

The present projected line through the Saskatchewan is eminently unsuited to the settlement; it crosses the bleak, poor prairies of the Eagle Hills, the country where, as described in an earlier chapter, we hunted the buffalo during the month of November in the preceding year. For all purposes of settlement it may be said to lie fully 80 miles too far south during a course of some 300 or 400 miles.

The experience of those most intimately acquainted with the territory points to a line *north* of the North Saskatchewan as one best calculated to reach the country really fitted for immediate settlement; a country where rich soil, good water, and abundant wood for fuel and building can be easily obtained. All of these essentials are almost wholly wanting along the present projected route throughout some 350 miles of its course.

Now if we take a line from the neighbourhood of the Mission of Prince Albert, and continue it through the very rich and fertile country lying 20 or 30 miles to the north of Carlton, and follow it still further to a point 15 or 20 miles north of Fort Pitt, we will be about the centre of the *true* Fertile Belt of this portion of the continent. Continuing north-west for another 60 miles, we would reach the neighbourhood of the Lac la Biche (a French mission, where all crops have been most successfully cultivated for many years), and be on the water-shed of the Northern Ocean.

Crossing the Athabasca, near the point where it receives the Rivière la Biche, a region of *presumed* musky or swamp would be encountered, but one neither so extensive nor of as serious a character as that which occurs on the line at present projected between the Saskatchewan and Jasper's House.

The opinions thus briefly stated regarding the best