

between Slave Lake and Fort Assiniboin, is known as "The Cattle Trail," or "The Kinesayo," and is the most direct trail from Slave Lake to Edmonton, and the best. From where I intersected this trail to Fort Assiniboine, distance about one hundred and twenty miles (at which point a wagon road is again reached), I found the trail to be the best I had yet travelled upon, running for the first part principally through small jack pines and spruce and over sandy ridges, intersected by bits of muskeg with rocky bottom, but no fallen timber whatever. During the last part the timber is heavier but open, giving good travelling. Horse feed and water are abundant.

The Athabasca River at old Fort Assiniboine is about two hundred and fifty yards in breadth and not fordable. The approaches to the river are flat, the north shore is heavily timbered but the south shore is open, with fine feed. Fifteen or twenty miles of the road from Fort Assiniboine towards Edmonton is heavily timbered, the balance prairie with bluffs. Twenty miles south of the Athabasca, Paddle River is crossed, a small stream of about one hundred feet, fordable at almost any time. Ten miles farther south the Pembina River is crossed. This is only fordable at the lowest water and is about one hundred yards wide.

The country between Athabasca and Lesser Slave Lake is evidently a great moose country, as tracks were very numerous, also cariboo tracks. Whilst crossing from Lesser Slave Lake to Fort Assiniboine, pack pony No. 7 was suddenly taken sick whilst travelling light. I pitched camp and remained with him that day and part of the next, but as he grew worse and was quite unable to travel, I was forced to abandon him. He was apparently suffering from some kidney or spinal trouble, as he had to a great extent lost the use of his hind quarters. I left him in a well sheltered place with good feed and water, and should he get better will be easily recovered. I reached Edmonton on Friday, October the 15th, having been absent just three months, and travelling in that time in the neighbourhood of fifteen hundred miles without any change of horses, and without any sore backs amongst the horses other than slight galls, which were speedily healed. This was owing, in great measure, to the careful attention given his duties by W. P. Taylor, the packer.

I made diligent inquiries regarding the condition of the Indians along the route, and found them to be in a very prosperous way. Their average trade of fur appears to be about \$300.00. One Indian had, I was informed by the Hudson's Bay agent at Sturgeon Lake, traded to the value of \$2,500.00 in one year. Of this I am, however, doubtful, or he may have traded for others besides himself. This average of \$300.00 means that besides that quantity of fur they have well provided themselves with dried meat, as they dry the flesh of almost all the animals they kill. All the Indians I saw, except the Beaver Indians at Dunvegan, were a healthy, well-clothed, well-fed looking lot.

Whilst at Slave Lake a complaint was made to me regarding the abduction of a child from the Church of England Mission by an Indian who, apparently, had no claim upon her, and who after abducting her had placed her in the Roman Catholic Mission. I inquired into the matter with the result that until the child's mother is heard from, she having placed the child at the Church of England Mission, but was now away at Dunvegan, the child should return to the Church of England Mission.

Fish.—The only points which I visited where fish are in abundance are Sturgeon Lake and Lesser Slave Lake. The fish from the former lake are the finest, but the supply is limited, and during the winter season no fish can be caught through the ice.

Timber.—On the lower stretches of the Athabasca, the Big and Little Smoky, are some small areas of very fine spruce timber. The upper reaches of these rivers are all burnt. I should say the supply of spruce timber throughout this country is limited, owing to the very extensive fires which have from time to time run over the country.

Fur.—It is very difficult to ascertain whether fur is decreasing in quantity or not, as it seems to increase in one part one year and decrease in another, and *vice versa*, and again some seasons the catch of certain kinds of fur is greater than others. It is generally admitted, however, that beaver are on the decrease.