

7 EDWARD VII., A. 1907

Along the Peace river near Peace river crossing, there is a fringe of timber most of the way, but it is not very wide. As to the country running across from Dunvegan to St. John, it would not take a man very long to cross it if he had a road. The foot hills of the Rockies begin very near Hudson's Hope.

MR. MACOUN'S EVIDENCE.

The witness stated emphatically that he is of opinion there is a large area of valuable agricultural land on the Peace river. Taking the whole country there, as far as he knew, there is as much agricultural land to be settled as there is settled at present west of Winnipeg.

In reply to questions, the witness said that this was the very country that Mr. Macoun had spoken of disparagingly before the Agricultural Committee of the House of Commons two years ago. Witness said he most certainly disagreed with Mr. Macoun. He was there in that same country at the time Mr. Macoun was. Mr. Conroy said he thinks Mr. Macoun got wrong information.

Hon. Mr. PERLEY.—'He spoke from his own knowledge.'

Mr. CONROY.—'He did not have proper knowledge. I was through that same country that spring, and it happened to be a very wet spring. The farmer he speaks of had not a grain in up to May 20. That I can swear to. In fact he could not have put it in before June 6. That is the year it froze, and it has never frozen since. Old timers in there do not want anybody to come in, and they tell people that the country is no good. That is what they told Mr. Macoun. They have the whole country to themselves. One man grows 2,000 or 3,000 bushels of wheat every year and gets for it from \$1 to \$1.75 a bushel from the Hudson Bay Company, and he does not want anybody else to come in and compete with him.'

Hon. Mr. FERGUSON.—'Mr. Macoun said you strike a hard pan there?'

Mr. CONROY.—'That is in the country where the altitude is high. There is hard pan in every part of the country. It runs close to the surface at that particular place, but I can take you to a place not very far from Ottawa where you can get hard pan on the surface the same way. That probably dips two or three miles further on and goes down deep.'

'How far north of Edmonton is that?'

'About 700 miles by the trail. It is about 350 or 400 miles in a direct line. We have to take an indirect course in order to touch the different reserves. It is about 5 degrees of latitude north of Edmonton. The river broadens out as you go east and north.'

Continuing his evidence, Mr. Conroy explained that from Vermilion north-easterly you are out of the agricultural country, but below that it could be made an agricultural country. There are no settlers there at all.

There is some good country up along the Clearwater—very nice country from an agricultural point of view.

The CHAIRMAN.—'As to the whole of this Peace river country, you ought to be in a position to know whether the country is fit for agricultural purposes or not. In your opinion is that country good for agriculture?'

Mr. CONROY.—'Yes, I consider it as good as any settled. As I told you, there is just as much there to be settled as there is now settled west of Winnipeg.'

THE NORTHERN DISTRICT.

Mr. Conroy remarked he was down at Fort Providence at the mission five years ago. They have a splendid farm about latitude 62°30', and Mr. Conroy saw beautiful crops of wheat, oats, barley and peas. He left there on July 28, and their barley was fit to cut, and they were cutting it. Their oats and wheat would be ready to cut in a