

head waters of Fraser River, and down it to the gold fields of British Columbia. This project is unquestionably one of great national interest, not only as respects Canada, but the whole British empire;—for should its feasibility be thoroughly established, and it be found practicable to form a communication by Railway and Steamer between the head waters of Lake Superior and the shores of the Pacific, it would make Canada the highway to India and China, give to Britain the shortest route, and that within her own territories, to her possessions on the Pacific and her vast dominions in India, and open a highway for her commerce with the far East, with which no hostile power could interfere.

Meanwhile the government of Canada have, as you are all aware, taken steps to obtain reliable information as to the nature and capabilities of the country between Lake Superior and Red River, and there has lately been printed, by order of the Legislative Assembly, a very full and interesting Report of the exploration of that country, drawn up by the gentlemen who composed the expedition sent out for that purpose. The primary object of the expedition, as set forth in the instructions given to the party, was to make a thorough examination of the tract of country between Lake Superior and Red River, by which might be determined the best route for opening a facile communication through British territory from that Lake to the Red River settlement, and ultimately to the great tracts of cultivable land beyond them. The gentlemen to whom the task of exploration was committed appear to have done their work thoroughly, and to one among them, more especially, are we indebted for a large amount of most valuable and interesting information in respect to the soil, climate, geological formation, and natural history, both of the tract of country intervening between Lake Superior and Fort Garry, and the valleys of the Red River and the Assiniboine. I need scarcely say that the gentleman to whom I allude is Professor Hind of Trinity College, the geologist and naturalist to the expedition, whose connexion with the Institute, of which he has so long been a most valuable and efficient member, must increase the interest which all of us feel in his labors and researches.

Nothing, I think, shows more strongly the value of careful systematic observation, when conducted by properly qualified persons, than the statements contained in Professor Hind's Report with respect to the soil and climate of the valleys of the Red River and