

may have been due to a drier July, but whatever the cause may be, it is probable that the climate is more temperate there. As this prairie is in British Columbia it will never be made available for settlement in any other way than by purchase.

Dr. G. M. Dawson crossed the Pouce Coupé prairie in 1879 and went eastward towards Spirit river. He describes the soil of that prairie in these words:*

Dr. Dawson's report.

'The plateau itself is usually a widely extended terrace level. The soil in the valleys is very deep and rich, while that of the plateau is similar but not so deep, and rests on a silty deposit, which when it comes to the surface gives the soil a pale aspect. Even the silt, however, is a rich soil as evidenced by the luxuriant growth found upon it.'

The trail followed eastward by Dr. Dawson was near that travelled by me going to the Pouce Coupé prairie. Of the country traversed he says:

'Turned eastward over the plateau with a general elevation of 2,380 feet, for a distance of fourteen miles. Small open meadows and prairies, aspen groves and thickets, willow coppice and tall well-grown woods of spruce and aspen alternate. Met with occasional swampy spots.' Travelling eastward for about fifteen miles, he says of the country:

'The country passed over resembles that previously described, the surface being nearly uniform, the highest point attained between the sources of small streams having a height of 2,670 feet. * * * From half to three-fourths of the region is well adapted to cultivation, with a rich soil.'

It should be remembered that Dr. Dawson's estimate here and in other parts of his report is based on the assumption that the silty subsoil is very fertile. For that assumption he had apparently no other warrant than the luxuriant vegetation that grew on this soil. The plants which compose the vegetation, however, indicate a wet, cold subsoil rather than a fertile one. The Spirit river country is only described by Dr. Dawson in general terms.

Leaving Pouce Coupé prairie, going south, the river was crossed and the stream followed which is shown on the maps as being nearest the British Columbia boundary. This is the main branch of Pouce Coupé or l'Echafaud river, heading southeast of Swan lake. After leaving the forks this stream runs through a wide flat, more than two-

*Report of Progress, Geol. Surv. Can., 1879, p. 49 B.