

710. What is the nature of the council which you have mentioned?—The principal officers of the Company, the chief factors, are members of council. If there is not a sufficient number of chief factors the number is made up by chief traders, who are the second class of partners, and all matters connected with the trade are discussed and determined at this council.

711. What is the nature of the authority of the council as distinguished from your own; are they merely advisers?—They are advisers, and they give their opinions and vote upon any question that may be under discussion.

712. Does the ultimate authority and decision reside in you solely, or is it with you in conjunction with the council?—With me in conjunction with the council.

713. Do you mean that they could outvote you and prevent your doing anything which you thought proper?—They could outvote me, but it has never been so; in the absence of the council my authority is supreme; in travelling through the country, or giving any direction connected with the management of the business, my authority must be acted upon until it be annulled or disallowed by the council or the Company.

714. Of course, having administered the affairs of the Hudson's Bay Company during so long a period, you are well acquainted with every part of their territories?—I have travelled through the greater part of the country; I have not visited what are usually known as the Barren Grounds.

715. You are well acquainted with the western portion, as well as the eastern?—Yes; I have not been in Mackenzie's River, but I have been in nearly all the other parts of the country; my usual route in going up the country is from Montreal by Rainy Lake and Lake Winnipeg to Red River; I have crossed the Rocky Mountains at three different points to Oregon.

716. Will you have the goodness to give to the Committee an account of your impressions of the character of the territory of the Hudson's Bay Company in point of soil and climate, particularly with reference to its adaptation for the purposes of cultivation and colonisation?—I do not think that any part of the Hudson's Bay Company's territories is well adapted for settlement; the crops are very uncertain.

717. Do you mean that observation to apply only to Rupert's Land or to the entire of the territory now administered by the Hudson's Bay Company?—I mean it to apply to Rupert's Land.

718. How would you describe the limits of Rupert's Land to the west?—The Rocky Mountains to the west.

719. Would you apply that observation to the district of the Red River?—Yes.

720. And the country immediately behind it?—Yes.

721. Is it not actually settled?—I do not consider it well adapted for settlement.

722. Why so?—On account of the poverty of the soil, except on the banks of the river. The banks of the river are alluvial, and produce very fair crops of wheat; but these crops are frequently destroyed by early frosts; there is no certainty of the crops. We have been under the necessity of importing grain within these last ten years from the United States and from Canada, for the support of the establishment.

723. Have you an equally unfavourable opinion of the country on the Saskatchewan River?—Yes; the climate is more rigorous, and the crops are even less certain on that river; the scarcity of timber also is a great bar; there is little or no wood in the country. The present population of Red River have great difficulty in providing wood for their immediate wants.

724. Is there any part of the territory of Rupert's Land towards Lake Superior that you think adapted for cultivation?—Immediately upon the right bank of the Rainy Lake River cultivation might be carried on to advantage; but there is merely a slip of land adapted for cultivation; immediately behind are deep morasses which never thaw.

725. Mr. Gladstone.] Is that right bank of the Rainy Lake River in the Hudson's Bay territory?—Yes.

726. Mr. Edward Ellice.] Do you mean by "never thaw" that in the summer, when the surface is thawed, if a person was to walk through that morass his foot would get to the ice below?—No, not immediately so; but by digging deeper you would come to ice.