

Cariboo is an indefinite term so far as extent and exact limitations are concerned. As mapped, it is different for different purposes—electoral, judicial, etc.

For Provincial electoral purposes there are three constituencies carved out of what might properly be included within its limits—Cariboo, Quesnel and Clinton.

Physically, all three have the same characteristics. In other words Cariboo proper extends as far north as Fort George and Giscome Portage, as far east as Yellowhead Pass, nearly as far south as Clinton and as far west as Tatla Lake. It may almost be said to include Nechaco Valley, but as we leave the bunch grass here, objections may be taken to it being outside a natural classification. It does include, however Blackwater Valley and Chilcoten country.

Chilcoten Country.

The Chilcoten has long been known as a ranching country. Here are located the extensive ranches of the Western Canadian Cattle Company, the Cotton, and numerous other ranches. Travelling westward from 150 Mile House into Chilcoten the country broadens into a wide plateau of park-like aspect. Belts of timber alternate with open prairie covered with luxuriant grass. The flora is very similar to that of the fertile eastern slope of the Rocky Mountains. There is a rapid descent to the lower bench of the old Risky farm. Although at an altitude of 2,400 feet, fine crops are produced by irrigation, and the lower terraces appear both warmer and drier than the plateau above.

From Risky Creek in a south-westerly direction there is a large stretch of open prairie, covered with bunch grass and forming a fine stock-raising country. The highest part of the plateau is about nine miles from Risky Creek, and there is then a gradual slope towards the valley of the Chilcoten River. Beyond this valley, and rising gently as it recedes, the same plain stretches for many miles, diversified prairie and woodland.

After following along the plateau parallel with the valley for some seven miles the trail descends to the valley bottom. From this place to Alexis Creek, fifteen miles, the valley is wide, with much level land on terraces a short distance above the river. It is estimated there are about 7,000 acres of cultivatable land in this part of the country alone.

In the valleys and river benches where most of the ordinary crops are grown, fruit and garden crops succeed in favourable locations. The elevated plateaus are, however, only used for stock-raising.

Blackwater Valley.

That part of the Blackwater Valley lying to the north of Kluskus Lake contains abundance of good grazing ground. The slope is generally lightly tree-clad, the undergrowth consisting of bunch-grass, vetch and strawberry, while the south bank is much more heavily timbered with scrub pine and poplar and occasional groves of black spruce. From Kluskus Lake to its junction with the Nasco, the Blackwater flows through a series of lakes, along which are found large stretches of land. The surface slopes gently to the water and is dotted with groves of aspen and spruce, and covered with luxuriant grass.

After its junction with the Nasco, the Valley of the Blackwater is wide and flat-bottomed for a distance of ten miles. The country is generally well-timbered, but there are occasionally grassy meadows. The river then runs westward through a range of hills which are not known to be of any value. On descending to the plain, the growth of timber greatly improves and groves of large Douglas fir occur frequently. The surface is undulating, with large alders growing in the moist hollows. As it is 300 feet below the general level of the country and of great size, it may be of agricultural value, but there is a heavy growth of timber that will require clearing. Another range of hills is met with after this plain has continued some miles and from that point to the junction with the Fraser, the valley is contracted into a canyon with rocky sides, apparently of no use agriculturally.