

products; I counted upwards of forty of these houses. The Indians from here hunt south to the Buck Lakes which lie between the Little Smoky and the Athabasca, north to the junction of the Big and Little Smoky and west to the Grand Prairie. They all seem prosperous. There are no white hunters in this section, and I was informed there was absolutely no poison used in the district, neither could I learn of any traffic in liquor.

From fifty miles south of this lake, on the Little Smoky River, I travelled on the trail which is used by the present parties en route to the Yukon. This trail is good. From Sturgeon Lake there are two trails, one via Grand Prairie, which is about twenty miles longer, the other direct to Dunvegan. I expect both these trails will be used; I travelled by Grand Prairie. Sturgeon Lake is crossed at the narrows by both of these trails. The narrows are about one hundred and fifty or two hundred yards wide and not fordable. There is a trail around the north-east end of the lake, but it increases the distance by about fifteen miles, and is not advisable owing to soft ground.

From the narrows of Sturgeon Lake to Big Smoky River is two and a half days travel over a very good trail; this river is about two hundred yards wide and is never fordable. The approach on the east side is steep but not difficult; proceeding from the river the banks are not so high. About five miles of brush and timber is passed through when the Grand Prairie is reached. This is a fine stretch of prairie twenty by thirty miles, interspersed with lakes, creeks and clumps of trees, and from the top of the butte, from where the first sight is had, presents a charming scene. It is noted for the number of silver and black foxes which the Indians kill upon it. We found large numbers of prairie chickens there, but which were much wilder than I have ever known them to be in the Territories. The Hudson's Bay Company have a winter post at Bear Lake, which lies on the south-west corner of the prairie. This post was closed at the time of my visit. I, however, met the agent on the way to open it for the fall trade.

Gerome Laboucan, a half-breed from the Battle River, east of the Calgary and Edmonton trail, located last winter at Saskatoon Lake, as also some other half-breeds. The feed on the prairie is magnificent and well adapted to cattle-raising, and I am sure when a road is opened up the land will be speedily taken up for that purpose. The climate is said to be very mild and with frequent chinooks. To the north, between Grand Prairie and Spirit River, is a timbered plateau one thousand two hundred feet high, through which the Dunvegan trail runs. This trail is good.

At Spirit River is located the horse and cattle ranche lately run by the Hudson's Bay Company, but now owned by Bremner & Gunn, upon which they have about a hundred and fifty head of Polled Angus cattle and a number of horses. I saw a number of the horses raised there; they are an excellent stamp of horse for that country, where they are required for both pack and draught purposes, being low set, sturdy and active, with good bone and short backs. There is a settlement springing up along this river, there being some four or five houses owned by hunting half-breeds.

I regret to state that the day I reached the Big Smoky River, Constable Smith, while chopping wood, cut his foot very seriously. I dressed the wound as well as I was able and fixing him as comfortably as possible in a saddle, with the injured foot elevated over the horse's neck, conveyed him to Spirit River, a journey of four days. From thence to Slave Lake I had him conveyed in a waggon, from Slave Lake to Athabasca Landing by boat, and thence by trail to Edmonton. His foot is now healing rapidly. Another mishap occurred on the Big Smoky, horse reg. No. 1875, which I was riding, whilst feeding amongst some fallen timber, injured one of his forelegs so severely that I was compelled to leave him on Grand Prairie, where he will no doubt do well. I left word with the Hudson's Bay trader there where I had left him and instructed him to recover the horse and when fit to travel to send him to the N.W.M.P. Detachment at Lesser Slave Lake.

I reached Dunvegan on the 13th September, and remained there until the 16th. This was once a very important post, but is now an outpost from Slave Lake. The valley of the Peace River here is very deep and the climate said to be very mild, and it must be, judging from the magnificent crops of vegetables I saw there, tomatoes and corn are said to ripen regularly in the open. Here and at Grand Prairie the trade is chiefly done with Beaver Indians, who are the tribe from whom the Sarcee Indians are