

small stream flowing into the Kaministiquia, at a distance of about 12 miles, in a direct line from its mouth, and totally unfitted for any purpose of navigation.

The general aspect of the northern shore of Lake Superior is precipitous and rugged. Around Thunder Bay, however, and extending for some distance up the valley of the Kaministiquia there is a considerable extent of rich alluvial land, heavily timbered. The rise to the crest of the rocky district that forms the height of land is almost abrupt, to an altitude of 800 feet above Lake Superior, or 1,400 feet above the sea level.

The country which succeeds to the west and north is wild and rocky, but with no hill more than 300 feet above the general level, so that it cannot be called a mountainous region. It is intersected by long narrow lakes and innumerable watercourses, broken by ridges of rock, across which the traveller has to make tedious portages. The extent of the continuous water communication improves considerably as we descend to the west, and there are some large lakes which would be available for steam navigation in the event of the country ever becoming settled.

As a line of communication with the Red River and the Saskatchewan prairies, the canoe route from Lake Superior to Lake Winnipeg, even if modified and greatly improved by a large outlay of capital, would, I consider, be always too arduous and expensive a route of transport for emigrants, and never could be used for the introduction of stock, both from the broken nature of the country passed through, and also from the very small extent of available pasture. I therefore cannot recommend the Imperial Government to countenance or lend support to any scheme for constructing or, it may be said, forcing a thoroughfare by this line of route either by land or water, as there would be no immediate advantage commensurate with the required sacrifice of capital; nor can I advise such heavy expenditure as would necessarily attend the construction of any exclusively British line of road between Canada and Red River Settlement.

As regards the fitness for settlement of the district traversed by the canoe route, I beg to state that there are only very few and isolated spots where agriculture could be carried on, and that only by the discovery of mineral wealth would this region be likely to attract settlers. At present the considerable number of Indians living in it subsist by hunting, fishing, trapping, and trading furs to the Hudson Bay Company; but the fitness of the country for these pursuits is by no means a proof of its being so for those of civilized man.

The winter experienced in this district is severe but steady. From the commencement of November till May the whole country is icebound, so that vegetation is perfectly dormant. The spring is very lingering, owing to the great extent of surface occupied by the large lakes to the south-east, and by Hudson Bay to the north-east, as the slow melting of the ice which accumulates during the winter on these sheets of water keeps the temperature depressed until far on in the summer season. Thus, when crossing Lake Superior in the second week of June 1857, the Expedition encountered much cold weather, and got entangled in icefloes that were still drifting on the lake.

The summer temperature is high, but does not reach the same extreme as in Canada; its duration is, however, prolonged by the alternations caused by the influence of large land-locked sheets of water, which do not tend to produce an equalized climate like that on a sea-coast, but merely prolong the effects of the two half-yearly extremes of heat and cold.

The whole territory explored may be naturally divided into three districts, marked by different physical features. Concerning the first of them, the canoe route, it is not necessary for me to enter into further particulars, as it has been made the subject of a minute and able report (already laid before Parliament) by a Canadian Expedition, which had much greater facilities for making an examination of this region than my Expedition possessed. I shall, therefore, pass to the consideration of the central prairie region, and as this is for the purpose of agricultural settlement by far the most valuable portion of the territory traversed by the Expedition, and is also somewhat diversified in its character, I shall be warranted in entering more into detail upon this portion of my subject.

Immediately to the west of the rocky district already referred to succeeds a chain of lakes, the principal of which is Lake Winnipeg, which has the same altitude above the sea level as Lake Superior, viz., 600 feet. From these lakes to the Rocky Mountains the central region may be considered as a plain gradually rising until it gains an altitude of 3,000 feet at the base of the mountain chain. The surface of this slope is marked by steppes, by which successive and decided increases of elevation are effected, accompanied by important changes in the composition of the soil, and consequently in the character of the vegetation.

These steppes are three in number. The first may be said to spring from the southern shore of the lake of the woods, and, trending to the S.W., crosses Red River considerably south of the boundary line; thence it runs irregularly in a north-westerly direction towards