributaries, each defining a distant range, and a beautiful lake (Jasper) ten miles long embosomed three thousand feet above the sea, among mountains twice as high, offer innumerable scenes seldom to be found within the same compass for the artist to depict and for the traveller to delight in."

Natural Wonders

Numerous lakes lie beside the Grand Trunk grade. Of these Bruce and Jasper have often been described by early explorers. Surrounded by high peaks they are indeed beautiful. Fiddle Creek is a small stream that flows through a deep canon into the Athabaska. The natural wonders along this creek are legion. Those deserving the most attention are the hot springs, five in number, on Sulphur Creek, a small branch of Fiddle. These range in temperature from 111 degrees to 127 degrees, the warmest being much too hot for a human to endure. The waters are of high medicinal value. It is the intention to construct a carriage road from the track to these springs. One of the Grand Trunk summer hotels will be erected in the vicinity.

Mount Robson, the highest peak in the Canadian Rockies, pierces the blue to a height of 14,099 feet. Roche Perdrix or Folding Mountain, a high peak of folded strata is close to the track. It has been described as resembling a "huge sponge cake which had been cut in half." Close to Roche Miette and Roche Perdrix are Roche Ronde, Roche Jacques and Bullrush, ranged in a semi-circle, all imposing peaks but not possessing the distinctive characteristics of the two first-mentioned. In fact, for two hundred miles, in Western Alberta and over the summit into British Columbia, the traveller will gaze upon unrivalled

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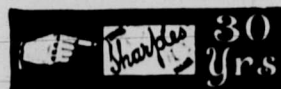
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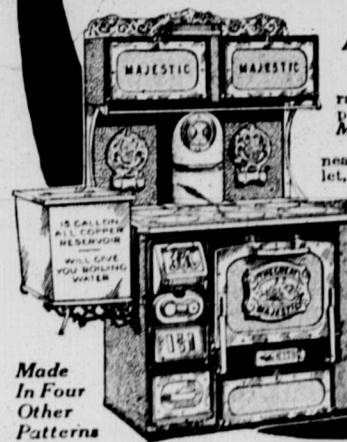
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scenery. The railway company will erect numerous hotels through the mountains where those wishing to do so may break their journey and inspect the wonders that Nature has thrown up. That the new Wonderland will be preserved inviolate, has been insured by the Dominion government's incorporating the whole into the Jasper Park Reserve.

PROVINCIAL HORTICULTURAL EXHIBITION

The annual horticultural exhibition, held under the auspices of the Winnipeg Horticultural society, will this year occur in the Horse Show amphitheatre, Winnipeg, September 1, 2 and 3. The prize list is a long one, and covers fruits, flowers and vegetables for both professionals and amateurs. Prizes are also offered for the best display of honey, extracted and in the comb. Besides the cash awards, twelve cups are

offered. The contest that will no doubt be of most interest to rural residents is that for agricultural societies. These are divided into two classes, those within a radius of twenty miles of Winnipeg and those more distant. There are three cash prizes offered in each, \$25, \$20 and \$15, the winners of the first prizes carrying off besides the Porte & Markle and the Dingwall & Co. cups. These are for the best collection of roots and vegetables, all of which must be grown by members of the competing society.

Rockefeller, on his Western trip, rode on a train composed of steel cars, minimizing the risk of collision. The Fort William Herald very properly asks why the same precaution should not be taken for everybody. No train ever runs on rails that does not contain lives as valuable as Rockefeller's.