

from the Lake of the Woods to Fort Garry ; but, in order that they might be in a position to judge for themselves as to whether it would be better to go by that route or by way of the Winnipeg, I sent them a memorandum of which the following is a copy :

“ MEMORANDUM.

“ LAKE OF THE WOODS TO FORT GARRY.

OTTAWA, 18 April, 1870.

“Accompanying this memorandum is a rough plan of the Winnipeg River made from Track Survey, together with a table of distances, showing the length of the Portages and Navigable sections, respectively, between Rat Portage at the outlet of the Lake of the Woods and Lake Winnipeg. From the Lake of the Woods to Fort Garry are two routes, the one by water, being that just referred to, and the other by land from the “North West Angle.”

“Having regard to the passage of a large body of men with outfit and supplies the following facts are submitted with a view of supplying information on which an opinion can be based as to which it would be most advantageous to adopt.

“ THE WATER ROUTE.

“By this route, the distance between Rat Portage, at the outlet of the Lake of the Woods, and Fort Alexander, at the entrance to Lake Winnipeg, is in round numbers 149 miles.

“In this distance the number of Portages is twenty five and their aggregate length as ascertained by actual measurement three miles and six chains.

“The Winnipeg River presents no serious difficulties to the largest class of canoes and it has long been navigated by the Hudson Bay Company's Boats.

“In the navigable sections, the depth of water is sufficient for large boats and there are but few heavy rapids to be run, and these short.

“In several instances the entrances to the carrying places are close to the brow of the falls, and in such cases boats should be brought in with caution, one by one.

“As a general rule, with practised guides and skilful boatmen, the Winnipeg may be considered a safe river, or, if an exception exists, it is at the seven portages, which have always to be passed with great care.

“As canoe men, the Indians who frequent the Winnipeg cannot be excelled, and, as boatmen, many of them have had a good deal of experience.

“The Winnipeg River, in its general character, may be regarded as a series of Lakes separated by short rapids or water-falls. A brief description of the different sections will be found in the printed slips annexed.

“ THE LAND ROUTE.

“The country lying between the Lake of the Woods and Red River is low and swampy and, except on the route adopted as a line of road, quite impracticable, at least it has never yet been passed over in summer, except by a few wandering hunters. Even the Indians traverse it but rarely, and the half-breeds of Red River never attempt to pass, except in winter.

“The distance between the ‘North West Angle’ of the Lake of the Woods and Fort Garry, by the line adopted for a road, is ninety miles—sixty miles being through a wooded country and thirty over open prairie.

“Starting from the North West Angle, and proceeding Westward there is, first, a section of thirty miles quite in a state of nature, and as yet unopened. This section abounds in swamps and marshes but is nevertheless practicable for a road. Then follows a stretch of thirtymiles of line, newly opened through a wooded region, still very swampy, but not so much so as that first referred to. In this section, the road runs for many miles