

## SESSIONAL PAPER No. 13

RIA, A. 1900

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mouth of the Pelly is 1,525 feet. We saw no large timber but in places the growth of small spruce was very dense. We crossed the headwaters of Scroggie, Rosebud and Lake creeks. Ten miles north of Fort Selkirk is an extinct volcano. The stream of scoriaceous lava, which flowed to the north-west is visible for many miles. The Indians say that about fifteen years ago, smoke issued from the mountain. There are evidences of a comparatively recent and mild eruption, and as it subsided the lava solidified in the form of a cone. There is evidence of three distinct eruptions, all of which flowed to the north. The crater lies between two peaks, several hundred feet in height, which are connected on the south side by a low saddle. The Indians informed me that to the south-west between Fort Selkirk and White river is a similar mountain.

We struck the Stewart about three miles east of the mouth of McQuesten river. The distance from Fort Selkirk is 53 miles. The Stewart is a magnificent stream, more than one hundred and fifty yards in width, and is deep, with a four mile current. McQuesten river is about 100 feet wide and is swift for a distance of fifty miles from the mouth, when the valley widens and it becomes more sluggish. Prospectors have ascended one hundred and fifty miles in small boats. It has several large tributaries. A large number of people were camped at the mouth, also a band of Stick Indians. The Galvin Co. were erecting a large warehouse, and several other buildings were under way, and a town site had been roughly laid out. A mining recorder and police escort had just arrived from Dawson.

The course of the Stewart valley is nearly north-west. About ten miles down stream from McQuesten, the river makes an abrupt turn, and cutting through a mountain range flows to the south-west. The valley, however, several miles in width, continues to the north-west, and must extend to the Klondike river.

On August 6, we started up river extending the triangulation and had no difficulty in keeping our camp up with the work. About 35 miles above McQuesten, we come to Crooked creek, which enters from the south. It is not navigable for small boats, but considerable prospecting has been done along it. About a half mile above this, the river leads to the north-east out of this broad valley, which continues to the south-east, and must fall into MacMillan some distance above its mouth.

Fires were raging along the river flats and hill side, and the smoke became denser day by day. About August 12 I had to abandon the triangulation, as I could not wait for the smoke to disappear, but I continued along the valley making a track survey, every now and again touching the river at one of its many bends.

I beg leave to call the attention of the department to the wanton destruction of timber throughout the country. Prospectors seem to have a mania for setting fires, and if strict measures are not taken to prevent this vandalism the timber on the mountain sides and river flats will be destroyed in a very few years. To those who have faith in the Yukon Territory as a permanent mining country, the rapid disappearance of the green forest is harrowing, and it will, unquestionably, in a short time, affect the navigability of the rivers.

About the 18th the atmosphere cleared, and the triangulation was resumed with the expectation of being able to fill in the gap on the way back.

About seventy-five miles from McQuesten, Mayo brook comes in from the north. It is too swift and shallow for boating, but has been much prospected and some encouraging reports sent out. On the 21st we reached what is shown on the old maps as Frazer falls. It is a twisted rapid which, near the foot, rushes through a gorge. At extreme high water, there may be a fall of 8 or 10 feet from a table rock on the east side. From the head to the foot, one third of a mile, the descent is 40 feet. There is a portage road. For a distance of four and a half miles above, the river is broken at intervals by short rapids. About five miles above the falls, Nogold creek comes in from the south-west. It is about seventy-five feet in width, crooked and rather sluggish, and flows through a broad valley which is dotted with small lakes. It is partly fed by a large body of water about fifteen miles in length, which I have named Ethel lake, and which lies about twenty five miles to the south-west.

Above this the river resumes its general character. The valley is broad and on the south side are many small lakes and swamps.