

me in bodies, and seemed greatly alarmed at the advent of the police and the prospect of a wagon road being opened through their country. They are also very jealous of white trappers trespassing upon their hunting grounds and wanted them forbidden to do so. Another thing they were particularly troubled about was that they should be compelled to take treaty and live on reserves. I informed these Indians that they would not be compelled to take treaty and that their freedom would in no wise be interfered with, that the police were there more for their protection than for any interference with their ways, and so long as they obeyed the laws, the police would not trouble them, but that the police would prevent the white trappers setting out poison and fires, and the traders from trading liquor. Regarding the liquor traffic generally in the districts through which I patrolled, I am of the opinion that there is little of it, that is, trafficked with Indians, who all seem aware of its evils and have no desire for it. There is a stimulant traded by the traders, "Jamaica Ginger," I do not know whether this is classed as intoxicating liquor or not. The trade of it, however, is very limited. At the time of my stay at Lesser Slave Lake, the population, both whites and Indians, were preparing for their fall fishery, which usually begins about the 12th of October. The number of fish taken each year must be very great, as the main diet for man and dogs during the greater part of the year is fish. The Roman Catholic Mission, at their fishery last fall, put up seventeen thousand fish, and at this time of the year when the fish are full of spawn it represents a great destruction.

About the western end and southern shore of Slave Lake and also about the Buffalo Lakes, which lie to the west of Slave Lake and are connected with it by narrows are large dry marshes, which once were portions of the lake. These produce the greatest abundance of hay of an excellent quality. This hay stands in many places six feet high and as thick as it can grow. The marsh is as smooth, almost, as a cultivated field, thousands and thousands of tons could be put up with the greatest facility. This hay is not of the ordinary "Slough grass" nature, but is finer and has a head not unlike timothy. There is comparatively little grain grown here, as at Peace River Landing oats are valued at \$1.50 per bushel, and the supply is limited. At Lesser Slave Lake I left two horses in the care of the detachment, arranging with the Hudson's Bay Company for feed and stabling at \$3 per month each. These horses had been injured, one being staked in the groin, the other having caught his off hind leg between some poles in a muskeg and in a struggle to extricate himself, jammed and injured his hock severely. They were both, however, on a fair way to recovery when I left there and as they were particularly good horses, will be of great benefit to the detachment upon their recovery.

This detachment is very unfortunately situated without horses. They have a boat which is comparatively of no use to them. It can only be utilized on the big lake, and then only during calm weather, being too small for a heavy sea, and they rarely have occasion to go on the big lake. The Buffalo Lakes are not navigable even for a small boat, there not being more than three or four inches of water, consequently the balance of the patrol they must do on foot, with a heavy sand to walk through and streams to ford. I would recommend this detachment being properly equipped; they should have two saddle horses and two pack horses. Constable Phillips is a suitable man for the post, I found him to be greatly respected by the residents of this district.

If the rush to the Klondike continues in the spring, I would strongly recommend the stationing of a constable at Sturgeon Lake, also a permanent patrol being placed on the trails. I also think it would be advisable, in the absence of local justices, if it be arranged that a magistrate visit these outposts at fixed intervals. Leaving the settlement on Slave Lake, the trail which I followed to Edmonton via Fort Assiniboine, follows the north or north east shore of the narrows for about three miles to the crossing, to which point runs a wagon road. The narrows are fordable by unloaded horses, but not by packed horses or by wagons, owing to the soft nature of the bottom. The width is probably little more than one hundred yards. From here to Sandy Bay, distant about thirty miles, the trail (now a pack trail) follows the dry marsh along the lake shore. At Sandy Bay it leaves the lake, taking a south-easterly direction towards old Fort Assiniboine. I, however, overshot by several miles the point on Sandy Bay where the trail takes off; I then struck across in a southerly direction till I intercepted the trail from Sandy Bay at the crossing of the Swan River. This trail, where it runs