

JOURNALS, DETAILED REPORTS, AND OBSERVATIONS

RELATIVE TO

CAPTAIN PALLISER'S EXPLORATION

OF

A PORTION OF BRITISH NORTH AMERICA.

THE GENERAL REPORT.

13, Gate Street, Lincoln's Inn, London,
4th April 1862.

MY LORD DUKE,

HAVING heard from the Colonial Office that the Government have expressed their willingness to print "in extenso" the journals containing the details of my expedition for the exploration of British North America during the years 1857, 1858, 1859, and 1860, some extracts from which have been already presented to both Houses of Parliament by Her Majesty's command, in 1859 and 1860, I have the honour of laying before your Grace these documents, which have been prepared by me, with the aid of my colleagues, Doctor Hector, Mons. Bourgeau, and Mr. Sullivan.

In them will be found a complete narrative, not only of those portions of the expedition which fell to my immediate share, but also of the branch expeditions which I organized from time to time under the charge respectively of Doctor Hector and Mr. Sullivan.

I have, &c.

To his Grace the Duke of Newcastle, K.G., (Signed) JOHN PALLISER.
Colonial Office, Downing Street, London.

INTRODUCTION.

I propose in the following remarks, which are introductory to the journals and other detailed papers relative to the Expedition recently under my command, to give a short sketch of the physical features of the country explored, with especial reference to its economic value. These remarks will be principally based upon the facts and observations to be found in detail in the body of the Report.

The portion of British North America examined by the Expedition is contained between the western shore of Lake Superior, in longitude 89° W., and the Okanagan Lakes, in longitude 119° W., and extends from the frontier of the United States, in latitude 49° N., northwards to the sources of the chief rivers that flow to the Arctic Ocean. In other words, it embraces 30° of longitude, and in some places 6° of latitude. Some portions of this large extent of British territory were well described previously to the organizing of this Expedition, especially the neighbourhood of Red River, where the Selkirk Settlement is situated.

The district stretching from thence to the north-west along the valley of the Assiniboine and the North Saskatchewan was also well known, from the Hudson Bay Company having for many years had a chain of trading posts or forts on that river at intervals of about 200 miles, established partly for the trading of furs, but mainly for the purpose of procuring provisions from the vast herds of buffalo, on which their more valuable trading posts in the northern districts depend for subsistence.

It is by the trail passing from fort to fort on this route along the North Saskatchewan river that the few emigrants have travelled, who, besides travellers connected with the fur company, have passed through the country on their way to cross the Rocky Mountains. The southern portion of the country along the South Saskatchewan remained, however, comparatively unknown.