



INTERESTING LETTER REGARDING THE FAR NORTH

ATHABASCA LANDING TO HUDSON'S BAY POST AT SLAVE LAKE

Specially written for The Western Home Monthly

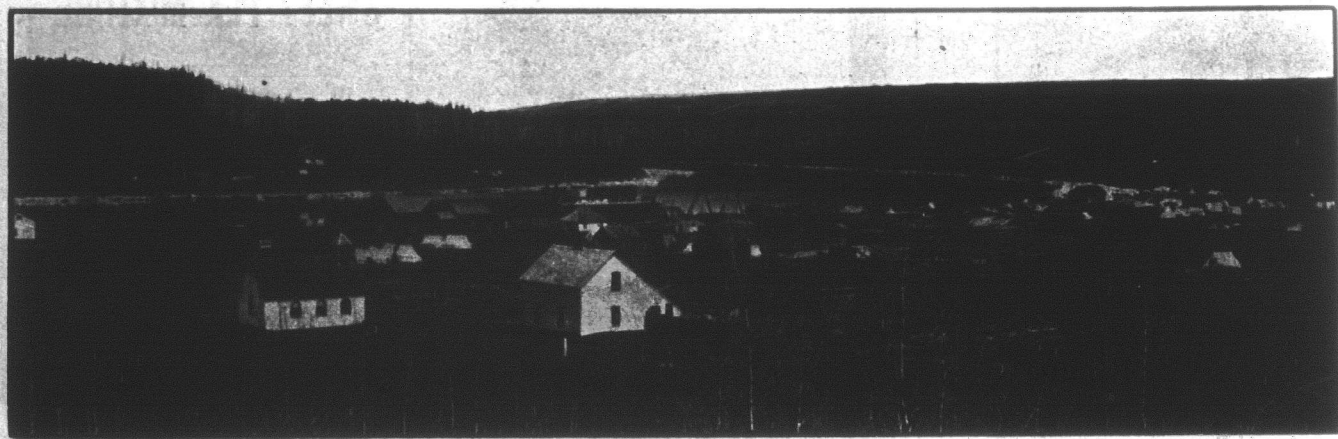
Athabasca Landing is the great point of distribution for the whole of the vast territory lying to the north. From there, the roads of the slow-moving commerce of the north branch out in two directions. Freight for Slave Lake and Peace River goes up the Athabasca, and freight for Lake Athabasca and Mackenzie River goes down the stream. These are the two branches of the long trail leading out into the wilderness. No matter to

what point in the Northwest interior part of Canada you are bound, you must go over the trail from Edmonton to Athabasca Landing, and from there you must go either up or down the Athabasca River. It is the only accessible route for loads of freight, either in winter or summer, and affords the only passable route for anything but packhorses.

There is an overland trail from Edmonton to Slave Lake that affords a

while the river itself is thus navigable it is of little value in that respect to any boat that is unable, on account of its draft, to ascend the Little Slave River, which forms the connecting link in the route to the north. On the other hand, boats going down the stream are impeded from getting into Athabasca Lake by a long series of rapids and chutes that are impassable to a steamer and traversible by canoe and flat boat only at great peril to their cargoes and the lives of the men in charge of them.

A large steamer called the "Midnight Sun" was built at Athabasca Landing with the intention of being used on the route between that point and the upper end of Lesser Slave Lake. But its builders had reckoned without the Little Slave River, for when the "Mid-



GENERAL VIEW OF ATHABASCA LANDING, 1898.

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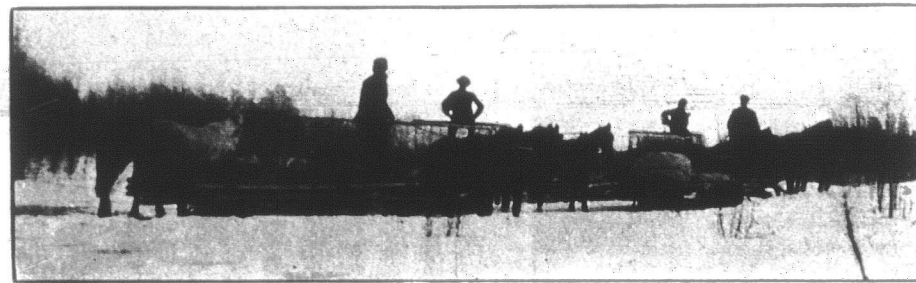
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means of getting into the country with a train of packhorses, but it entails an endless amount of labor, in the crossing of rivers, and a great amount of annoyance, in traversing the numberless muskegs that lie in its tortuous route. This trail is known as the Swan Hills route and was largely used by the unfortunate Klondykers who tried to gain the Yukon by an all-land route.



AT SLAVE LAKE.

Freighters returning to Athabasca Landing.

However, the river route is much the easier to travel at any season and has provided for years the most common method of reaching the territory on which so many eyes are now centered—the Peace River country.

This route takes one about eighty miles up the Athabasca to the mouth of what is known as the Little Slave River. The scenery on the Athabasca

is not particularly awe-inspiring, being for the most part an endless panorama of low hills sloping very gradually back from the river to a height of two hundred and fifty or three hundred feet, clothed generally with small timber—poplar, spruce and the like.

The Athabasca is a river of good size, being, even at a point so comparatively close to its source as the mouth of the Slave, about a thousand feet in width, and of a very good depth. It is navigable for the greater part of its entire length by boats of considerable draft, but

night Sun" tried to force her way up that little stream against a long series of rapids and shallows, they found that the boat had too great a draft, and the idea had to be abandoned until such time as the stream is cleared of rocks and boulders, and a channel dredged through the shallows; so a large warehouse was built at the mouth of the Slave River, and all freight has

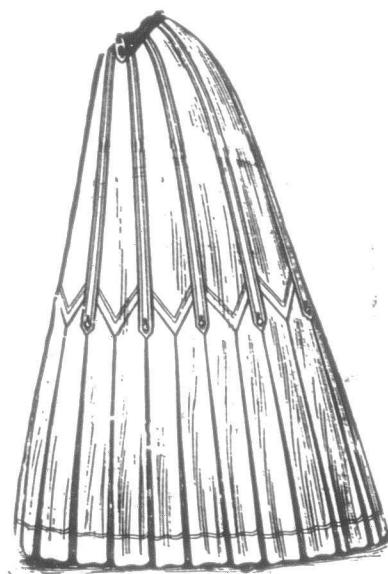


A HOME IN THE FAR NORTH.

Group of Indians and houses taken at mouth of Athabasca River, Slave Lake. The white man in the group has a pair of lynx paws for a hat.

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