

commercial communication between Canada and Central British America, in the absence of correct knowledge of the physical features of the country. The utmost length of the barrier which requires the construction of a road, scarcely exceeds 200 miles. From its western extremity there is an unobstructed navigation, with but one break, to the edge of the fertile prairies of Central British America *via* Rainy River and the Lake of the Woods; and its eastern extremity is connected uninterruptedly with the sea by the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence. The highest point over which the road from Lake Superior to the northern indent of Rainy Lake must pass, is not 900 feet above Lake Superior; and for the first 30 miles it would traverse a country susceptible of tillage for several miles on either side. Then follows a sudden rise, marked by the great Drift bank of Dog Lake, which forms the Eastern limit of a Drift-covered country stretching in a north-east and south-west direction, and having a breadth of about ninety miles where the road would cross it. This accumulation of Drift covers the height of land to a depth certainly exceeding 150 feet, as shown by the hills at the summit level at Prairie Portage, 885 feet above Lake Superior, and the highest point on the line of road. There are no serious physical impediments to overcome between Lake Superior and the northern indent of Rainy Lake, either for a waggon road or a railway; and this short link of 200 miles completed, the distance between Fort William on Lake Superior and the commencement of the arable prairies of the valley of Red River would be reduced to 200 miles of road or railroad, and 180 miles of steam navigation. Here, then, we see no formidable impediments, which an impression derived from the custom of traversing the country in canoes through the rocky channels of rapid rivers or hill-embosomed lakes, had created in the minds of the few who have traversed that region;—impressions which, too eagerly accepted by the public, notwithstanding the imperfect knowledge of the physical conformation of the country, which a rapid journey without special geographical objects in view is fitted to obtain, have retarded the settlement of the fertile prairies of Red River.

The communication between Central British America, British Columbia, and the Pacific Ocean, is the next point to be considered. The recent successful journey across the Rocky Mountains of the Canadian emigrant party of 1862, by an old and long unused trail,