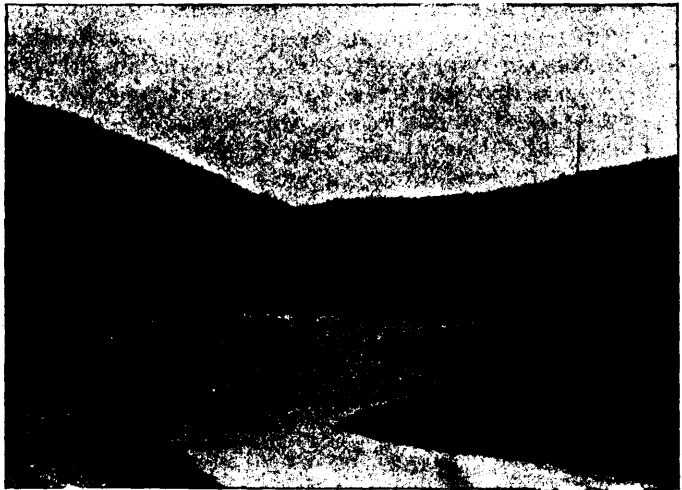


asserted positively that he had ever been through to the Peace, from which he came seventeen or eighteen years before, and had once since visited Fort St. John.

An appointment was made with him for that evening, in the interpreter's house, when I would take notes of the descriptions of it, in particular, and the country in general; also, under his directions, make a map of the principal topographical features in the intervening country. This I did, and also got much information from several others, all of which has been dotted in on my map. What I saw myself was shown by solid lines.

The Professor, learning something of what I had done from the interpreter, determined that he, too, would put up a stock of information for the journey ahead of us: and so he made inquiries concerning a source. It was not long until he found an old Indian who, under the influence of tea and tobacco, became very confidential, and, by mysterious hints and much pantomime, conveyed the impression that he was the only true oracle on the whole question. An appointment was made for a meeting that evening in the interpreter's house, when the Professor would meet him with paper, pencil, and pen and ink, which he borrowed from Mr. Christie, the Company's clerk, with strict injunctions that I was to know nothing about it. At the appointed time the Professor appeared, and after marking the cardinal points of the compass on a sheet

of paper, and laying it down with reference thereto, he marked the position of Fort Nelson on it, and directed the Indian to trace out the course of the river we were to ascend, and the track overland we were to follow. Now, an Indian knows nothing about the cardinal points of the compass, and does not refer to them, but to some arbitrary, imaginary point, to which he refers the direction of any and every point around him: and from this fact we seldom find two Indians, when taken alone and independently, point in the same direction, from the same place, to designate the position of any sought locality, though they would all, without doubt, arrive at it, if sent to it. The Indian did not think the sheet of paper lay in a natural position, and turned it considerably from the Professor's position. This, the Professor would not tolerate, but angrily put it back, telling the Indian that was the way it should lie, and to fire ahead with his map. But the In-



LOWER END OF CANON ON SICANNIE CHIEF RIVER.

dian could do nothing with the paper in (to him) such an unnatural position, and twisted it around again. After some squabbling the Indian gained his point, and began sketching the river,