

Report of Surveys in the Clearwater Valley, Kamloops District

By R.H. Lee

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Surveyor-General, Victoria, B.C.

Sir—during the past season I surveyed 4,364 acres of Crown lands, continuing northward from previous surveys on the east side of the Clearwater River. From the northern boundary of Lot 2179, where work began, the river turns north-westerly for about ten miles, following closely the eastern foot of the mountains, which run down to the water's edge in steep rock bluffs. No benches or bottom lands of any extent were found on the west side of the river below the mouth of the Mahood River, while on the east side of the Clearwater the main mountain-range runs almost due north, leaving a wide valley or bench from one to five miles wide, and 500 to 700 feet above the river, ending along the east bank in broken rock bluffs.

It is on this bench that the best agricultural land was found, at an elevation of about 2,500 feet above the sea-level. The soil is good clay, mixed sand and gravel in places. The surface generally is undulating and rolling, with a general slope toward the river, rocky in places, and covered with a dense growth of young fir, spruce, and cedar timber; but a severe fire ran through here some years ago and killed most of the trees. At the present time this dead timber is falling down, covering the surface with a mass of fallen timber and logs, through which a young growth of pine, fir, alder, and cottonwood bush is growing up, making it almost impossible to travel through without cutting trails. The land will not be hard to clear, as this dead stuff will burn readily.

We did not encounter any bodies of merchantable timber worth mentioning; only small spots of live timber that had escaped the fire and which will be useful for the needs of settlers.

The general formation is volcanic, and the soil is more or less mixed with volcanic ash, which, I was informed, is highly prized in Oregon for fruit-growing lands.

The pasture land is very limited in this locality, confined chiefly to swamps and small meadows.

I believe that irrigation will not be required in this locality—for some time to come, at least—on account of the rainfall. In August we had heavy rain for two days, in September five days, and in October six days. Should irrigation be required, however, there is abundance of water for that purpose. Nearly all the small streams coming down from the mountains are from springs and run throughout the summer season. Camp Creek is a stream 10 feet wide, coming down at the south end of the bench, and could be used to irrigate it northward toward Beaver Creek, a stream from 30 to 40 feet wide, which would afford ample water for all lands in that locality.

The climate is generally mild, somewhat similar to Kamloops, excepting that there is a greater fall of rain during the summer, and, perhaps, a little more snow in winter. But the [bu]shes and timber do not show a heavy snowfall. Trappers report from 1 to 2 feet. On account of the sheltered nature of this district and close proximity to the large lakes, I would not imagine that the temperature would go very low.

The Clearwater is not navigable, even for canoes, from the mouth of the Mahood River down. It is a rushing body of white water between steep rock walls most of the way, and in many places large rocks are standing in the stream. There is about 10 feet between high and low water.

The British Columbia government has just built a good wagon-road from the main North Thompson River road (in Lot 73) to Larkey's Cabin (Lot 2157) , a distance of about three miles, and from the end of this road we built a good trail through to Camp 4, on Camp Creek, last year, and continued it to Camp 7 this year. From the mouth of the Clearwater to Camp 7, on Lot 2896, the distance is about twenty-eight miles. There are large bodies of good arable land along this valley, and I would recommend the building of a wagon-road from the end of the present road at Larkey's Cabin northward as a means of opening the country for settlement. This can be done very cheaply, as very little grading will be required after the fallen timber is cleared.

I have, etc.,

R.H. Lee, B.C.L.S.