

Climate and Tree Growth of Mackenzie River Oil Region

(From a Bulletin of Canadian Institute of Mining and Metallurgy, by Dr. E. M. Kindle.)

Although the new oil-district lies in the latitude of southern Baffinland and south Greenland, it has a far more genial climate than its latitude would suggest. The gardens at the trading posts in this part of the Mackenzie valley afford a good variety of the more hardy vegetables. Potatoes of excellent quality and good size are raised as far north in the Mackenzie valley as the Arctic circle. The nearly continuous sunshine of June is the great factor in the exceedingly rapid development of vegetation. Mr. Chas. Camsell, who has a more intimate knowledge of the climate on the Mackenzie valley as a whole than anyone else who has written on the subject, states that, "in general it may be said that any point in the Mackenzie basin has a milder climate than any corresponding point of the same latitude in Northern Manitoba, Ontario, or Quebec." The relatively warm summer-climate of the Mackenzie valley may be ascribed chiefly to its remoteness from the chilling influence of Hudson's bay, and to its low average elevation. Most of this great lowland is less than 500 feet above sea level, while much of the northern half of Alberta immediately south of it lies 2,000 feet or more above tidewater. Warm air-currents from the Pacific may also be a factor. Ripe red raspberries were seen on August 7th at Bear mountain, which is about 40 miles from the oil-well. Blueberries were a feature of the writer's camp fare from the first week in August to the end of the summer. The writer spent the latter part of August and the first ten days of September in 1919 in the Wrigley district. At river level the first frost came on September 1st. At Simpson the first notable freezing of the season of 1919 occurred on the night of September 25th.

Physical Geography.

Both the Peace and the Athabasca rivers flow in valleys deeply incised in the nearly horizontal Cretaceous shales and sandstones of the Alberta plateau. The traveller taking the Peace river route to the new oilfield, passes for several miles along one stretch of the river between deep canyon-like walls of sandstone. In scenic beauty this canyon ranks with the great canyons of the continent.



Winter travel on the Athabasca River. Photo by courtesy Geographical Review.

The sharp turns of the river, which has cut its valley from 700 to 800 feet through the sandstone and shales, always brings into view some new and striking combination of cliff, spruce-covered slope, and cloud-rimmed sky. Further down, the steep walls of the river drop back and leave a broad, nearly level, valley bordering the river.

A heavy growth of spruce forest borders the Peace and Slave rivers everywhere. This forest extends northward to the delta of the Mackenzie. The timber, of course, decreases in size toward the north, but it is everywhere large enough for constructing cabins.

FORESTRY AS A PUBLIC CAUSE.

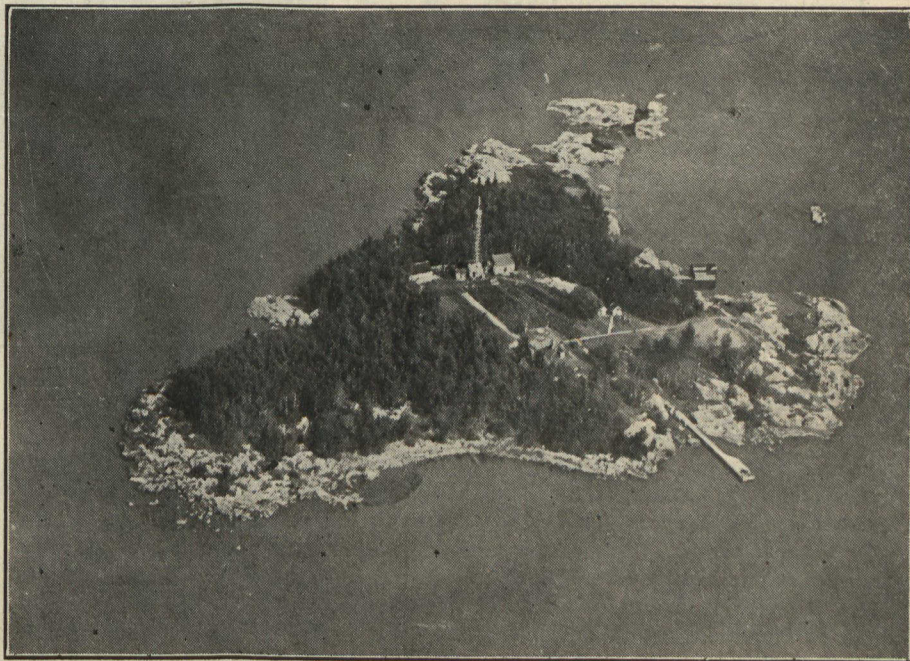
"I appreciate very much the new and attractive Forestry Magazine. I wish that my neighbors would take an interest and become members for the good of the cause."

EDWIN MOORE.

ON PLANTING TREES.

"Only God can make a tree" said the poet. Yes, but almost anyone can plant a tree, and everyone who plants a tree of the right sort in the right place does a public service."

—"Regina Leader."



The "Movable Lookout Tower" soaring above the stationary Lookout Tower. A unique aerial photograph taken at Norway House, Lake Winnipeg, where the Dominion Forestry Branch has a forest patrol staff. Picture by courtesy, Dominion Air Board.