

S. J. DAWSON, M.P., in 1874 testified as follows :

" Alluvial land of the best description extends along the banks of Rainy River in an unbroken stretch of 75 or 80 miles from Rainy Lake to Lake of the Woods. In this tract where it borders on the river there is not an acre unsusceptible of cultivation. At intervals there are old park-like Indian clearings, partly overspread with oak and elm, which although they have sprung up naturally, have the appearance of ornamental plantations. The whole district is covered with forests, and Canadian settlers would find themselves in a country similar in many respects to the land of their nativity. Nor does the climate differ essentially from that of the most favoured parts of Ontario or Quebec. Wheat was successfully grown for many years at Fort Frances, both by the old North-West Company and their successors, the Hudson Bay Company. The Indians still cultivate maize on little farms on Rainy Lake and Lake of the Woods. In many places the wild grape grows in extraordinary profusion, yielding fruit which comes to perfection in the fall. Wild rice, which requires a high summer temperature, is abundant, and indeed the flora, taken generally, indicates a climate in every way well adapted to the growth of cereals.

" The Lake of the Woods receives the drainage of an area which may be approximately estimated at 33,600 square miles. In this vast district there are, of course, considerable varieties of climate, soil, and natural productions ; but I desire expressly to draw attention to the fact that it reaches nearly to the northern and north-western limits of the growth of pine wood of the class known in Ontario and Quebec as red and white pine—that is, in the region eastward of the great prairies. Within this district, on the streams tributary to Rainy Lake, there are in many places extensive groves of both red and white pine, of a size and quality well adapted to all the purposes for which such timber is usually applied. On the alluvial belt of Rainy River white pine of a large size is to be seen, interspersed with other descriptions of forest trees, and on the islands of the Lake of the Woods and main land to the north and east there are occasionally pine groves of moderate extent ; but on proceeding to the north, by way of the Winnipeg, it gradually becomes more rare until, on reaching Lake Winnipeg, it finally disappears."