

From that time forward, for the remainder of the season, and during the winter of 1858-59, our explorations were confined chiefly, I may say exclusively, to the country between Rainy Lake and Lake Superior. Two well appointed parties were kept constantly at work, and sometimes three. Instrumental surveys were carried from Lake Superior, westward, through Dog Lake, Dog River, Lac des Mille Lacs and the Seine, to within a short distance of Rainy Lake. The levels were taken from Jourdain's Rapid to Dog Lake, and from that Lake across, by the line laid out as a road, to Lake Superior.

In the spring of 1859, having learned that a party fitted out by the people of Red River, who at that time took a great deal of interest in promoting the development of the country, had been baffled in an attempt to take horses through to the Lake of the Woods, had in fact got bewildered in swamps, from which they had experienced much difficulty in extricating themselves, and as the impression as to that section of the country being impracticable for roads was thus gaining confirmation, I hastened to the Lake of the Woods, with the most active of my assistants, and proceeding to its western extremity had the good fortune to secure the services of an Indian Chief, who undertook to show the ground on which the country could be crossed.

Leaving my assistants to find their way across with the Chief, I proceeded by way of the Winnipeg to the Red River Settlement, where I had not long to wait for their arrival. They reported that the Chief had led them to a gravelly ridge which extended, with but few breaks, for a long distance across the most swampy parts of the country, and that the remains of Indian encampments shewed that it had been much used as a pathway, in times long past.

A number of men were immediately engaged in the Settlement and sent to open the line which had been traced, in such a way as to render it passable for horses; and over this line *our party rode clear through to the Lake of the Woods, on horseback.*

The line thus opened was used afterwards as a Post road for the conveyance of Mails *on horseback*, and it requires but slight knowledge of engineering to understand that ground, over which horses can be ridden, is not so swampy as to be impracticable for roads.

Returning again to Rainy Lake, we made a more thorough examination of the Lakes, by the old canoe route, than we had previously had an opportunity of doing, and the result led me to the conclusion that, considering the long reaches of navigable water on that route, it could be rendered available, in the first instance, to greater advantage and at less outlay than the line by the Seine, which had been examined and reported on the previous year.

Arriving at Lake Superior, I was joined by my assistant, Mr. Wells, who had spent the whole summer in examining the country about the Height of Land and Lac des Mille Lacs. The fall being now far advanced, the parties were gradually withdrawn, such of them as we had left at the Lake of the Woods returning only in the beginning of November.

To sum up, the explorations and surveys were thus continued, uninterruptedly, for three summers and two full winters. There were generally three well-appointed parties simultaneously at work, in different sections, and, whether at Lake Superior or the Lake of the Woods—the one a swampy and the other a hilly region—they always availed themselves of the aid of the natives, whose occupation of hunting, pursued from youth to age, within particular areas, rendered their local knowledge of the greatest value.

A considerable period of time has now elapsed since the operations of the Red River Expedition were brought to a close, and since that time there has been no further exploration whatever in the country between Lake Superior and the Red River Settlement, so that such of our preliminary Reports as have been published are the only sources of information generally available.

Having thus briefly alluded to the surveys and explorations made by me, or under my direction, I proceed to describe the different sections of the country in detail, pointing out, as concisely as possible, the works and improvements required, and the reasons for adopting particular lines of route or starting points.

For the sake of convenience, in description, the country between Lake Superior and the Red River Settlement may properly be regarded as forming four divisions.

The first, embracing the region to the east of the water-shed, or Height of Land, will be referred to as the "Lake Superior Section."

The next, extending from the Height of Land to Fort Frances, I propose to designate as the "Lake Region."