

NORTHLAND EXPLORATION

At Sled Lake, which lies about twenty-five miles north east of Green Lake and is reached by winter road, a native that is a half-breed, named Baptiste Morasty, has a good log house, trading post and other buildings, and grows successfully vegetables and oats. The lake is about ten miles long and varying from one-half to two miles in width; all around it is good land and there might be located here a compact prosperous settlement of farmers. Though the land is covered with bush still clearing would be easy. Several families live here and both the Hudson's Bay and Revillon's have winter posts here. About 14 miles south-east of Sled Lake is Dog Lake also about ten miles long and surrounded by excellent land. Pelican Lake about 18 miles long and 2 miles to 1 a mile in width is about ten miles south-east of Dog Lake. Here a native named Louis Vallé lives and trades for Revillon Frères. Vallé has a good vegetable garden. There are very large hay meadows here but as Vallé has no stock he does not cut any hay. Moose are particularly plentiful around this lake. There are considerable stretches of good land surrounding this lake. To the north of Pelican Lake are some other large lakes little known and called by various names which causes much confusion. The height of land between Beaver and Montreal Rivers passes about four miles east of Pelican Lake, running in a north-westerly direction. The soil along the easterly slope of this water shed is very good. Pelican Lake appears to have an outlet towards Stoney Lake; I did not, however, follow it. The whole country around Pelican Lake has been burnt off, the last time about ten years ago, and from the appearance of the brush much valuable timber has been destroyed.

The northerly portion of this section contains some timber but not sufficient to supply any industry. It is fairly level, some ridges occurring.

Clearing should be easily accomplished and where drainage is necessary the conformation of the country is such as to present few difficulties. There are some muskegs but generally small.

Some idea may be gained of the nature of the country in this section and its value for agricultural purposes by assuming a small area of say 160 acres, equal to one quarter section, not selected as particularly good but representing a fair average. Such a parcel of land carefully reported on would show the following estimate of resources: —

Good land prairie,	8 acres.
Good land bush, not hay,	80 acres.
Hay land (not requiring drainage),	15 acres.
Hay land in need of drainage,	20 acres.
Muskeg (probably possible to drain),	10 acres.
Muskeg (difficult or impossible to drain),	10 acres.
Stoney land,	2 acres.
Water (small ponds),	15 acres.
	160 acres.

About 15,000 feet of good lumber might be cut and about 3,000 cords of poplar.

However, there are a great number of large and small lakes. The aggregate of land available as compared with the gross area would therefore be very much reduced.

In the western part of the Green Lake Section there appears to be as much or more good land than farther east, and along Beaver River hay abounds. I did not go far west to the west. The soil generally is a light loam covered by about 4 inches of decayed vegetation, the subsoil varies and is sometimes sandy clay, sometimes blue clay. In places I have found a peculiar reddish, gritty soil which appears to be marvellously productive. Pen vine is abundant here and grows to about two feet in height. Game of all kinds abounds in the woods and fish in the streams, and the native makes an easy living by catching fish and occasionally shooting a moose. Wolves are very numerous in this section and do a lot of damage to game. Fur is not plentiful except muskrats which are very numerous.