

of water in dry seasons. The climate is such, however, that I have been forced to the conclusion that wheat at least can never be considered a certain crop and that in many years neither oats nor barley will mature. This conclusion is based on the character of the vegetation, on the records of severe frosts and the experiments which have already been made in growing cereals on the plateau.

Former reports.

The region under consideration was first reported upon by Dr. G. M. Dawson in 1879. He says: "The soil is everywhere exceedingly fertile and the general aspect of the country exceedingly beautiful."*

The country north from Dunvegan to Battle river was described by Mr. R. G. McConnell in the same year. This report may be summarized in Mr. McConnell's words as follows:†

"For several miles after reaching the plateau (north of Dunvegan) the country passed through was somewhat rolling and dotted with aspen coppices, but gradually the rolls ceased and at a distance of about six miles from the river became almost perfectly level. * * * * The soil displayed where the trail has been worn somewhat deeply was a heavy clay covered with rich black mould often over a foot in depth * * * * This style of country continued for a distance of about fifteen miles from the river and then commenced gradually to change for the worse."

Mr. McConnell's description of the country between Hay lake and White-mud river is similar to my own. Of the region about White-mud river he says: "It flows in an easterly direction and the country we descended into appeared to be its valley. If so it is from north to south, where the trail crosses it, about fifteen miles in width but appears to narrow westward, another range of hills running from the south-east seeming almost to close it up. Between these two ranges of hills and stretching eastward and south-east ward as far as the eye could reach is a large area of magnificent country, slightly rolling and dotted here and there with clumps of aspen and willow. This reach of country according to half-breed report follows White-mud river to its mouth and bears the same character throughout. This would make it about fifty miles in length with probably an average width of twenty miles."

As already stated, the country along the Battle river trail is open, and near the crossing of the White-mud river there are patches of prairie land but the open country to the east described on page eight is

*Report of Progress, Geol. Surv. Can., 1879-80, p. 58 B.

†Report of Progress, Geol. Surv. Can., 1879-80, pp. 58-60 B.