

ment it would be in at that date, and, worse still, there were severe frosts in July. It appears from this data that though farming in the immediate valley of the river has always met with a large share of success, on the plateau the experience is far from satisfactory, that is what little there is of it, and, as both places tried were selected for their favourable location, it is reasonable to assume that it is a fair test of the capacity of the plateau. The difference in altitude between the river-bottom and the plateau being about 1,000 feet generally, this alone would account for the different results of a frost. In addition to this, the presence of a large body of water in the valley at a temperature of 55° must have a beneficial effect, also the condensation of moisture in the valley emits heat during the evening, so that a frost cannot have the same effect there as on the plateau.

'To conclude on this subject, I would not advise anyone seeking a home in our great North-West to think of Peace river. There is but a limited area in the valley, which is the only place success can be reasonably expected, and even there success is merely an assurance of a living, as there is no market at present. * * * I regret that I have to present such an unfavourable account of a region of which much has been said and written. That the soil is excellent and much of it available for immediate use cannot be denied, but the occurrence of severe frosts on the plateau when the grain is not far enough advanced to resist its effects may be, as far as our experience goes, considered a certainty in the majority of seasons. It may be that, when the necessities of settlement require it, early seeding and early varieties of grain may materially alter conditions, but at present I would advise no one to think of farming there except in the river bottom, in which there are flats extensive enough to locate a few score homes.'

Plateau not
suitable for
settlement.

In 1893 Mr. H. Somers Somerset travelled through the Peace river country and in 1895 published "The Land of the Muskeg," from which his estimate of the country quoted below has been extracted. Were Mr. Somerset's opinion based on his own observations alone it might not be of any great value, but he spent several days at "The Settlement" with the Rev. J. G. Brick, referred to above, and Mr. H. B. Round, who was in charge of the H. B. Co.'s post at Dunvegan for fourteen years, was with him during the whole season, and it was upon information given by these gentlemen that his estimate of the country was chiefly based. He says:

'The notes to be found on the maps of the country are emphatic in their praise of the soil, which is undoubtedly fine, but, if the experience of the inhabitants is to be relied upon, the whole area fit for cul-