

...	51
...	51
...	52
...	52
...	54
...	54
...	54

REPORT

ON

TIMBER CONDITIONS AROUND LESSER SLAVE LAKE.

The ever swelling tide of immigration into the Peace River country and vicinity renders it imperative that steps be taken to set aside non-agricultural lands in order that the timber resources of that country may be conserved for the need of future generations.

It is evident that the settler, from his position in the community, cannot be expected to realize that the value of a perpetual timber supply is more important than the facility in clearing land afforded by the unchecked use of fires. There is also a feeling among many that fires are beneficial rather than otherwise, inasmuch as they turn poplar and willow country into prairie. The possibility of the destruction of large areas of valuable timber is regarded as a chance to be taken if the desired end is to be secured. Moreover, the persistence of the old, ignorant belief that the north country contains an inexhaustible timber supply accounts for a great deal of carelessness.

Experience has taught that the only way to obtain efficient fire protection is to have all the non-agricultural lands put into forest reserves. The best time to do this is before settlement has encroached on poor land, because in this way the difficulties and friction of dealing with settlers is dispensed with. With this object in view it was decided, last winter, to send out a party to examine the country in the neighbourhood of Lesser Slave Lake, much of which was known to be rough, hilly, forest land.

RESUMÉ OF THE SEASON'S WORK.

Pursuant to instructions of March 24 and April 7 last, I proceeded to Edmonton, arriving there May 17. There I met Mr. J. A. Doucet who had preceded me for the purpose of securing supplies and having them forwarded by team to Athabaska Landing. I found that with the exception of a few odds and ends everything was in readiness.

On May 25, Messrs. R. G. Lewis and F. McVickar reported to me. The next day we proceeded to Athabaska Landing, and on May 31 left by steamer for the mouth of the Lesser Slave River. Here we began field-work.

My instructions were to take the rivers as bases and run strips at intervals from them. This method is practicable only in a flat country where there are numerous lakes and streams, where it is possible to travel by canoe in any direction. Unfortunately, along the Lesser Slave River tributaries are few, and generally impassable after a few miles, so that only a narrow strip four to eight miles wide along the main river could be examined by this method. Consequently, I found it necessary to supplement this work by sending out parties of two across the muskegs. These parties packed their supplies on their backs.

On arriving at Sawridge I learned that there were many hunting and pack-trails leading back into the hills. I therefore considered it advisable to buy some pack-horses. This allowed us to explore country that would otherwise have been inaccessible.