

is dotted with low hills, between which are small marshes and ponds caused by old beaver dams. The Smoky was crossed at a strong Crossing of Smoky river. rapid about ten miles, by the river, below the Little Smoky. There is no difficulty in crossing, though the river is deep and swift, as gravel bars on both sides make a safe and easy landing for horses. We were fortunate enough to find an old canoe, but had we not done so there is an abundance of dry wood from which a raft could have been made.

From the crossing of the Smoky river to Stinking lake there is a fine winter trail, cut out for flat sleighs, but except for lightly loaded pack animals it is hardly passable in the summer, as it crosses a very wet country. For seven or eight miles from the river the country is wooded, but broken by innumerable small ponds and marshes. Then for about twenty miles there is a series of immense marshes with firm bottoms. Spots of dry ground a few feet above the water are dotted over these marshes, and on these there is standing poplar, most of it killed by fire or water. Several streams run through these marshes; one near the eastern edge of the marshy country and flowing to the southwest, which the trail follows for several miles, is bordered by dry ground, chiefly prairie, for a few hundred yards on each side of the stream. From the character of the marshes and old beaver dams, which the trail sometimes followed, I concluded that the marshes were caused by beaver dams, and on making inquiries at Lesser Slave lake from old hunters learned that such was really the case. There are now no beavers in the region, and if the channels of the streams were opened out and a few lateral drains dug most of these marshes would be transformed into hay land. At least 100,000 acres could be reclaimed at very little cost.

On the evening of September 2nd, dish-cloths and other damp things were frozen before dark, but a mist rising from the marsh the thermometer only fell to 28° ; the next evening to 27° and on the evening of the 4th, when a few miles west of Lesser Slave lake, to 24° . For Stinking lake, some distance before reaching Stinking lake, the trail passed brook, second-growth poplar and black spruce swamp with a few marshes—the soil generally rather poor. Stinking lake is a fine body of water with an inappropriate name. From the east end of the lake to Lesser Slave lake, there is a good wagon road. On the night of the fourth, we camped near a potato-patch two miles west of Horse lake. The plants had been frozen twice before, the last time almost to the ground, and that evening a very severe frost finished them.

Very little time was spent at Lesser Slave lake, either when going into or coming out of the country, but much valuable data relating to