

be the policy to follow it in its main features. The general interests of the country, and the people who are to occupy it, demand that efforts should now be made to determine the leading avenues of traffic. Any scheme will be inadequate unless it takes into view the country, with its capabilities and possible requirements as a whole.

The first step is to obtain general information respecting the principal features of the country, the character of the soil, the climate and its minerals. I pointed out last year, that although the prairie region had been seen by many travellers, and that the country east of the Rocky Mountains had been traversed on many trails, and a great deal of information collected, still the territory is of such vast extent that comparatively little of it was known.

I felt it my duty, therefore, to recommend that every effort should be made by additional explorations to gain information and gather data to admit of correct conclusions being drawn.

In conformity with my recommendation, these explorations were authorized. They included the country north of the 51st parallel of latitude, to the Churchill River district reaching the 56th parallel, and to the 57th parallel in the Peace River district. They extended from the Rocky Mountains easterly to the meridian which passes through Lake Winnipegosis.

The examination was divided into five sections:

1. Dr. John Smith was appointed to examine the tract north of the telegraph line, as it runs west of Northcote, included between the River Saskatchewan and Lake Winnipegosis.

Mr. D. C. O'Keeffe explored the tract bounded on the south by the River Saskatchewan, between Cumberland House and Carleton, on the west by the Hudson's Bay route, extending from Carleton northerly, *via* Lake Pelican to Isle à la Croise; on the north by the Churchill River.

3. Mr. Eberts was detailed to the exploration of the district bounded on the south by the road from Carleton to Lac la Biche, on the west by the 112th meridian, and on the east and north by the Hudson's Bay route from Carleton *via* Lake Pelican and Methy Portage.