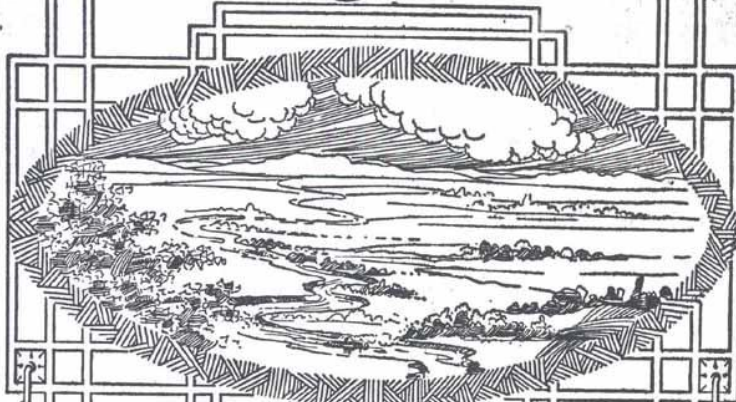


Looking Ahead



In  *The*
PEACE RIVER
COUNTRY



· TO ·
· THE · BUILDING · OF · A · CITY ·
by
A. M. Bezanson
author of Peace River Trail

THAT'S WHERE THE WEST BEGINS

Out where the handclasp's a little stronger,
Out where a smile dwells a little longer,
 That's where the West begins.
Out where the sun is a little brighter,
Where the snow that falls is a trifle whiter,
Where the bonds of home are a wee bit tighter,
 That's where the West begins.

Out where the skies are a trifle bluer,
Out where friendship's a little truer,
 That's where the West begins.
Out where a fresher breeze is blowing,
Where there's laughter in every streamlet flowing,
Where there's more of reaping and less of sowing,
 That's where the West begins.

Out where the world is in the making,
Where fewer hearts from despair are aching,
 That's where the West begins.
Where there's more of singing and less of sighing,
Where there's more of giving and less of buying,
Where a man makes friends without half trying,
 That's where the West begins.

Anonymous.

The Peace River Country.

The Peace River Country is today attracting the attention of Capitalists and homeseekers in all parts of the world. No other section of Canada is so well advertised and so little known, no other similar area possesses so many undeveloped resources; and I will hazard the prophesy that in no other section will development be so rapid within the next decade.

The aim of this little folder is to present a few of the reasons why this development is so rapid and to point out the inevitable trend of that development in the establishment of important trade centers.

Every statement in this folder is made with a full knowledge of the country and the trend of its development, based upon long residence therein and several thousand miles of travel on its rivers and trails.



ONLY THE NORTHERN PRAIRIES CAN SHOW A GROWTH LIKE THIS

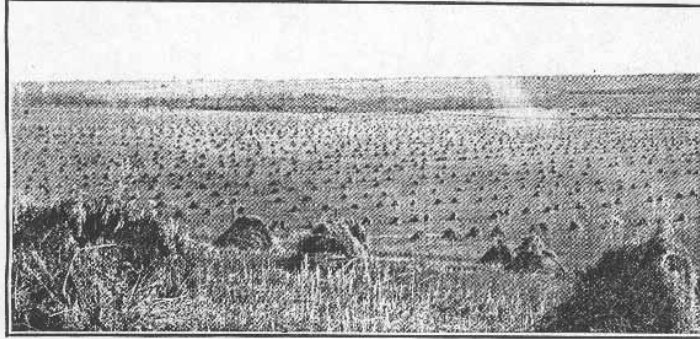
According to my interpretation of the term, "The Peace River Country" means that area drained by the Peace River and its tributaries—an area of approximately 16,000 square miles; an area equal to the combined area of Massachusetts, Delaware and Connecticut.

Nature, aided by fires in ages past, has divided this vast area into districts, each with its local name taken from some outstanding feature or from some incident of its early discovery.

In these natural divisions Grande Prairie, with its two million acres of rich rolling prairie easily comes first; chiefly because of its superior situation, climate and greater natural beauty. "Grande" it surely is; no more appropriate name could have been chosen.

Imagine standing on the crest of a great ridge thirty miles

long and several miles across the base, whose top and sides are as fertile as its base, and counting eleven beautiful lakes with tree-dotted sandy shores, reposing on great sweeps of undulating prairie with beautiful little poplar bluffs set here and there as if by design, and the snow-clad peaks of the Rockies standing sentinel a hundred miles to the west, but



A TYPICAL GRANDE PRAIRIE SCENE

looking to be no more than twenty. If you can imagine such a scene then you can visualise, to some extent, Grande Prairie. But this will be as it was when I first saw it only eight years ago. Should you stand on that hill today your view would be broken by hundreds upon hundreds of little clusters of buildings, and little patches of deeper green where the homesteaders have already taken their stand and are playing the prelude to the last act in the drama which the West will stage for them, the advance guard of the last of prairie pioneers in North America.

Yes, that's one reason. This is the Last West.

Grande Prairie has now about four thousand homesteaders. Thanks to the fact that all land north of the Saskatchewan was at one time considered only fit for fur; there is no Hudson's Bay or C. P. R. land in the Peace River Country. So you see we have some chance for settlement up there; we can have neighbors and schools, and lots of things denied to the settlers in districts near the present railroads.

The first crop sown on Grande Prairie was on April 14th, 1907, the acreage was less than ten; in 1913 one man had 900 acres and the total for the prairie must have been in excess of 100,000 acres, and here's the peculiar thing about it: **In the seven years in which cultivation has been carried on upon Grande Prairie, there has never been a crop failure from any cause.** True, there have been cases of crops hastily put in a month after seeding time owing to the late arrival of the owner, which were touched by frost, but generally speaking, the above statement is true.

Can you name any other Canadian district with an equal record? **In the first seven years, mind you.**

Grande Prairie has two municipalities composed of nine townships each—and room for half a dozen more,—holds three agricultural fairs each fall, has a five-team baseball league, has numerous schools and churches, and is in every

way a well-developed community—except for the lack of railways.

Pouce Coupe, lying northwest from Grande Prairie about 45 miles, is very similar to Grande Prairie, only that it is only about one-fourth as large and in many places the half rotten logs, remnants of its former state, are still lying on the ground, which will call for some extra work on the part of the first settlers.

The year 1912 saw the first real influx of settlers into Pouce Coupe, and from the best information obtainable it would appear that at least a thousand homesteads have been taken there already. The crops tried so far have been very successful, and its development is now assured. Pouce Coupe is not so well watered as Grande Prairie, but it has numerous creeks and lakes, and the settlers who have not a natural supply have been able thus far to get an abundance at depths varying from twenty to fifty feet.

Spirit River Prairie lies fifteen or twenty miles over a high ridge to the north of Grande Prairie, and has a very similar, although a little dryer, climate. Its area is about equal to Pouce Coupe's, and barring the greater scarcity of natural water, the general conditions are very similar. Crops have been as successfully grown here as on Grande Prairie, and its settlement will be rapid now that railway transportation is in sight.

The entire remainder of the Peace River Country lying south of the Peace is covered with brush, chiefly poplar and willows, but of a small and scattering growth which will be quite easily cleared. East of the Big Smoky, or just across the Big Smoky from Grande Prairie, lies a strip fifty or sixty miles



20TH CENTURY PIONEERS COMING INTO GRANDE PRAIRIE

wide, which has the same equable climate as Grande Prairie, and which has some large areas comparatively free from brush. Its settlement is now in progress.

North and west of the Peace River lies the great prairie which I would name the Peace River Prairie to distinguish it

from the others already named. You will observe that the Peace describes an L between the Rockies and Fort Vermillion; only in the heel of the L is there any settlement of consequence, and that now numbers nearly two thousand homesteaders. We are told by explorers and Indians that this entire area of about 25,000,000 acres is more than half prairie. I can say from personal inspection that the country back twenty-five miles to the north of the river between Peace River Crossing and Hudson's Hope is practically prairie all the way (250 miles).



A. M. Bezanson and
Party Taking First
Car Over Edson Trail,
Dec., 1913.

You will observe that about 70 miles west of Peace River Crossing the river take a dip to the south; here is where most of the rains, which come from the west and southwest in that country, leave the course of the river and continue on in their northeasterly direction leaving that big loop in the heel of the L dryer than any other known part of the prairie country.

In spite of that, in the four years in which crops have been grown there the quality and yield were equal to any district in the West. The chief drawback from the smaller rainfall is manifest in the lack of surface water sources, there being few lakes or running streams; the settlers who have tried it, though, have been fairly successful in getting water in wells.

At Fort Vermillion there is a settlement composed of nearly a hundred actual farmers, some of whom have been there nearly thirty years. The best evidence of the quality of the wheat grown by them is in the fact that the Hudson's Bay Co.



Wapiti 30 miles above
Bezanson (notice clear
banks for logging.)

have an electric lighted flour mill there, installed ten or more years ago, which makes each year's crop into flour.

Remember that these farms at Fort Vermillion are near the river, and that the general elevation there is less than 1,000 feet above sea level.

You have often heard of the ripening of tomatoes in the Peace River Country, and justly so. But don't you think that we should know just where this is done? I think so, and have always decried the circulation of such reports without the

qualifying statements that should accompany them. Our country is rich enough and good enough, just as it is, without cheaply attempting to pass it off for something that it is not. Now, I'll tell you where those tomatoes are ripened: In the Valley of the Peace whose banks are 1,000 feet high at Fort St. John and 700 feet high at Peace River Crossing. Get it clear; they are ripened down in the bottom of that great trough, where the sun boils down and heats up the sides of the banks to such a temperature that they remain warm over the short summer night, or else on the sloping sunny shore of a lake. I have yet to see any tomatoes ripened, in the open, out on the great prairie. Mind you, I am not saying there may not be some day, as settlement advances, but so far there has not been.

The great prairie country lies from 100 feet at Fort Vermillion to 1,000 feet at Fort St. John above the river after which it takes its name. At Grande Prairie, the Big Smoky



BIG SMOKY BELOW BEZANSON

is 450 feet below the general level. Perhaps a few figures will make this clearer:

| Elevations. | Prairie. | River Bed. |
|-----------------------------------------|----------|------------|
| Grande Prairie, average | 2,000 | |
| Big Smoky at Bezanson | | 1,525 |
| Pouce Coupe | 2,200 | |
| Peace at Fort St. John | | 1,462 |
| Peace River Prairie | 1,900 | |
| Peace at Peace River Crossing | | 1,225 |

You will see from this table that these great northern rivers have cut troughs for themselves, which are veritable canyons in miniature, and you will readily see that conditions in those canyons would be vastly different climatically to those on the prairie above.

Did you know that wheat that took first honors at three different World's Fairs, was grown in as many different parts of the Peace River Country? Fact.

As to mineral wealth, little is known. Many and varied reports have been circulated about the existence of gold, copper and iron, and from the reports of geologists and mineralogists who have occasionally found their way into the mountains to the west, the indications are very favorable for the de-

velopment of a rich mineral field, particularly to the southwest of Grande Prairie.

Coal is reported to be nearly everywhere in the country, but these reports are circulated chiefly by people who have an axe to grind, and are simply enlarging upon the vague rumors which they have heard, but not substantiated. As a matter of fact, there has been no coal of value in the prairie sections of the Peace River Country found to date. I know of the existence of several seams of lignite, ranging in thickness from 2 to 4 feet in various sections, but this, as you know, is of little value except to use locally.

In the Peace River Canyon, however, there is a great field of hard coal, testing over 70 per cent. carbon, which will be tapped by at least one of the railways now under construction. On the Big Smoky river also, is a similar, though larger, field, giving even a better test. These two fields alone will furnish enough coal of the higher grade to supply the needs of the country for thousands of years.

Next in importance to agricultural land comes timber, of which there are no large bodies on or near the Peace, excepting that block between the South Pine and the Cut-Bank rivers, which covers nearly three hundred square miles, and is reserved by the Dominion Government. Let us hope that it will be protected from destruction by fire. The great timber wealth of the country is on the Big Smoky and the Wapiti rivers, where,



FIRST HERD OF CATTLE ON GRANDE PRAIRIE

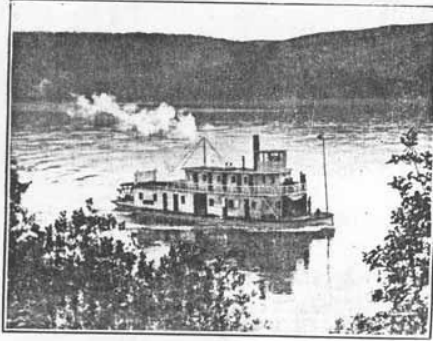
to my personal knowledge, there is over 5,000,000,000 feet, board measure. This can be very easily logged and brought to market by bringing it down the rivers to their confluence at Bezanson, where railroads building into Grande Prairie cross the Big Smoky river, and where there is situated the finest natural mill site in Western Canada.

In water power we are abundantly supplied. Thousands of horsepower units can be developed upon any of our large rivers. They are also navigable for steamers for upwards of 1,000 miles.

For building stone, the Wapiti, Big Smoky and Simonette will furnish sufficient for the whole country, should no more be found. Three miles above Bezanson, I can show you a wall of the finest gray sandstone, over two hundred feet high, which

can be taken off in layers of nearly any desired thickness.

Bear, moose, and most fur-bearing animals abound, and the smaller game birds, such as grouse and ducks are plentiful. I have seen bull trout, weighing as high as 18 lbs., caught with a hook in the Wapiti and Big Smoky. We have dozens of beautiful lakes offering every facility for summer sport, so it



Steamer Grenfell on
the Peace

appears to me that we only need three things to make this one of the richest parts of Canada, and they are:

Men, Women and Railroads.

The former are going in rapidly enough, and of the latter there are two now under construction, viz., The Canada Central, which is building to the Peace River at Peace River Crossing—which is the only practical crossing known on the upper reaches of the Peace, owing to the height of the banks, as previously described—and the Canadian Northern, now building to the Coast by way of Grande Prairie, and crossing the Big Smoky River at Bezanson, where the junction of the three rivers offers the best possible grade. Let me add that the E. D. & B. C. is also building west from a point near the western extremity of Lesser Slave Lake across the Spirit River Country, and on towards the Pine Pass, through which, it is reported, they will then go down to Fort George to connect with the Pacific and Great Eastern, building up from Vancouver. So, you see, even the latter is on the way.



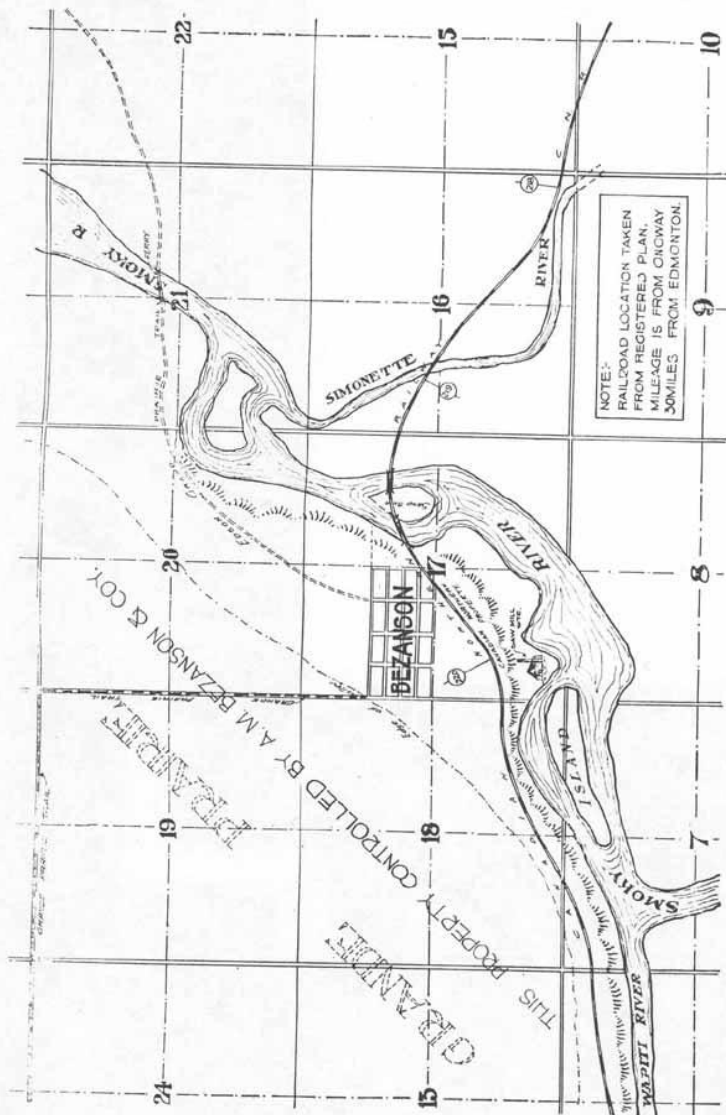
Track Laying on the
First Railway to the
Peace River Country.

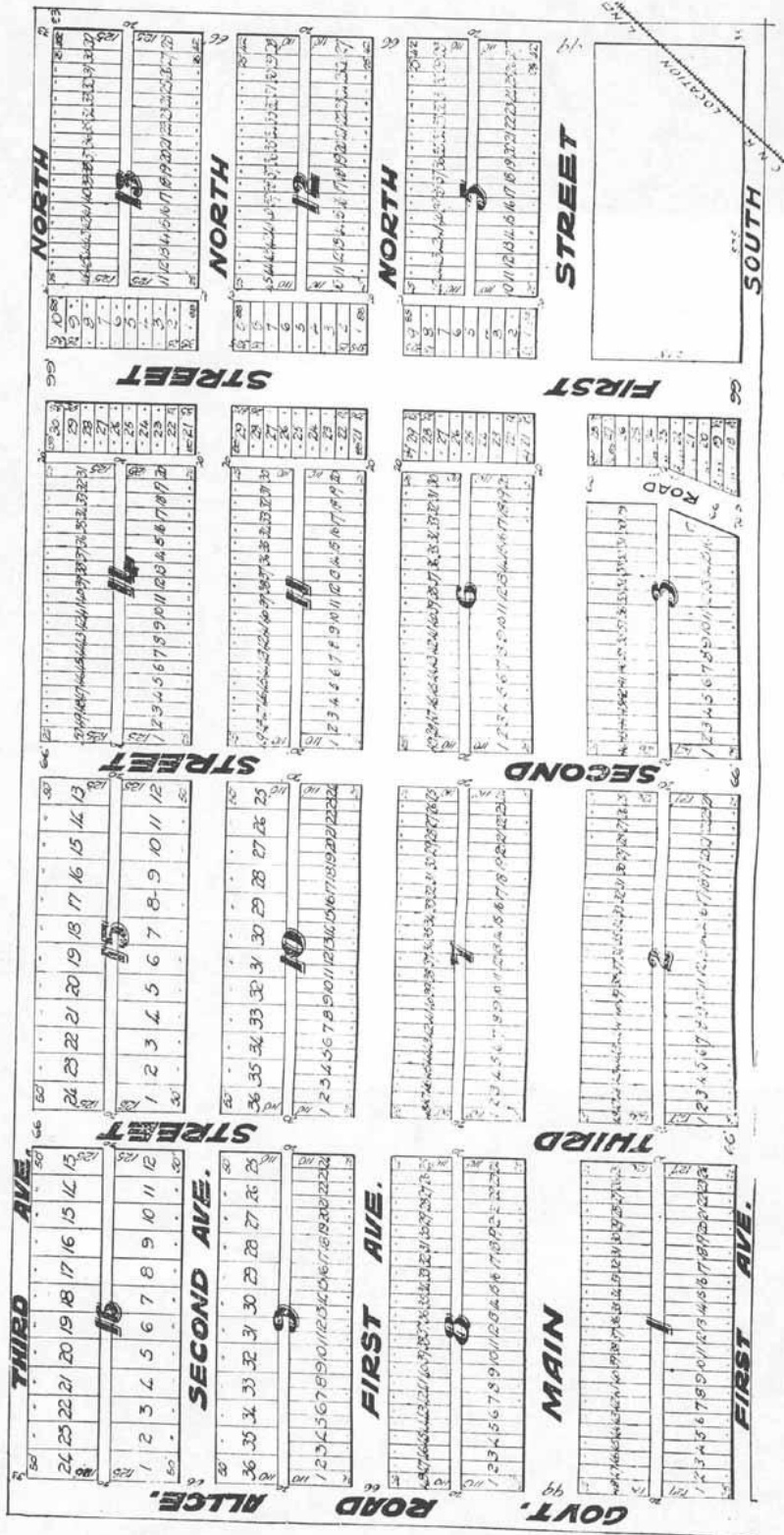
Now, perhaps, you are wondering what benefit all this can be to you unless you want to farm. My answer is, that the development of that country will be tenfold more rapid than that of any other section of the West, and that such a development will bring bigger opportunities for money-making than were

BEZANSON

Note the strategic situation. You can see the impracticability of railways crossing the Big Smoky river without going through Bezanson.

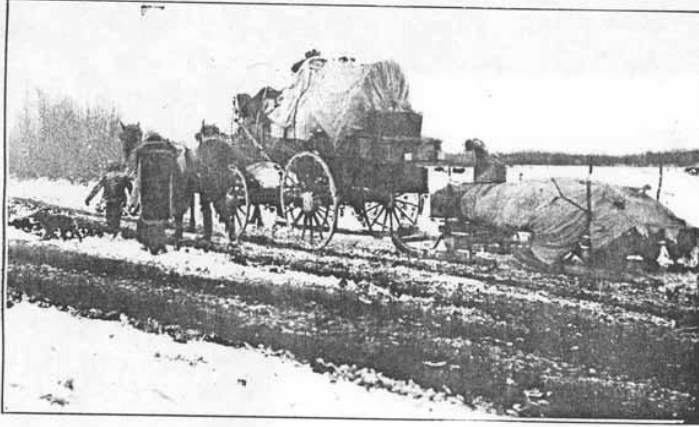
We intend to carry out the wide street for street cars every four blocks in the business section as more land is surveyed.





ever seen before on such a large scale. I will try and point out one of the principal ways, as well as one of the best and safest and surest.

The immense immigration into that country, and the railway construction now under way is giving rise to much speculation in townsites of all kinds in the hope of anticipating the



One of the First Families to Settle on Grande Prairie—
On the Trail February, 1908.

location of one of the important cities, which all concede the natural resources of the country must produce.

Like many others, we have been trying to anticipate development in that line, in a different way from most, however; while living near where Bezanson now is, I spent several years in travelling over, searching out the natural resources, learning the agricultural possibilities in the various districts and the timber wealth in all, with a view to determining the location of that particular point where most of these natural resources center, which could be reached by railways, knowing that to be the logical location for their development. Railways always come to such points, because their life depends upon the development of the natural resources of the country through which they pass.

Townsites simply happen—occurring at regular intervals of seven or eight miles along all railroads.

Cities come from the womb of old Mother Nature herself, and are nourished from her breasts.

In other words, it is the products of the soil which, in the last analysis, furnish the lifeblood of all cities; and where Nature has placed the greatest number of other natural resources, there, at that point where those resources can be most economically manufactured and distributed, must inevitably grow the biggest city.

These are the reasons for Bezanson.

Look at any map of Northern Alberta; note the location of Grande Prairie—then note Bezanson's location on the threshold of that prairie. **Plain, isn't it?**

Not only is that conceded by engineers to be the only practical crossing of the Big Smoky River for railroads, but it

is also in direct line from Edmonton to the Pine Pass, Grande Prairie's western gateway to the Pacific.

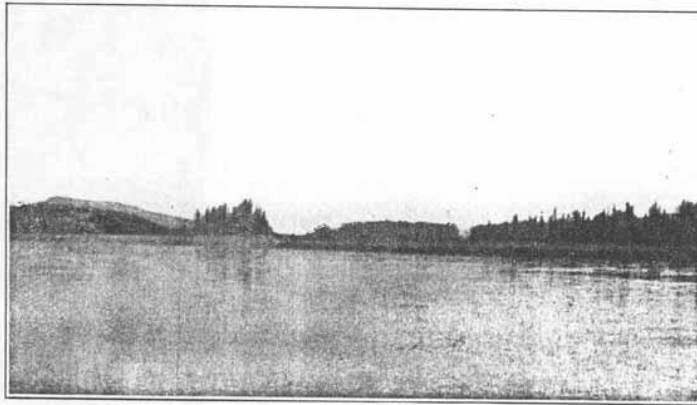
Farm Land builds most cities, transportation some, and timber a few—all three center at Bezanson.

The Canadian Northern is located across the corner of the townsite as shown on the enclosed plan; they own the seventy acres adjoining on the south, which, taken in conjunction with our property, makes an ideal station site.

The Grand Trunk Pacific and Canadian Pacific also have survey locations across the Big Smoky River there, and beyond a doubt their lines will be constructed to this point within a few years.

Bezanson is not a subdivision; it is a townsite.

It is beautifully situated upon a bench at an elevation of about 120 feet above the river, of which it commands a magnificent view. Had the location been planned and modeled by the hand of man, it could not have been made more suitable for the purpose for which Nature intended it.



Big Smoky River, Near the Mouth.

West of the Big Smoky and north of the Wapiti, lies Grande Prairie, with its 2,000,000 acres of fine agricultural land, whose fertility has been proven by seven years of successful cultivation, while east of the Big Smoky and north of the Simonette lies a country nearly as rich as Grande Prairie, only that it is more bushy. But now that the railroads are on the way, and most of the open prairie has been taken, it is being rapidly settled.

Above Bezanson, on each side of the three rivers and their tributaries, stands 5,000,000,000 feet of merchantable timber, which must come down to the railroad crossing at Bezanson to be manufactured, as the only practical mill-site is here.

Grande Prairie needs the lumber, and will take most of the output until the railroads come. The surplus will go down the Big Smoky to the Peace River Country, which has no other timber supply.

Look at the map of the Peace River Country, and know that the Big Smoky is a navigable river. Trace it to its junction with the Peace, with its 600 miles of uninterrupted navigation, and its connection with the Slave River and ultimately with the MacKenzie River, and see if you have any difficulty in locating the Gateway to the North. **Do you fully grasp the meaning of that feature alone and its bearing on Bezanson?**

The Canadian Northern bridge across the Big Smoky at Bezanson will be nearly a mile long, and will take at least two years to build. With Grande Prairie looking for an outside market, just consider what this will mean to Bezanson. Its commanding situation as a distributing center will be established then and there—a distributing center which, by reason of its strategic importance, must remain a distributing center for that immense area of rich country for all time.

Our aim in selling this property is three-fold.

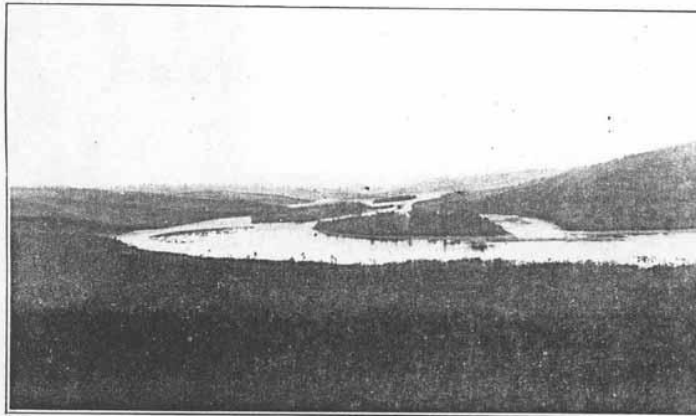
First—To get others interested, as we cannot build a city alone.

Second—To get back some of the money we have already invested.

Third—To use the money so acquired for development purposes.

If we can, we will control the situation there so as to prevent subdivisions being put on sale until the development of the town requires it being done.

This is not an attempt to make some "easy money." We believe in this location and its future. We have believed in it for years while living there, when we knew not when the railroads would come.



Confluence of Big Smoky and Peace, Seen From Half Way Up the Bank at Peace River Crossing.

We know its resources and its commanding situation, and we want to be instrumental in its development. We believe that to be a worthy ambition, and we also believe that if you will take the trouble to investigate the importance of its situation, you will see, as others are seeing, the advisability of promptly taking advantage of that development by getting in early—which means **now**.

Think of the places of strategic importance, and what it meant to those who got in on the ground floor; bought a few lots for a few hundred dollars, which within a few years were worth thousands. True, in the old days, some had to wait a long time for the development to reach them and enhance the value of their property, but you know that development is tenfold more rapid in these days than it was, say, ten years ago.



Canadian Northern Survey—Pack Horses Swimming Big Smoky

This is the Last West, and every one recognizes the fact. Do you realize what that will mean to you if you get in at the start?

Bezanson is 251 miles from Edmonton by the Canadian Northern survey. Grading is completed for 131 miles from Edmonton, leaving 120 miles yet to build, for the construction of which contracts will soon be let. The bonds for that construction are guaranteed by the Alberta Government, and the money is now in the Provincial Treasury. The 8,000 or more people in the Peace River Country are going to see that the terms of that bond guarantee, which requires the construction of at least 100 miles a year, will be carried out.

So much for the first railroad. Now an additional word about the general situation.

The statement has been often made that the growing season in the Grande Prairie Country is longer than in South Central Alberta, which is true. The writer was one of the first settlers on Grande Prairie, and has watched its development very carefully, and during the seven years that have intervened, and speaking from a thorough knowledge of the subject, positively states that the record established by Grande Prairie during that time is absolutely unique in the annals of new countries, for this reason:

In the seven years in which cultivation has been tried, there has never been a crop failure from any cause!

Think of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and in fact all of the Middle Western States in the early stages of their development, and make your own comparison.

This, then, is the country upon whose threshold Bezanson stands.

Those 5,000,000,000 feet of timber must come there to be milled.

It is at the head of navigation on a great waterway.

That's the whole story in a nutshell.

Now for the actual development so far. The first store is just being built. Lots have been purchased for two livery barns and stopping places which, we are told, will be opened before the winter's business begins.



A. M. Bezanson with
12-lb. Trout Caught in
Big Smoky.

Ten thousand people will pass through Bezanson this year. Do you doubt this? Then take note of the people all around you who are heading that way, and take note of the fact that the main road from Edson and Grouard is just being opened up across the Big Smoky there.



A. M. Bezanson's Garden,
Near Bezanson.

Many intend to wait until railway transportation is available. Have you considered what that means to those who become owners of property in an important center such as this before that development reaches it?

We think it means the greatest boom in business property that Western Canada has ever seen. Don't you?

You owe it to yourself to investigate this opportunity

whether you contemplate buying now or not, for you will eventually.

We know that country from long residence, and are always ready to prove that we know what we are talking about.

If we are telling the truth, **this is your opportunity.** If we are not, we deserve exposure. Put us to the test.

Take the Canadian West. Where are the big cities? Where the railways, building west, cross the rivers, every one: Winnipeg, Prince Albert, North Battleford, Saskatoon, Edmonton and Calgary.

History repeats itself.

Ever view it in that light before? Carry it on to the next big prairie beyond Edmonton in line for railway development? —and see where you land.

See more reasons for Bezanson; don't you?

Write for Prices. Delays are costly.

Special prices to purchasers beginning business within six months.

**BEZANSON TOWNSITES, LIMITED,
Edmonton, Alberta.**

TO HOMESEEKERS

I get many letters from intending settlers asking about homesteads, ranching locations, about work and numerous other things, so I will anticipate some of those questions and answer them here.

The Peace River Country is a **farming, not a ranching country**. I did both for four years, and I have looked in vain for a ranching location in all my travels up there. Cattle must be fed in winter.

Homesteads are plentiful, but I would advise no man with a family to go into that country to homestead till the railways get nearer, unless well provided with money, as the settlers already there are growing all the produce there is a local market for.

Work in a country ahead of railways is always an uncertain quantity at best. There has always been an abundance in times past, but I would advise workers also to keep their eyes on the railways, and not go in far ahead of them.

The shortest trail to Grande Prairie and Pouce Coupe is from Edson, 132 miles west of Edmonton, on the Grand Trunk Pacific. This trail is very bad in summer, as it goes through a bush country for 150 of the 200 miles to the Big Smoky at Bezanson, but in the winter, when most of the freighting is done, it is good.

The easiest way to reach the more northern points in the Peace River Country is by way of the Edmonton, Dunvegan and B. C. Railway to Sawridge, at the eastern end of Lesser Slave Lake, thence by boat in summer or ice in winter to Grouard, thence by trail to Peace River Crossing.

Mail stages carrying passengers run over both these trails.

Remember that the Prairie lies west of the Big Smoky and west of the Peace, and the height of land which marks the eastern boundary of the Peace River Country is about midway between Lesser Slave Lake and these rivers. East of that is the Athabasca, not the Peace River Country, a country very different in every way.