

PEACE River valley, the new Mecca of the land seeker, is beginning to write a story which promises to be one of the most wonderful of all Canada's marvellous records in crop raising, stock breeding and probably in mineral development as well.

Not at the behest of any land company but entirely because of its surpassing interest to every

northern latitudes renders vegetation both rapid and luxuriant.

In the Peace River district the seasons change very quickly, so

cultural possibilities of the country in Professor Macoun's official reports, and he summarized his conclusions in his book "Manitoba and the Great Northwest," published in 1882. He defines a tract lying between the upper reaches of Athabasca River and the fifty-seventh parallel of latitude in Peace River basin, which he considers "may be classed as fertile," and estimates its area as about thirty-one thousand five hundred and fifty square miles.

Starting from the Parsnip and through Rocky Mountains, the good country for agriculture commences, at Rocky Mountains portage at Hudson Hope (in British Columbia). From this point down the country is suitable for agricultural purposes, the whole distance, not on the slopes of the river, but on the prairie above. The north bank of the river, that is the one facing south, has hardly any wood, but

banks of the river that were wooded; above, all was prairie, with poplar and willow in clumps. It was of the same character as the North Saskatchewan, but with much taller grass.

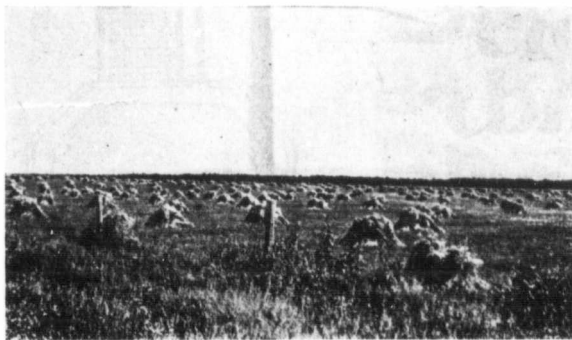
Said Professor Macoun:—"While at Fort Vermilion, on Peace River, in latitude 58 deg. 24 ft., I was informed by old Mr. Shaw, who had charge of that post for fifteen years; that

Indian Corn Would Ripen

well every year there, and at Battle River corn ripened three years in succession, and that frost never injured anything on this part of the river. The whole country at Fort Vermilion is a plain, not elevated at its highest point more than a hundred feet over the river, but the greater part of it is less than fifty feet. The soil is wonderfully like that of the second prairie steppe, in the prairie region, as the surface is composed of black loam, mixed apparently with limestone gravel. From Fort Vermilion, Caribou Mountains are visible about forty miles off. These may have the effect of keeping off the cold winds from Great Slave Lake, and hence the country is permanently warm. Both days and nights have been warm down on this part of the river, whereas on the upper parts, where high banks are, the cold was even felt at night in August.

"The grain at Fort Vermilion was sown on May 8 and 20, and was cut on August 6. Wheat growing among the barley and by the fences was almost ripe August 12, when I was there. At Rocky Mountain portage (British Columbia), where Peace River issues from Rocky Mountains, latitude 56 deg., we found a first rate garden with vegetables far advanced, July 21; new potatoes, onions and carrots were part of our bill of fare. That was in 1875. Five days later, at Fort St. John (B.C.) vegetation was even further advanced, and all kinds of

THE PEACE RIVER COUNTRY—



Field of Grain at Fort Vermilion

one who has the smallest interest in Canadian affairs, the following descriptive facts are offered. They are condensed from more detailed matter recently issued by the Department of the Interior at Ottawa and the Hon. Minister responsible for them will be happy to provide any inquirer with the last bit of authentic information which the want of space alone precludes from this notice.

While a few pioneer settlers have from time to time penetrated this portion of Northern Canada, it has only been within the past few years that it has been possible to regard the Peace River Valley as within the reach of the homeseeker. The almost insurmountable difficulty in taking in supplies and machinery, and the corresponding task of marketing the crop rendered this fertile area of Canada's hinterland a veritable "terra incognita."

While—as has been said—but few have explored this district, many will be surprised to learn that so long ago as 1876, grain from the Peace River captured the trophy in competition with the world at the Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia.

In the book just issued by the Hon. Minister of the Interior, numerous extracts are given from the reports of well known explorers and scientists who have visited the country, dating from the beginning of the last century down to the present day. There is a consensus of opinion among these authorities as to the adaptability of the country to the growth of all grains and root crops. The great amount of sunshine which obtains in these

that as soon as the snow passes, the ground is ready for seeding. The soil in some places consists of a rich black loam. In others

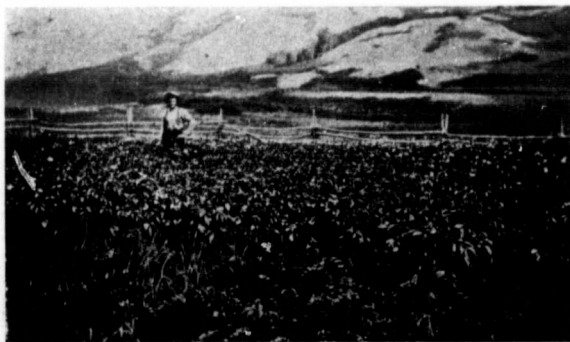


Ploughing at Grande Prairie

it varies from a blue clay with a top soil of sandy loam—from two to six inches—to a sandy loam, much desired by wheat growers. Vegetables attain a large size. During a large part of the winter season cattle and horses may remain outdoors. It is a country adapted both to mixed farming and ranching.

After the very early pioneer efforts in a small way, Professor John Macoun was the first scientific explorer to draw attention to the agricultural possibilities of Peace River country, after making a thorough examination of the natural flora, the soil, climatic conditions, etc. Mr. Macoun had accompanied the first Canadian Pacific Railway survey expedition, and had subsequently been botanist to the geological survey party appointed to investigate this very country. There was much information as to the agri-

is covered with berries, and Dr. Macoun found the cactus growing there. The other side of the river, facing the north, was cov-



Vegetable Garden fifteen miles West of Fort St. John

ered largely with spruce down to the river's edge, the whole upward slope. It was only the

garden stuff were in the greatest profusion. Nigger Dan's barley was coloring on July 26, and