

# Report on the Nation River District: North-eastern British Columbia

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THE Nation River district lies just to the east of Tacla Lake, about midway between its northern and southern boundaries, and is drained by a series of four lakes, which are connected by short stretches of river, the waters of which eventually empty into the Parsnip and then into the Peace. The elevation is slightly lower than that of Tacla Lake, which is given by the late Dr. Dawson, of the geological survey, as 2,000 ft. The district is bounded on the north by the Tom Creek Mountains, which rise to the height of between 2,000 and 3,000 ft., and to the south there are a number of rather high hills, mostly denuded of their timber by fires. The country lying between these two ranges is in the form of a broad valley with some spurs of hills coming down to the shores of the lakes. The land to the north of the uppermost of the most westerly lake is on a gentle slope, slightly terraced back to the base of Tom Creek Mountain. This portion of the country has been fire swept, and when I saw it in 1896 it was practically cleared. The soil was a light brown sandy loam. Red top, wild vetch and peavine grew very luxuriantly. The growth of trees was young poplar, willow and spruce, with jackpine on the ridges. The Quancia Creek flows into the second or third lake from the north and drains a very large extent of low country. This is one of the largest creeks in the Omineca country. One of its branches is crossed by the trail leading into Manson mining district from Hazelton. The valley of the Quancia is broad and flat, with large stretches of open land which will make very good agricultural land when worked. Taking the land on both sides of the Nation Lakes I should say that there must be somewhere in the vicinity of 180,000 to 200,000 acres which could be used for settlement. To the north of this portion of the country and at a much higher altitude lies the min-

ing district of the Omineca, comprising at the present time the following hydraulic camps, viz.: Tom Creek Vital, Silver, Germanson, Slate, Manson and Lost Creeks. Much capital has been expended in these camps in the past ten years, and large sums of money are being spent at the present time in putting in dredging and hydraulic machinery. Being at such a high elevation, nothing in the way of supplies can be grown, and as the Nation Lake country is the nearest agricultural land to these growing and promising mining camps there is a ready and growing market for all sorts of produce raised, at prices which will give the grower very large returns for his labor. As to the best means of reaching the Nation Lakes from the Coast I shall first give a short description of the existing trails, and later show what the possibilities will be for cutting down the distance, lowering freight rates and shortening the time. The first time I went into the district I went by way of Ashcroft up the Cariboo wagon-road to Quesnel mouth, crossed the Fraser River at that point, then followed the old telegraph trail to Stony Creek, where we branched off to the north for Stuart Lake, and from there to the eastern end of the fourth Nation Lake. This would be now considered impracticable as a route for settlers, as the distance is considerably over 500 miles. The other route is by steamer from Vancouver to Prince Rupert, thence by the Grand Trunk Pacific to Hazelton, east from Hazelton by the Omineca trail to Tacla Lake, over the lake to the east side, then over the divide (which is a low one and not over six miles) to the Head Nation Lake. Now that the Grand Trunk Pacific is nearing completion it will be possible for the prospective settler to go by train to Fort George, embark on a comfortable steamer at that point, go up the Stuart River to Stuart Lake, and from there to Tacla Landing with his supplies,