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# THE LAST GREAT WEST



BIRDS EYE VIEW OF PEACE RIVER CROSSING

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C O U N T R Y

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I S S U E D B Y T H E P E A C E R I V E R B O A R D O F T R A D E ,  
1 9 1 4 .



W. J. DOHERTY,  
PRESIDENT

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HONORARY SECRETARY-TREASURER

ALLAN MCKENZIE,  
HON. SECRETARY

## Secretary's Introduction

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**T**HIS Pamphlet is published by the Peace River Board of Trade owing to the numerous requests for information concerning the Peace River Country—the Last Great West.

The Peace River Board of Trade has gathered together the following facts and are publishing them, trusting they will be of use to intending settlers.

## THE PEACE RIVER COUNTRY

Great care has been taken in compiling this work to publish reliable information only. In the past many exaggerated and misleading statements have gone forth about this country. This the Board deplores, as such do not help the best interests of the country. The Board feels that the country is good enough and the bare facts of what has been done and what can be done will help it far more towards material progress than all the flowery language with which they might laud it.

THE SECRETARY PEACE RIVER BOARD OF TRADE.

PEACE RIVER CROSSING, ALTA.

(Please address all communications to "The Secretary.")

## The Peace River Country.

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**T**H E rich lands of Alberta are spoken of as the Farmer's Paradise, but nowhere in this great Province is there a region of greater promise to him than that which lies along the Peace River, stretching from the Rocky Mountains to Lake Athabaska.

That more than one little town from one to three hundred miles away from this great district, jealous of its own interests, has claimed to be the Gate Way to the Peace, proves how that country overshadows the surrounding districts, but what alone may be justly termed the Peace River farming district is the stretch of country extending some sixty-five miles on each side of the Peace River, and reaching from Fort Vermilion to the Rocky Mountains.

With an area of 26,000 square miles this district offers advantages to the settler unsurpassed in the Prairie Provinces. All that the home-builder would have are here; land for many thousands; land that will grow almost all that can be raised within the temperate zone; timber for building and fuel; and great coal beds to supply the latter need when the forests are

exhausted. Not far distant, it may be stretching out beneath our feet, are the great oil fields of the Athabaska. Nor is "White Coal" wanting, for at Peace River Canyon and Vermilion



THE JUNCTION OF THE PEACE AND SMOKY RIVERS ONE MILE ABOVE  
PEACE RIVER CROSSING

Chutes are resources of power that require but the engineer's skill to harness.

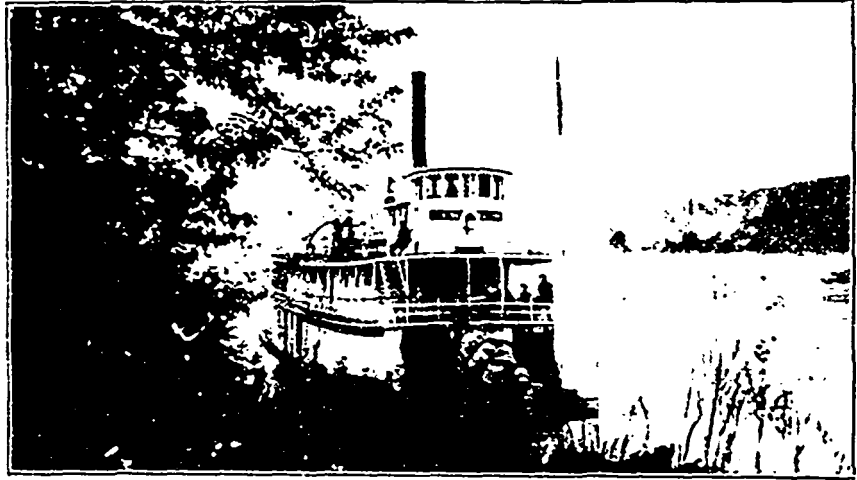
The soil and climate rank amongst the best. The growth of grain and vegetables is equal to that of any other temperate climate. The Prize Winning Wheat of the Chicago World's Fair, (1893), was grown here. Potatoes are often advanced enough for consumption eight

weeks from the date of planting. Such rapid development is due to the long summer days, there being 16 to 20 hours sunshine per day from the first of June until the first of September,

## MIXED FARMING

The District is well adapted to mixed farming, the top soil being a rich black loam, varying in depth from 6 to 18 inches, with a heavy clay subsoil.

Grain of almost every variety has been grown and ripened for 8 or 10 years. Roots and vegetables, with the exception of only one or two species, have been successfully cultivated for that length of time. Samples of the Grains, Fruits and Vegetables grown here have compared very favorably with those produced in other parts of the West. As a Stock and Grazing country we consider Peace River gives place to none, always growing an abundance of the very finest grass for stock. It is



HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY'S STEAMBOAT



watered by many creeks and lakes, the latter almost all surrounded by good hay meadows. This abundance of grass and the fact that the country is dotted with wooded bluffs, enable

range horses to winter out and usually to come through in the Spring in as good condition as in the Fall.



SAWMILL IN PEACE RIVER CROSSING

store, or a pioneer farm may form the nucleus around which any one of these small communities is growing.

## SETTLEMENTS

As is natural in a country covering so large an area, the process of settlement is taking place around several centres, often at long intervals apart.

A favorable crossing, a trading

## PEACE RIVER CROSSING

One of the oldest and most advanced of these settlements is Peace River Crossing, formerly known as Peace River Landing. It lies at the junction of the Peace, Smoky and Heart Rivers. Situated as it is at the terminus of the overland trail from Grouard this may be truly termed the Gateway of the Peace. Here on a flat on the South side of the river is the beginning of a town. Lying midway between the extreme points of navigation and surrounded by a well settled farming district, Peace River Crossing has naturally developed more quickly and more substantially than any of the other settlements.



PEACE RIVER TRADING AND LAND COMPANY'S STEAMBOAT

Here are a Public School, an Anglican Church, a Royal North West Mounted Police Post, Three General Stores, Two Hotels, Bakery, Telegraph Station, Post Office, Barber's



HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY'S STORE AND NEW HOTEL  
IN COURSE OF CONSTRUCTION

Shop, Pool-room, Blacksmith's Shop, Sawmill, and a Branch of Canadian Bank of Commerce. It also possesses a Telephone System which numbers amongst its subscribers all the business houses and several private residences, and is connected with the neighboring settlement at Shaftesbury by long distance line. Peace River Crossing has a mail service twice a week.

It also is connected by Telegraph with the trunk lines. Its central position gives Peace River Crossing a further advantage in being the headquarters of **Two River Steamboat Lines.**

The district West to the sixth meridian and South to Dunvegan has been practically all surveyed, and fourteen townships of good farm land are now open for homestead entry. The country is for the most part open and level, interspersed with patches of scrub. The soil is a rich black loam. Wheat, barley and oats have been cultivated for several years with remarkable success in this district. Stock-raising has also been proved by many of the settlers in the neighborhood to be a profitable and safe investment. Very little land to the East side of the Peace has at date of writing been surveyed, but this region also contains large areas well suited for farming and will probably be surveyed and thrown open for



STREET IN PEACE RIVER CROSSING

homestead entry in the near future. In the meantime there is enough good land to the West of the Peace to accommodate the homeseeker for the next two years, when further



ONE OF PEACE RIVER CROSSING'S COMFORTABLE HOMES

Harness-maker, Shoemaker, a number of Carpenters and Building Contractors, several Painters and Decorators, Druggist and Stationer, Lawyer, Dentist, Physician.

provision will, no doubt, be made to bring the East bank of the Peace and contiguous territory under survey to supply the new settler with an ample range of country from which to select a homestead.

At Peace River Crossing there are at the date of writing the following openings for business and professional men:—  
Laundryman, Butcher, Baker,

The following are also badly needed to meet the growing needs of the community:  
**An up-to-date Saw Mill, Flour Mill and Newspaper Office.**

### SHAFTESBURY SETTLEMENT

Up stream and contiguous to Peace River Crossing, Shaftesbury Settlement stretches for 12 miles along the North bank of the Peace. An old settlement with several old and highly developed farms, it has also a large Roman Catholic Mission, with Saw Mill, Flour Mill and School, as well as a Church of England Mission, with another School.

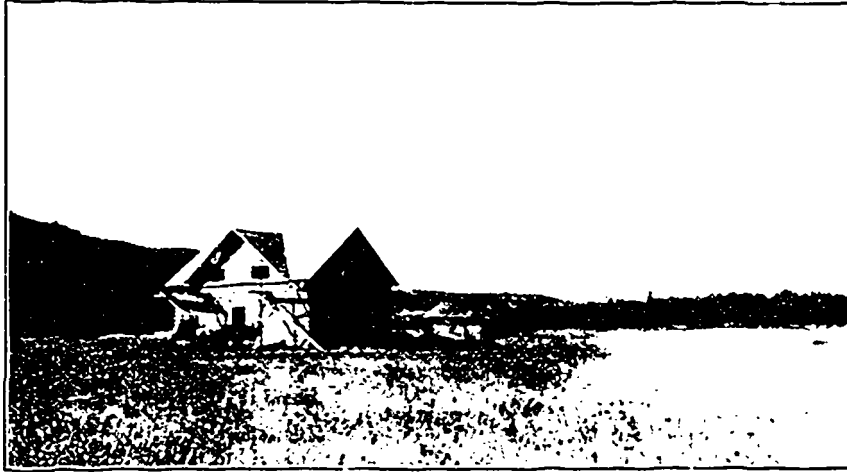


STORE OF BEVILLON FRERES TRADING COMPANY, LIMITED

Both Missions are connected with Peace River Crossing by telephone. A second flour Mill is to be installed here. In this settlement the prize-winning wheat of the Chicago World's Fair, 1893, was grown.

**COLD SPRINGS SETTLEMENT**

Cold Springs, 10 miles West of Shaftesbury, on the upland, is a purely farming community. It boasts of an Agricultural Society, a Local Improvement Club and a School district.



RESIDENCE IN COURSE OF CONSTRUCTION IN PEACE RIVER CROSSING

Peace River Crossing and Dunvegan, in a dry season. Things have been changed since then, but the name still holds. The people are very progressive and organized a school district in 1911.

**BURNT RIVER SETTLEMENT**

West of Burnt River and North of the Peace, about 15 miles from Cold Springs lies the German Settlement of Burnt River. Oats and Wheat are both grown successfully here.

**WATERHOLE SETTLEMENT**

The Waterhole Settlement, 10 miles from Burnt River, takes its name from what was once the only camping place between

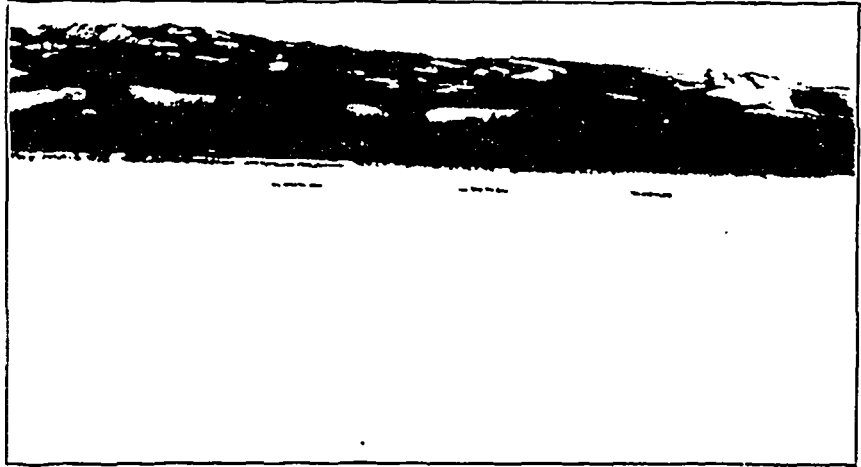
### DUNVEGAN SETTLEMENT

Dunvegan proper has only about two miles of river front, but land is surveyed and open for entry for twelve miles around. Though most of that close in has been taken up, there is plenty of good land left.

### SPIRIT RIVER SETTLEMENT

Spirit River is a small stream flowing into the Burnt River, which in turn empties into the Peace below Dunvegan. Spirit River Settlement

lies on both banks of the stream, about 16 miles South of the Peace at Dunvegan. There is a well improved road leading to this district and passing through Peace River Crossing.

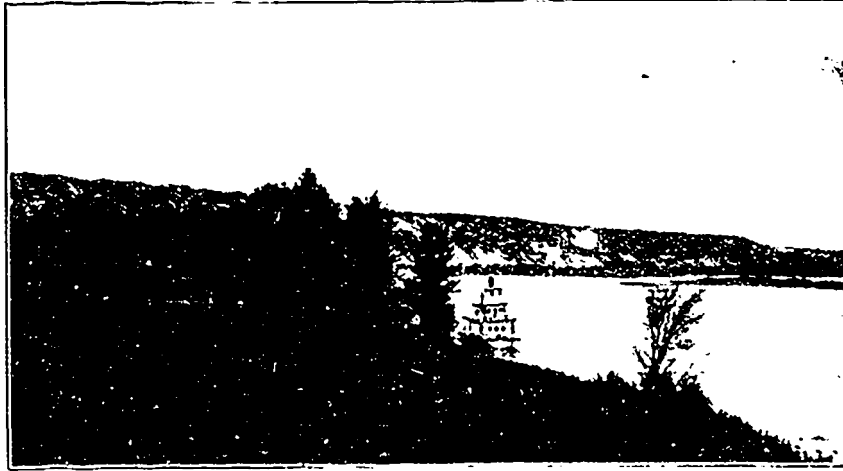


THE PEACE RIVER IN WINTER—FREIGHTERS SHOWING IN FOREGROUND



The land in the vicinity is flat and the soil is a rich black loam, excellently suited for the successful cultivation of wheat, oats and barley. Two of the pioneer

settlers of this region harvested between them six thousand bushels of high-grade oats in 1912. The settlement is more thickly populated than any of the other districts on the North side of the river. At Spirit River there are a Saw Mill, a Shingle Mill, Public School, Dominion Government Telegraph Station, Post Office,



SUMMER SCENE ON PEACE RIVER

Pool Room, Roman Catholic Mission and Presbyterian Manse. Many desirable homesteads are still open for entry. There are also good openings at the present

time for a Boarding House, Blacksmith Shop and a Bakery.

### FORT VERMILION SETTLEMENT

Fort Vermilion, 300 miles down stream from Peace River Crossing, has three Trading Stores, Saw Mill, Planing Mill, two Threshing outfits, Flour Mill, and the Hudson's Bay Company's Post there is lighted by electricity. There is a large Roman Catholic Mission and School, and the Church of England has also a Mission with two Schools, one at each



HEART RIVER BEFORE ENTERING PEACE RIVER

end of the settlement. The Dominion Government has placed one of its many experimental farms at this point and has proved that the climate and soil are eminently suited for farming.

All of these settlements, Fort Vermilion alone excepted, are connected by Telegraph with the outside world, and since an extension of the line is under consideration, that exception may soon cease to be.



CORNER OF GARDEN ATTACHED TO HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY'S HOUSE

It is proposed to put in a Roller Mill at Shaftesbury, which will be able to handle a large quantity of wheat and enable the farmers of the district to reap the advantages of

### MARKETS

So far all grains have found a ready sale within the country, oats now, 1912-1913, selling at from sixty to seventy-five cents per bushel. Most of the wheat grown is ground at the small local mills and consumed within the district in which it was raised.

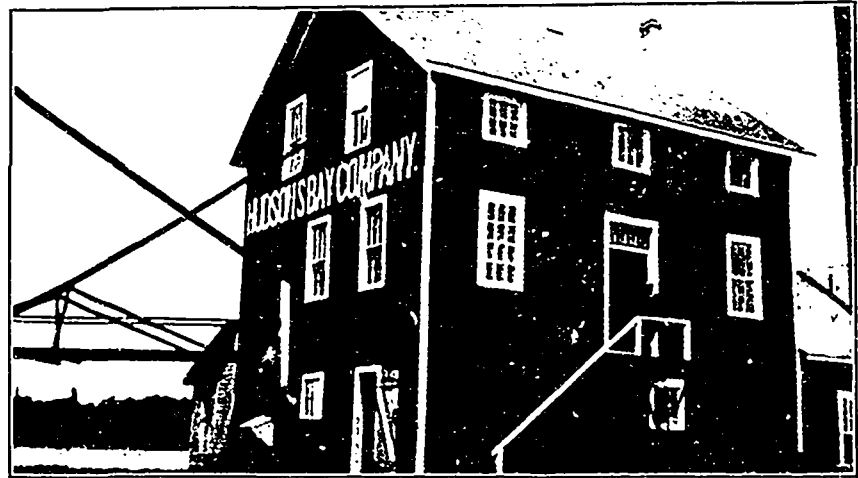
their home market, which, owing to the lack of milling facilities, has been denied them in the past. This will place them in a position to compete successfully with the large quantities of flour imported annually and sold at a very high price.

Of beef and pork there is not enough to supply the local markets, and it is the same with butter and eggs.

### FLOUR MILLS

Three Stone mills and one fifty barrel Roller mill, with a total capacity of about 120 barrels per day, have been

in operation on the Peace River for a number of years, and their products have found a ready sale in the North, but on the strength of the increased number of settlers and the



HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY'S FLOUR MILL, FORT VERMILION

amount of land already under cultivation and prepared for wheat, Mr. F. S. Lawrence has bought Mr. W. H. Carson's farm at Shaftesbury, with the intention of placing there a sixty



OATS GROWN NEAR PEACE RIVER CROSSING

barrel Roller mill. The machinery for this has already been purchased and at the time of writing is on its way in.

quite safe in saying that the land is capable of producing more and better wheat than it ever has done.

### PRODUCES EXCELLENT WHEAT

It has often been said that Peace River Wheat is the best in the world. This is, perhaps, a very strong statement to make, but we do claim it is amongst the best, and feel

## TRANSPORTATION

From Edmonton the Canadian Northern Railway run trains daily to Athabaska, a town on the river of that name. From there, during the open season, steamboat transport may be obtained up the Athabaska and Little Slave Rivers and across Lesser Slave Lake to Grouard, another growing town with several good hotels; thence the traveller must take the overland trail, ninety miles in length, to Peace River Crossing, where he again comes in touch with river transport, the Hudson's Bay Company and the Peace River Trading & Land Company both running steamboats from there to all points on the river between Vermilion



VEGETABLES GROWN IN PEACE RIVER DISTRICT

Chutes and Hudson's Hope. There is also a good and much travelled trail from Peace River Crossing to Dunvegan, and thence on to Grande Prairie, by way of Spirit River.



A VEGETABLE GARDEN IN PEACE RIVER DISTRICT.

In Winter all traveling must be done with teams and sleighs, but since one of the several railways making their way towards the Peace must soon strike the river, we may hope that before long the necessity for this will cease.

At present there are five railways projected into the Peace River Country, but it is impossible to state definitely when the first of these will reach Peace River Crossing, although there is every reason to hope that at least one will be running freight and passengers to the Peace River within two

years. Mr. Moore, Secretary of the Canadian Northern System, which at present extends to Athabaska, is quoted as having made the statement in April, 1913, that the construction of this line would be pushed right ahead until the end of the grade was reached. On the Edmonton and B.C. Railway the grade is supposed to be completed as far as Sawridge on the East end of Lesser Slave Lake by the Fall of 1913. As soon as we enjoy railway facilities this country will fully come into its own.



A FLOWER GARDEN IN SHAFTESBURY SETTLEMENT.

### CLIMATE

It is remarkable how wide a divergence of ideas is displayed by people unacquainted with the climate of the Peace River Country. They range all the way from a torrid to a



frigid zone. The climate of Peace River is somewhat similar to that met with in Dakota, U.S.A., Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Southern Alberta. The summers are not excessively



MR. CAMBSON'S FARM, SHAITESBURY SETTLEMENT.

hot, nor are the winters too cold. There is, however, this difference, there are few high winds and the prevailing winds from the north-west coming through the mountain passes are warm. Peace River, therefore, enjoys a delightful winter; it is cold but without the severity that people experience on the plains to the south-east. On account of being farther

North we enjoy longer hours of sunshine in the summer. There is, therefore, a rapid growth and grain ripens in from two to three weeks earlier than farther South. The freeze-up

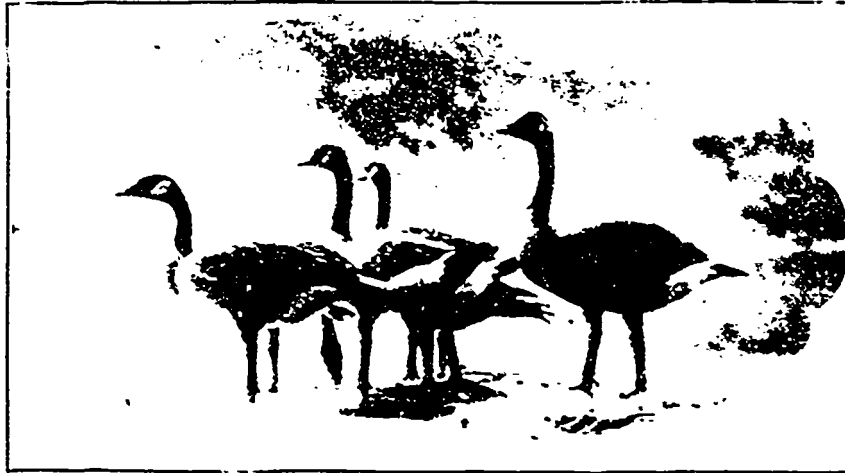
comes about the first week in November, and the break-up commences about the end of March. Seeding is general from about the tenth to the twentieth of April. In fine, to say that Peace River enjoys the finest climate in the North-west is no exaggeration, for, as already stated, on account of its Northern latitude there are longer hours of sunshine in the summer, and because of the warm winds through the mountain passes the cold of the winter season is considerably modified.



THRASHING OUTFIT IN PEACE RIVER CROSSING

Mr. F. S. Stupart, of the Dominion Meteorological Service of Canada, gives the following comparative table of temperatures registered in June, 1907. The mean

temperature at Winnipeg is the same as in Toronto, namely, 62 degrees; Calgary, 55 degrees, 3 minutes; Edmonton, 57 degrees, 1 minute, and Dunvegan, 56 degrees,



WILD GEESE

5 minutes. As Dunvegan is only some sixty miles South-west of Peace River Crossing the mean temperature at the former point may be taken as a fair criterion of the mildness of the climate in Peace River Crossing.

the exception of a few flying trips taken by Government Geologists and Mineralogists very little has been done as yet in systematized prospecting. The following

### MINERALS

There is every indication of vast mineral wealth in the Peace River Country. With

minerals are known to exist: **Coal** is found in large quantities both above and below the Crossing, and outer croppings are visible on the upper Peace and Smoky Rivers in all directions. As wood is so plentiful everywhere little attention has been paid to the vast stores of coal awaiting development.

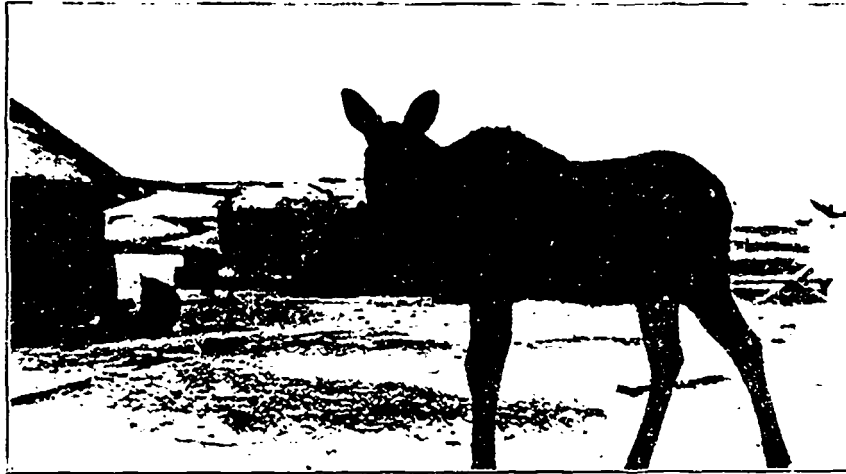
**Coal Oil or Crude Oil** no doubt exists in large quantities. In the evidence taken before a select committee of the Senate in 1907, several authorities on this country agreed that this was the finest

oil region in the world to their knowledge. **Tar** can be seen oozing out of the gravel beds of Tar Island, twenty-five miles down the Peace, and **Gas** escapes out of the



A GOOD MORNINGS' SPORT.

ground in many places above the Crossing. **Gold** has been mined on the bars of the Peace River in paying quantities, but recently homesteading has found more favor in

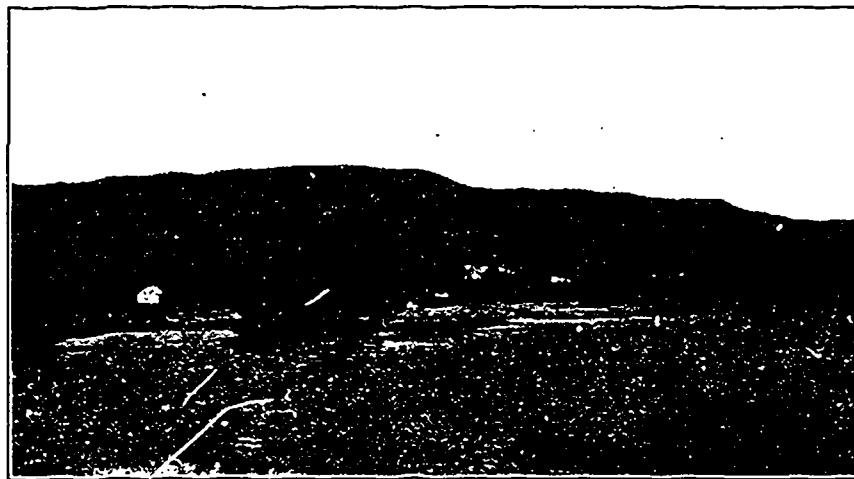


YOUNG MOOSE CAUGHT IN PEACE RIVER DISTRICT

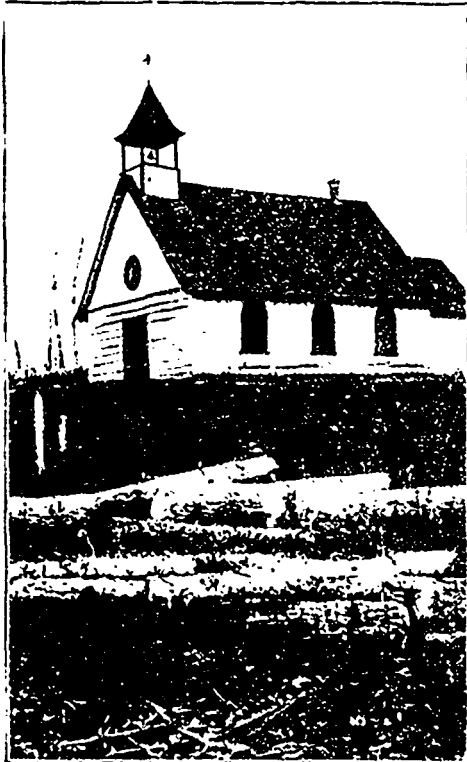
the eyes of the new settlers. Quartz is known to exist in large quantities above Hudson's Hope. **Limestone, Granite, Sandstone and Gypsum** are abundantly evident in many parts of the river bank. On the flat on which the town of Peace River Crossing is situated good sandstone for building purposes is plentiful and could be quarried with the greatest ease.

**PROSPECTS AND POSSIBILITIES**

The Peace River country because of its distance from railroads and the lack of the other conveniences associated with an advanced civilization, has for some years back attracted a fine class of young and enterprising settlers who have come in pursuit of the free and adventurous life. Much credit is due to these early pioneers for their faith in the future of the country and their courage and endurance under hardships. They are now beginning to reap the reward of their years of effort in well-stocked and highly productive farms. In their wake is following an ever increasing number of energetic and experienced farmers,



PEACE RIVER CROSSING FROM ACROSS THE RIVER



ANGLICAN CHURCH, PEACE RIVER CROSSING

men of considerable substance who have been drawn to the country by the fame of its vast mineral wealth, its rich timber tracts, its excellent farm land, and its favorable climate. Outside investors, too, are beginning to share in the faith of these pioneers and to look towards the Peace River country as offering a fine field in the near future for the safe and remunerative investment of capital. Because of its long distance from Edmonton, the nearest commercial centre, and its lack of transportation facilities, the Peace River Country has in the past lain dormant, awaiting the advent of the railway to tap its resources. This period of inactivity may now be considered closed and the year 1914 may safely be said to mark the first in a new era of rapid growth and development exceptional in the history of Canada. The Edmonton,

Dunvegan and British Columbia Railway has now publicly announced its intention to make Peace River Crossing the terminus of its line, and to push construction ahead with all possible despatch. By the fall of 1914 they intend to have their line completed to within twenty miles of Peace River Crossing, and if the Company is able to accomplish its projected plans, Peace River Crossing will spring into importance as a great distributing point and the commercial capital of the north country. Situated as it is at the geographical centre of a large and rich region, midway between the heads of navigation on the Peace River, and at the terminus of the only railway, its future is assured. When the railway's plans are established facts, the opening up of "The Last Great West" might be compared to the discovery of a new country.

