

Regarding the surface of the country and the difficulties of prospecting I may say that passing down the river in a boat one sees a succession of trees, ten, twelve, fourteen and sixteen inches in diameter, and he naturally comes to the conclusion that it is a well timbered country. And so it is, along the margin of the river. But let him land, and go inland and he will find the ground covered with what is locally known as nigger grass. This is a coarse grass, which each year is killed and falls, tangling in such a way as to make pedestrian progress all but impossible, tripping one up every few feet. It is, as might be imagined, a most difficult thing to walk through this grass, great areas of which are found all through the district. And where these areas are found the miners avoid them as they would the plague.

For the rest of the country the rocks are covered with one to two feet of moss—and underneath, the everlasting ice. On this a scrubby growth of trees is found, extending up to the mountains. It is this which appears to those passing down the river in boats to be a continuation of the good timber seen along the banks. Timber that is fit for anything is scarce, and we should husband it carefully. Our timber has built Circle City. Our timber has served all the purposes of the upper Yukon country. A large amount of timber is required, and what we have we should keep for our own use, particularly as the ground has to be burned to be worked.

Above the timber line you come to the bare rocks—the crests bare save where clothed with a growth of lichen on which the cariboo feed. There is no timber in the way here—no moss and no brush. The miners, in travelling, consequently keep as close to the top of the ridge as possible.

#### HOW THE MINERS PROSPECT.

Prospecting necessarily has to be reserved for the Winter. First the moss has to be cleared away, and then the muck—or decayed rubbish and vegetable matter. The fire is applied to burn down to bedrock. The frost in the ground gives way before the fire, ten, twelve, or perhaps sixteen inches a day. The next day the fire has to be applied again, and so the work proceeds until the bedrock