

The NATURAL FOOD PRODUCTS OF THE NORTH-WEST.

Debate in the Senate of Canada on the Report of the Committee presented
by Senator Schultz.

Reported by Holland Bros.

NATURAL FOOD PRODUCTS OF THE NORTH-WEST.

MOTION.

HON. MR. SCHULTZ moved the adoption of the second report of the Select Committee appointed for the purpose of collecting information regarding the existing natural food products of the North-West Territories, and the best means of conserving and increasing them.

He said:—Before the adoption of this report, I may explain that the Committee have caused their list of questions to be sent to many more gentlemen than those whose names appear upon the list appended to the report submitted yesterday, and that, on account of the great distance, or from other causes, answers have not yet been received: in such cases I would ask that all communications which were received up to the date of Prorogation should be considered as being now received, and appear in the printed evidence. I now move, seconded by the Hon. Mr. Girard, the adoption of the report, and as there only remains half an hour before six o'clock, I will be more brief in my remarks than if the time were longer, and confine myself to the subject of former official and Parliamentary reports upon the North-West, then known as Rupert's Land and the leased territory of the Hudson Bay Company, the latter being all the portions of the present North-West Territory, the waters of which do not flow into Hudson Bay, and the former comprising Assiniboia, Alberta, Saskatchewan and a very considerable part of northern Minnesota. The first of such reports, which has more than a passing interest, was made by a committee appointed by the British House of Commons in A.D. 1749 and contains some very curious and valuable information from which I would like to read

lengthy extracts had the time allowed. Evidence was given before this Committee that near the shores of Hudson's and James' Bay, Barley, Oats and Rye were grown and the witness had seen ornaments of silver and copper on the Indians and one witness who had got further into the interior had regaled himself on rice which he said was blacker but as good as that in England. Another had planted, and succeeded with many English seeds and would have continued but for fear of his officers "who liked it not." The next was a most important one, as it was to determine whether the North-West was to be opened thirty years ago for settlement by Canadians and others, or whether it was to be closed again till this Dominion, when only two years old, became the arbiter of its destinies. It will be seen from the Journals of the British Houses of Commons that two committees were ordered, one which sat during the winter session of 1857 and the other during the summer session of that year, consisting of nineteen members, and comprising such well known names as those of: Lord Stanley, Sir John Pakingham, Lord John Russell, Mr. Gladstone, Viscount Sanden, Mr. Lowe, Mr. Roebuck, Mr. Labouchere and Mr. Edward Ellice. The instruction of the House to these Committees was "to consider the state of those British possessions in North America which are under the administration of the Hudson's Bay Company, or over which they possess a license to trade."

These Committees held a number of sittings and examined many witnesses, who were, or had been, overland Arctic travellers, Hudson Bay Company's officers, officers of the army and navy who had served in the country, missionaries, Red River settlers, and Canadians. And two draft reports, widely divergent in character, were submitted to the Committee by Mr. Labouchiere and Mr. Christie. Those are very interesting,