

"By Mr. Cockburn.—Q. Is the land back of Lake St. John as good?—Yes, of good quality."

"By Mr. White (Newfrew).—Q. How is it with reference to the climate of Lake St. John, what is the length of the winter, I mean as compared with the summer?—I could not give an exact report as to the state of the thermometer at Lake St. John; but all reports go to show that the climate is much milder at Lake St. John and Chicoutimi than it is in Quebec. It would seem to me that it is more like that of Montreal than that of Quebec. Of course, the Laurentian chain might be the cause of that; because as soon as you have passed the height of land you find at once a difference; there is not so much snow on the north side of the Laurentian as there is on the south side.

"Q. I understand that; but my impression was that although the snowfall was not so great, the cold was more intense?—No, Sir, it is not the case. There spring generally begins at least two weeks and sometimes three weeks before we have it in Quebec.

"Q. What is the distance from the nearest market to Lake St. John?—The nearest market for the Lake St. John settlers would be Chicoutimi.

"Q. But that is a very limited market?—It is a very limited market. At the present time they have a surplus of wheat in the Upper Saguenay district which they have to carry to Chicoutimi, a distance of sixty miles, for those who are nearest to Chicoutimi; and a distance of upwards of a hundred miles for those at the upper settlements; and they only get one dollar a bushel for their wheat, and that the best wheat that can be found in both Canadas.

"By Mr. Hagar.—Q. I suppose that is altogether spring wheat?—Some farmers at the upper end of Lake St. John have tried fall wheat and they have done well. Mr. Price's farmer told me he thought fall wheat would do very well in the Upper Saguenay.

"By Mr. White.—Q. Do you know what is the average of bushels of wheat to the acre?—I could not exactly say, but I believe their average per bushel of seed is about fifteen; it is hardly lower than fifteen; very often it exceeds that. The depth of the clay in the Lake St. John region is something remarkable. Those who have only gone as far as Ha! Ha! Bay know nothing about the Saguenay region, because of the rocky borders of the river and bay. Even if you go by the river to Chicoutimi you do not know what the country is. But if you take the land route from St. Alphonse to go to Chicoutimi, a distance of twelve miles, there you will find ravines and gullies I suppose 150 feet deep, and nothing but clay from top to bottom. Sir William Logan and Mr. Robinson, I believe, have explored the Saguenay region for the Geological Department, and they expressed their opinion that there is nowhere to be found such a depth of alluvial soil—of clay—and under this there is a stratum of limestone all over. In fact the bottom of Lake St. John is nothing but limestone, and on the western side there is nothing but limestone on the edges of the lake.

"By Mr. White.—Q. Terre grise?—Terre grise, and there is a fair admixture of sand which makes it friable, it is loamy. It is quite friable every season of the year. The farmers there do not suffer from protracted droughts or protracted rains.

"By Mr. Hagar.—Q. It does not pack then?—Not at all; I have seen them ploughing with one horse, and sometimes a horse and an ox, that is all; of course, they prefer using a pair of horses when they can afford it.

"By the Chairman.—Q. It cannot be very stiff then?—It is not stiff at all, it is like yellow loam."

Rev. Father Lacasse, in his work *Une Mine*, writes:

"I am happy to tell you, my worthy habitants, that the climate of Lake St. John is preferable to that of Quebec. The Indians call Lake St. John the flat lake. Its waters, that are deep in a great many places, get warmed by the action of the sun, and all the valley feels the beneficent influence of its warm effluvia. Frosts along the shores of the lake are less frequent than in the valley of the St. Lawrence. There is frost that is felt there, it is true, but the settler hails it with pleasure. Sometimes the cold during the night condenses the vapors of the lake, the dew falls on the heads of wheat or oats, and in the morning a heavy hoar frost, or rather a kind of ice, surrounds the grain, the hope of the farmers. Let the stranger, however, be reassured, the sun will rise, the frost will disappear and be changed into a beneficent dew. The only effect of this frost will be to have imparted a new freshness, to have brought its quota of nourishment to the grain that is being formed, and to have consoled the farmer accustomed to this harmless frost. Seeding time is from the beginning of May until the end of June. Almost without exception, wheat sown about St. Peter's and St. Paul's day ripens. Even this year, with its cold and unfavorable summer, wheat sown on the 28th of June at Pointe Bleue will yield well."

If we now refer to the census of 1871, we find that the three most important counties of the Eastern Townships, in the agricultural line, Compton, Huntington and Stanstead, with a total population of 37,107 souls, produced 92,999 bushels of wheat, whilst the county of Chicoutimi, having only a population of 17,493 souls, produced above 136,114 bushels of wheat in 1870, and yet, in that year, we witnessed the great fire which was so disastrous. Thus, Sir, such a vast territory with such a fertile soil, such a mild climate, would necessarily be settled rapidly. Indeed, in 1842, as soon as the territory was freed from the bondage in which it had been kept by the Hudson's Bay Company, the first settlers began to put in an appearance at Chicou-

timi. They first clustered around the saw-mills, and, in their leisure moments, they went to clearing the forest. Such was the beginning of Chicoutimi, which is now a flourishing town, with a promising future before it. But it was only towards 1850 the Rev. Curé Hébert, seriously penetrated into the forest and went in the direction of Lake St. John. He arrived there one evening, as the sun was setting, at the head of a few brave settlers. The day's work had been hard, and fatigue had not been wanting. A voyage through the forest was then very difficult; but, before taking any rest they wanted to fell the first tree; they desired at once, with the sound of the axe striking the tree, to awaken the echoes of the immense forest, and to tell them they would have to yield to the sounds of civilization. The Rev. Curé Hébert had the honor of striking the first blows. With the tree thus cut down they made a cross, at the foot of which they prayed that evening. It was taking possession as Jacques-Cartier would have done; and as the work of the latter has been fruitful, so also has the work then commenced by the Rev. Curé Hébert brought forth prodigious fruit. To-day, on the spot where the Rev. Curé Hébert brought his first settlers, we find the beautiful and large parish of Hébertville, having a population of several thousand souls, and producing wheat in extraordinary abundance. Since that time we have seen seven large parishes formed above Hébertville, farther into the forest. In 1851, in the county of Chicoutimi, there were hardly 4,000 souls; in 1861, there were 10,500, and the census of 1871 gave us a population of 17,500. To-day that county contains nearly 30,000. There, where thirty years ago nothing but the forest could be seen, we find the town of Chicoutimi, the fine parishes of St. Jean, St. Alexis, St. Alphonse, St. Fulgence, Ste. Anne du Saguenay, Notre Dame de Latorrière, St. François Xavier de Chicoutimi, St. Dominique, St. Cyriac, Notre Dame d'Hébertville, St. Joseph d'Alma, St. Gédéon de Grandmont, St. Jérôme du Lac St. Jean, St. Louis de Metabetchouan, Notre Dame du Lac St. Jean, St. Prime, St. Félicien, and the missions of Normandin and Tikanaby. This county is the seat of a bishopric, two court houses, of a large and a small seminary, and possesses two registration offices, a convent and eight schools, frequented by about 4,000 children. And to think that this great and rapid development of colonization was brought about exclusively by French-Canadians, who, having left the older counties quite poor, had nothing but their energy and their patriotism, without help, without any communication with the great centres. But they had for protectors the priests of their religion who, teaching them the love of God and their country, encouraged them in their hard labor, and shared their fatigues and their privations. There is not one foreign immigrant in the Saguenay. Yes, Sir, I proclaim it boldly, the colonization of the Saguenay and Lake St. John is exclusively the work of the Catholic clergy. The wonders that they have operated there give the most emphatic answer to those who accuse them of being wanting in progressiveness. I have myself seen these priests at work among the settlers, keeping up their courage, and making them love more and more the soil that they water every day with the sweat of their brows. I do not wonder, after that, at the influence they exercise over the settlers, and I assure you, Sir, that is not undue influence. I would like to know, Sir, whether Manitoba, that Province where the Government sink every year millions of dollars—I ask if Manitoba would have, if left to its own resources, attained, proportionately, such rapid and prodigious development as the Saguenay and the Lake St. John have done? No, Sir. If the Government had applied to the development of Lake St. John the money they expend in one year on Manitoba, we would to-day have at Lake St. John a population several times larger than the present population of Manitoba. The territory of the Saguenay and Lake St. John has thus developed