

exercise those pretended rights they now claim in virtue of the Charter of Charles the Second.

In that year the trade of the North-West ceased to belong to Canada. The route of transit was changed. Time, and the wealth, and power, and influence of the Hudson's Bay Company has, as it were, obliterated from the mind of Canadians, that a North-West Company had ever existed, or that such a trade had ever been.

Aided by the wonderful improvements and facilities in transport, both in navigation and land carriage undreamed of by those enterprising Canadian traders of times past, let us now revive that trade, and exercise those rights which they enjoyed during half a century subsequent to the conquest of this country.

To carry on their trade the North-West Company had chains of trading posts at various distances apart, extending from Montreal along the shores of the great lakes to the head of Lake Superior. Also they had chains of posts from Montreal to Hudson's Bay; and likewise chains of posts and forts along the Ottawa to Lake Nipissing and to Lake Huron, and thence to the head of Lake Superior. The two latter were canoe routes, the first a batteau route.

Michipicoton, at the North Eastern extremity of Lake Superior, was the depot for the Hudson's Bay trade. The river connects the Lake and that Bay. Fort William, at the Western extremity of Lake Superior, was the grand depot for the trade of the West.

To lay down the yearly supply of goods at Fort William, cost the Company £30,000.

The same quantity of goods might now be laid down there for £250. A steamer could now take them from Toronto, or from Montreal. Notwithstanding this enormous expenditure—£30,000—the profits of the Company were immense. Their trade was confined to the skins of wild animals. A greater traffic than that Company enjoyed, is open to the Canadian merchants of the present day. Enterprise will grasp it, and give an almost unlimited extent to Canadian commerce and to Canadian trade.

The North West Company had in their employment the most scientific men that could be engaged, among whom was the late David Thompson, Esq. These have surveyed and explored the whole country from the Eastern shores of Lake Superior to those of the Pacific Ocean, and northward to the Arctic Seas. We have the benefit of these explorations and surveys made and continued from the year 1790 up to the year 1821. These have never yet been published, but there are in existence topographical surveys of every route from the head of Lake Superior to the westward and to the Pacific shores, with all the portages, levels and distances, accurately and correctly taken.

More recent geological researches, and sur-

veys and explorations made in 1851, 1852, 1853 and 1854, as regards the country between Lake Superior and the Red River Valley, corroborate the former information prepared for the North West Company.

There are several points besides those used by the North West Company whence good roads may be constructed to navigable waters, affording an excellent navigation to the Red River settlement. This navigation is interrupted by various portages, none of which are of any great extent, nor is there a single one over which a loaded batteau cannot be transported with ease.

There are long reaches of water communication capable of taking large steamers, the water being deep and free from obstructions. The distance in which steamers might even now be used varies from 10, 25, 60, and 150 miles.

Taking the Red River settlement as a centre of operations, a good communication may be had partly by water and partly by land, from either of two points upon Lake Superior, and the distance be about 380 miles, though the canoe route now travelled is about 683 miles.

From the Red River is an uninterrupted navigation direct to the valley of the Saskatchewan, and but for a trifling obstruction in the river of that name, steam navigation can be carried on from the Red River, for a distance of 1800 miles into the interior, to localities where goods now do not reach, coming *via* Hudson's Bay, until the second year after leaving England.

The advantages of the old route through Lake Superior, are so immeasurably greater, that the Hudson's Bay Company could only compete for the trade by using the route proposed.

Goods can be laid down at the Red River Settlement, *via* Lake Superior, by the month of June. By the Hudson's Bay route goods cannot be laid down at the same point before the month of October. Goods can likewise be laid down on the shores of Hudson's Bay, *via* Lake Superior, by the month of June. They cannot be laid down there by the Hudson's Bay route before the month of September.

Hudson's straits leading into Hudson's Bay, are frequently blocked with ice until the month of August, and the Company's ships do not leave England for Hudson's Bay until the month of June, so that goods could be sent from England and landed on the shores of the Hudson's Bay, *via* the St. Lawrence route, before the goods for the Hudson's Bay Company could even leave England.

The Americans are now opening a trade with the Red River Settlement, and have constructed roads and built bridges over the rivers and swamps, in order to afford facilities for traffic, and thereby cause the trade to enter at St. Paul's.