

EVIDENCE OF THE VENERABLE ARCHDEACON J. MCKAY, OF THE
CHURCH OF ENGLAND DIOCESE OF SASKATCHEWAN, HEARD BE-
FORE THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON FEBRUARY 27, 1907.

Archdeacon McKay explained that he had been forty-five years in the west, in charge of missions of the Church of England and was ten years at a place on the Churchill river, a little north of Lac La Ronge. The nearest point to Lac La Ronge on the map is where the Anglican mission is situated, about ten miles north of Lac La Ronge, on the Churchill river. This is almost due north from Prince Albert, and in a straight line it would be considerably over two hundred miles from Prince Albert. Then the witness had been in the Saskatchewan district generally, travelling between Prince Albert and Battleford and down the river as far as Grand Rapids, travelling backwards and forwards most of the time. He had been for some time superintendent of the Anglican missions. For the last two years he had been at Lac La Ronge.

White settlement at present is not yet practically settled. The district north of Lac La Ronge is rocky. The Laurentian formation extends along that part of the country. The south side of Lac La Ronge is of limestone formation, and from there on to Prince Albert it is not a rocky country. The rocky country begins there. Lac La Ronge is not the head waters of the Churchill river. The land between Lac La Ronge and Prince Albert in some places is very good. It is all forest practically until you get about thirty miles from Prince Albert, or perhaps twenty or thirty. You then begin to get into the open country where it is not heavily timbered.

The wild fruits are cranberries, raspberries, blackberries, blueberries, gooseberries, saskatoon and wild currants.

To the west of Lac La Ronge the country is very much the same. It is not rocky, some muskeg and some pretty good land, but all timbered—in some places heavy timber. There is spruce and poplar. The spruce is good enough for lumber, and of course it would do for pulp wood.

Archdeacon McKay explained that he had been as far north in this country as Lake Cariboo. In fact he had been away to the north end of Reindeer lake. It is a pretty poor country up there, and the trees are not very large.

In reply to a question, the witness stated that he was born on the eastern shore of James bay near Rupert's house. His father was a Hudson's bay officer. Witness had his education in Manitoba in the early days. He had been more in the old country than in eastern Canada. He lived at Moose Factory until he was eighteen.

From the Churchill he had been down to Hudson bay, and he had been as far west as Ile a la Crosse lake and on to Lac Loche, which is not many miles south of the Clearwater river and in an east-southeasterly direction from Fort McMurray. His sphere of work, since he commenced, has been in Saskatchewan.

Asked if he thought that there is any territory around Hudson bay and up to Lac La Ronge which would in future support settlement, Archdeacon McKay said he would hardly think so. That is a very rocky country. He had never heard of any minerals in that country.

AGRICULTURE.

So far as agriculture at Lac La Ronge is concerned, witness had raised good wheat on that point on the Churchill river for seven years in succession without having it frosted. The climate is good. It is a rocky country, and there is not a great deal of good land; but so far as the climate is concerned it is all right for raising anything that can be raised in the Saskatchewan generally. Potatoes grow splendidly.