

and surveying operations. The season was already well advanced, and the first experience of the Joint Commission in camp on the Red River Prairie was a violent snowstorm, from the north-west, which raged with great violence for three days, and greatly delayed field-operations. The settlers foretold that this was the harbinger of fine autumn weather, which proved to be the case; for during the succeeding month bright and genial weather prevailed with a sultry, hazy, and motionless state of the atmosphere, popularly known throughout Canada as the Indian summer. The position of the boundary-line at Red River was carefully determined independently by astronomical observations taken by the two Commissions, and the results differed by 32 feet, or about one-third of a second of latitude.* This difference was halved, and the position of the boundary-line, as then agreed to confirmed the rough observations that had been previously taken by Captain Palliser and others. The principal point now settled was, that the Hudson's Bay Company's trading-post, the territorial position of which had been disputed, was ascertained to be 250 yards within British territory. In order to take advantage of the open weather that might be expected during the month of October, three astronomical parties were organised by the British Commission, and two of them proceeded to the Lake of the Woods, to commence operations there in concert with the United States Commission; and the third party commenced work at an intermediate point on the boundary between Red River and the Lake of the Woods.

A difficulty presented itself at the outset, as to the exact position of the north-west point of the Lake of the Woods, determined by a former Joint Commission in 1826, being the terminal point of the operations under that Commission, and the initial point of the work of the present Commission. The point was described as being in a swamp, and there being no firm ground in the neighbourhood a pyramid of logs was constructed about a mile south of the spot, at an exact specified distance from the point, which the Commissioners in 1826 had agreed upon as the north-west corner of the Lake of the Woods. All traces of this wooden pyramid had disappeared, but the traditions of its construction were fresh in the memory of the Indians, and guided by the directions of an old man of the Chippewa tribe, some younger members of the tribe indicated a spot, then 18 inches under water in the swamp of the district, from which spot an oaken log was dug up, and the impression

* The method of working and marking the boundary-line is explained in the Appendix.