

Great quantities of white fish are taken in the lake, and the people have no dread of starvation.

"Made an excursion in the vicinity of the Post, and observed 184 species of plants. Not one of these indicate a cold climate. One hundred and thirty-two of this number grow in the vicinity of Belleville. Eighteen of the remainder were detected at Lake Superior. Thirty-four of the remainder were observed on the Saskatchewan.

"As far as I can judge, the whole of the land from Little Slave Lake to Smoky River, and on up to the base of the mountains, is of the very best quality. As I did not travel over the whole tract I cannot say from actual observation; but what I saw (at least 200 miles in length) of it was the best land I have seen anywhere. There was neither marsh nor swamp to any extent, but one wide extended expanse of rich soil, altogether devoid of stones. My observations bear out all that has been said of the fertility of the land along Peace River, though I was much disappointed to find scarcely any signs of farming at Dunvegan. Two small fields seem to be all that have ever been cultivated—the one for barley, the other for potatoes, and *vice versa*. This goes on from year to year. The same seed is probably used year after year, as it certainly is in the case of the potato. Game is much too plentiful for much attention to be paid to agriculture. What little is done is on a terrace about thirty feet above the river. One little field is cultivated on each side of the stream, which is over four hundred yards wide at this point. At Dunvegan, and between it and St. John, I particularly noted all the various species of plants, whether herbaceous or otherwise, and noticed a marked similarity between them and those found at Edmonton and Slave Post. The whole number observed was 212 species.

- 138 of these grow in the vicinity of Belleville.
- 19 were detected at Lake Superior.
- 52 were observed on the Saskatchewan.
- 3 had not been seen before.

"The three latter were cacti (*Opuntia Missouriensis*?) *Vaccinium myrtillus*, and *Rhodios*. It will be seen by this that the region of country along the Peace River has more of the prairie vegetation than the wooded country at Slave Lake. Its Flora indicates both a drier and warmer climate than they have at the latter place. The prairie vegetation is almost identical with that of Edmonton, except a few eastern species. This being so, can we not with justice say that what can be raised at Edmonton can likewise be raised on the plains bordering Peace River? Although summer frosts are not unknown at Dunvegan, they do little if any harm. It is very probable that no harm would be done by them on

the level country outside of the river valley, owing to the exemption of it from the producing cause. The Padre at Dunvegan furnished a written statement to the effect that there were no spring frosts; and when a summer frost did occur, it was caused by heavy rain, about the time of the full moon, in August, followed by clear still nights. Now this is precisely the cause of our summer frosts, which do considerable local damage every year. Whenever there is a circulation of air there is no frost, as was pointed out to me by Mr. Kennedy, the gentleman in charge of St. John. A corner of his potato patch was killed this year, but it was sheltered from the wind, while that exposed to the air was left untouched. Both Mr. Horetzky and myself noticed that the temperature during October was lower in the valleys of rivers than on the level country above, and very probably this is the case during the summer.

"That the Peace River country has exceptional climate, anyone seeing it must confess. While we were travelling through it, the constant record was "warm sunshine, west wind, balmy atmosphere, and the skies of the brightest blue." Even as late as the 15th of October the thermometer was 40° at daylight and 60° in the shade at noon. Within the foot-hills of the Rocky Mountains I picked up three species of plants in flower as late as the 26th of the same month. These facts, and many others that could be adduced, show conclusively that there is an open fall; and the united testimony of the residents makes it clear that spring commences before the first of May. There must likewise be a warm summer, as the service berries (*Amelanchier Canadensis*) were gathered fully ripe as early as the 15th of July, last year, by the miner we engaged at Edmonton, the same berries ripening at Belleville about the 10th of the same month. These berries are so sweet that we preferred them to currants in our pemican. From all the observations I made, both in respect of soil and vegetation, I am satisfied that the whole country between Slave Lake and the Rocky Mountains is a continuation of the prairie. The mountains we crossed between Fort Assiniboine and Slave Lake would therefore be a spur of the Rocky Mountains; and Sir John Richardson's remark, that there was a level country all the way from English River or Portage La Loche to Little Slave Lake would confirm this opinion. He even goes further, and on page 364 of his work says that:—"From Meathy Portage westward, though deeply furrowed by river-courses, and ravines more or less thickly wooded, partakes so much of a prairie character that horsemen may travel over it to Lesser Slave Lake and the Saskatchewan." If this opinion be correct, and I have no reason to doubt it, we can then assert with truth that the prairie country extends all the way from the Lower Saskatchewan by Lac

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