

was here done in surveying the central and largest outlet of the Rat river, the south branch, which was done by Mr. Ogilvie, being impassible excepting in the spring. The Rat river empties by three branches into Peel River waters, but the northern branch is an inconsiderable stream and only navigable in high water, so that no attempt was made to survey it. In the ascent of Rat river, we were particularly fortunate in having a great deal of rain and snow, which, though making the travelling very disagreeable, raised the level of the water sufficiently in the stream to allow of comparatively easy canoeing. The same conditions allowed us to get our canoes within six hundred yards of navigable waters on the other side of the divide, so that a portage of that length was all that was necessary. Had we been a week or two earlier, or a few days later, we would probably have been compelled to make a portage of three or four miles in length.

The Porcupine river was followed down to its junction with the Yukon at Fort Yukon, where we arrived on September 8, the actual travelling time from Fort Macpherson to Fort Yukon being twenty days. A track survey was carried all the way from Fort McPherson to the boundary line of Alaska just below Rampart House, where it was closed.

After a delay of five days at Fort Yukon, we caught one of the Northern Commercial Company's fast steamers plying between Dawson and St. Michael's, and arrived in Dawson on the 17th of September.

#### PREVIOUS EXPLORATIONS.

The first mention we have of the Peel river is by Sir John Franklin in his second voyage to the Arctic sea 1825-1828. On returning from this expedition, and while ascending the Mackenzie river a short distance above its mouth, he was led into the stream which he at first mistook for a branch of the Mackenzie. He ascended it for some considerable distance under this impression before he found out that it was an entirely different stream. He called it the Peel river in honour of Sir Robert Peel, and the favourable account he gave of the stream, and more particularly of its fur-bearing animals, attracted the attention of the Hudson's Bay Company and shortly after induced them to send an exploration party under Mr. Bell to make an examination of the river preparatory to establishing a trading post on it.

In the summer of 1839, Mr. Bell explored the river to the head of the Snake River branch, thinking this was the main stream, and the following year Fort McPherson was established at the head of the delta. During the winter of 1840-1841 Mr. A. K. Isbister, also an officer in the employ of the Hudson's Bay Company, made a survey and