

vegetables. At Fort Providence about fifty miles down the Mackenzie from the lake, they raise barley and all the vegetables every year, and some years wheat and oats.

One hundred and seventy miles below, north of Fort Providence, is Fort Simpson, where the Liard river comes in. Fort Simpson is on an island, the confluence of the two rivers, and the Hudson Bay Company for probably two years have raised barley and vegetables at that point. In some years they might raise wheat, but not every year.

One hundred and forty miles north of Fort Simpson is Fort Wrigley. That is where Mr. Bredin wintered one winter, and in the spring they put in a garden there. The Hudson Bay Company officials plant gardens every year at that point. The spring that Mr. Bredin was there they got their seed potatoes from Fort Good Hope, which is fourteen miles south of the Arctic circle. They went there because they had no seed, having used up their seed during the winter. Mr. Bredin saw those potatoes. They were a played out seed, a white blue variety. They were not the improved potatoes that we have in this part of the country, but they were a fair size. They had the same class of potatoes at Hay river, but since that they got in new seed, the Early Rover seed, from outside, and they grow very much better crops with this new seed than they did with the old. The season there is quite long enough, because the sun shines there during all the growing season. That is the great secret of the growth in that country.

On the Mackenzie river the trees leaf out almost in a few hours. The quickness with which the leaves appear on the trees in the spring is simply marvellous.

The witness was never up the Liard valley, but heard a great deal about it at Fort Simpson, and he had seen the journals of the Hudson Bay Company that were kept at Fort Liard, 200 miles up the Liard river. From these sources he gathered that they raised all the cereals there, such as wheat, oats and barley, as well as all the vegetables of the commoner varieties.

At Fort Simpson Mr. Bredin saw cauliflowers, cabbage and cucumbers growing under exactly the same conditions as they would grow them in northern Alberta. The cucumbers were simply planted in a hot bed, and allowed to remain there protected in the early spring from the frost and then allowed to grow in the hotbeds, with the sashes off, in the summer time.

The trees throw out their leaves in the Mackenzie basin about the middle of May, before the ice goes out of the river. The year witness was there the ice went out of the Mackenzie at Fort Wrigley on May 23, and the trees were all out in leaf before that time.

At Fort Chipewyan the Roman Catholic priests have a farm which was originally a muskeg, right amongst the Laurentian rocks, and they grow wheat there that was awarded a medal at the Centennial exposition.

Of course at all those Hudson bay posts they always raise vegetables. They do not pretend to raise any other grain but barley, because they use barley for soups. They pound the hull of it in a hollow piece of wood and use the grain for soups.

At the mouth of the Great Slave river and at the mouths of all the rivers running in there, large quantities of hay grows. In fact there is a very rank growth of grass along all those streams as far north as you like to go. Where it is not covered with trees, grass grows. The garden at Fort Wrigley was originally muskeg and covered with moss. As soon as the timber is cut off a muskeg the moss dies, the frost comes out of the ground, and gardens can be cultivated.

As regards the country around Lesser Slave lake, the south shore of the lake is excellent soil, as good as any in the country. There is excellent soil along the Slave river, and on the west side of Slave lake and along the Big Smoky and the Little Smoky it is all a good country.

Across the Big Smoky is what is called the Grand Prairie country, a prairie about 75 miles long and 20 miles in width; and also in there is the Spirit river and the Opas-kapee river country. There are settlers in all those three places engaged in stockraising and growing grain and vegetables.