

The Clearwater Valley

By F.C. Green

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G.H. Dawson, Esq.,

Surveyor-General, Victoria, BC

Sir,—From September until the end of November, 1913, I was engaged on the survey of timber lands for private owners in the upper part of the valley of the Clearwater River, a tributary of the North Thompson, and as, owing to the lack of earlier surveys, the information in the Lands Department regarding this area is very incomplete, the accompanying map and the following notes may be of some value.

Hobson Lake is most easily reached via Quesnel Lake. A branch wagon-road connects the lower and western end of Quesnel Lake with the main Cariboo Road, and a gasoline-launch on the lake makes the fifty-mile trip to the head of Quesnel Lake easy. A trail about five miles and a half in length running in an easterly direction connects the head of Quesnel Lake with Hobson Lake. This trail follows a valley about two miles in width containing very little arable land, but heavily timbered with cedar and hemlock, and skirts Summit Lake, which is about a mile in length. A publication of the Geological survey gives the altitude of Quesnel Lake as 2,250 feet above sea-level. Our aneroids gave the rise to Summit Lake as 425 feet and the drop thence to Hobson Lake as 20 feet, this making the altitude of Hobson Lake 2655 feet. Summit Lake has outlets into both Quesnel and Hobson Lakes. Should additional water ever be required for irrigation or other purposes in the Cariboo District, a large glacier-fed area could be drained into the Quesnel River by an easily constructed dam 25 feet in height at the foot of Hobson Lake.

Hobson Lake.

The trail referred to strikes the shore of Hobson Lake about four miles from its northerly end or head. This lake lies in a general south-westerly direction and has a length of nineteen miles and an average width of a little less than a mile. The mountains rise steeply from the water's edge and to the north and east of the lake there are many snow-capped peaks and glaciers. With the exception of some snowslides and small burnt areas, the lakeshores are heavily timbered with cedar and hemlock, and some red fir, while on the higher levels spruce and balsam predominate. The limit of merchantable timber is a little over 4,000 feet altitude, or say 1500 feet above the lake, and this limit is generally reached about a half a mile from the shore. The lake seems to have no fish, owing perhaps, to the high falls in the river below, and the land

surrounding it has no agricultural possibilities owing to the steep slopes and its stony character. A company is now installing an hydraulic plant for washing the gold-bearing gravels on Hemlock Creek, which enters the lake at its head.

Upper Clearwater River.

Hobson Lake drains southerly into Clearwater Lake by the Upper Clearwater River. This river has a length of about seven miles and an average width of about 200 feet and in its length drops about 600 feet. About a mile and a half down the river it is joined from the east by Goat Creek, flowing from a well-timbered valley, and about four miles further down and about a mile and a half from the head of Clearwater Lake is joined by the outlet of Blue Lake, the foot of which lake is less than a quarter of a mile to the eastward.

Blue Lake.

Blue Lake lies in a generally east-and-west direction and has a length of fifteen miles and an average width of one mile. It cuts directly through the mountain-range, the shores being very steep, especially on the southern side, and the lake being entirely surrounded by snow-capped mountains. Its waters abound with rainbow trout and numerous caribou were seen on its shores. There is a belt of good timber, generally about half a mile wide along the south shore and wider along the north shore, the altitude and consequent depth of snow becoming too great farther from the lake. About all the timber of any value on the south shore has been taken up, there is an area of about fifteen square miles of excellent timber still owned by the Government along the north shore of the lake and extending in a north-westerly direction towards Goat Creek. The entire area surrounding the lake is suitable for timber-growing only.

Clearwater Lake.

We built cedar canoes on Blue Lake, and finding the river below navigable went in them to Clearwater Lake. Clearwater Lake lies in a generally southerly direction and has a length of about seventeen miles and an average width of one mile. The character of the country rapidly changes southward from the head of Clearwater Lake, the mountains becoming lower and not so steep, while fire has destroyed about all the timber near the lake, with the exception of about four square miles on its east shore. There is probably some good arable land above this lake, though most of that observed was very stony.

Clearwater River.

Clearwater Lake flows southerly into the Clearwater River, which has a length of about fifty miles and enters the North Thompson about seventy miles above Kamloops. There is very little timber along the Clearwater River, most of the valley having been burned over. There are,

however, numerous extensive beaver meadows, and though there is much stony land, this valley will undoubtedly support many settlers.

From the southern end of Clearwater Lake we travelled south-easterly through six miles of rolling fire-swept country, most of it gravel; then passed easterly for five miles through about ten square miles of fairly good timber, of which about four square miles is still owned by the Government; then through six miles of flat, poorly timbered country, with many beaver-swamps and small lakes, and struck the Myrtle River about five miles below Myrtle Lake.

Myrtle Lake.

Myrtle Lake is about twelve miles in length and drains into the Clearwater River through Myrtle River. The river-valley for its upper ten miles is shut in by high mountains well timbered south of the river, but below that point is more open and has been mostly burned over. We left Myrtle Lake, which has an altitude of about 4,000 feet on November 25th. The lake was then frozen over and there was over 2 feet of snow. We followed down the river for about ten miles; then struck southward through heavy windfalls, and much to our joy struck the Fire Warden's trail, of the existence of which we were not aware, about five miles from the Myrtle and followed it the thirty-five or forty miles to the North Thompson.

Summarizing, I would say that Upper Clearwater, Blue, and Myrtle Lake Valleys are suitable only for timber, while Clearwater Lake and River and the lower part of the myrtle River Valleys have considerable arable land.

Game.

Besides the caribou referred to on Upper Clearwater and Blue Lakes, beaver and marten are plentiful, and many tracks of wolves and lynx were seen.

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F.C. Green, B.C.L.S.