

Burnt river.

prairie is left, and the soil is better than to either the south or west of the Spirit river prairie. Burnt river, at the crossing, is full of large boulders, which could be used for bridge piers or other construction purposes. After leaving Burnt river the trail follows narrow prairie openings, broken by thin strips of poplar, and my guide told me that the country was of this character south of the trail. These openings gradually became larger until we emerged on what I took to be Grizzly Bear prairie. Two openings (Grizzly Bear prairie and Fox prairie) had been described to me, but these names probably refer to the same piece of country. This is as good a tract of country as any we have passed through during the summer, if not the best. The prairie stretches from the trail to the Birch hills, and I estimated that there was about 10,000 acres devoid of trees or bushes. How much more there may be I had no way of estimating, but the whole country is there more or less open. Hay could be cut anywhere on the prairie and in small marshes and low spots. It is an ideal cattle country. The Birch hills have not been burnt on the north side, and there is much fine spruce among the poplar, especially towards the eastern and western ends. The prairie described is all west of the 6th Initial Meridian. Between the meridian and Egg lake the trail ran in some places through unburnt poplar woods, in others through open spots or willow coppice. The ground was everywhere quite dry at that time, but in spring the trail would be wet in some sections, though there is no boggy or soft ground.

Egg lake.

The country from Burnt river to Egg lake is quite level, no part of it rolling, and no bridges would be necessary for either wagon road or railway. Even in the thickest woods grass grows luxuriantly and covers the whole ground. "Blue joint" is the principal species in woods and thickets, and the soil is everywhere good. There were heavy thunderstorms on the 28th, and rain fell all day the 29th, clearing about five o'clock. At nine o'clock the thermometer registered 30°, and by eleven the wet tent was frozen stiff and there was ice on all water in pails and pans. The night was clear and bright, and this frost was doubtless general over a large area. During the night the thermometer fell to 26°. At seven A.M., with the sun shining brightly, the temperature in the shade was still below freezing.

The trail going towards Smoky river passes to the north of Egg lake. At this season the lake was almost wholly filled with grasses, sedges and rushes, only a few spots of open water being visible. It is completely surrounded by virgin poplar forest, with a few spruce trees interspersed. Between Egg lake and Smoky river the country