

water by drainage, and that water supply kept at a fairly even depth, during the growing season of July and August. This could be done in many localities with ease, and there are also many rivers and small lakes fed by rivulets where wild rice might be successfully grown, and which now do not produce any. In the west the Qu'Appelle River and lakes, the head of the Pembina River and lakes, Eagle Creek and its extensive marshes, besides many others are in my opinion well suited for some experiment in this way. Being personally and intimately acquainted with these places I do not hesitate to pronounce this opinion.

The yield of wild rice is very great but I cannot say exactly what might be the quantity per acre, approximately I would say nothing less than 35 bushels per acre in favorable places and 15 bushels as an average for a field planted by nature. Its head is very prolific containing from 14 to 20 grains and it stands much thicker than grain in a first class field. Often I have taken a bushel out of my canoe which has been thrown into it by the action of my paddle in the distance of half a mile of travel through a rice field. As the Indians do not clear any given spot but push the canoe haphazard through the grain when gathering, it is impossible to do more than approximate the yield. The lake whereon I gathered rice last year is about 2 miles long by an average width of three-quarters of a mile. It is one dense mass of rice and a passage for our canoes had to be made by beating down the grain with long poles and canoe paddles to enable us to reach our camping ground at the far end. I estimated the yield of this lake at 14,000 bushels or say about 315 tons of rice. It weighs about 45 lbs. to the bushel.

The Indian mode of gathering and harvesting is very simple. Two women go in a canoe (the men are usually hunting deer about this time) each provided with a stick about two feet long in each hand. With these they gently bend the rice into the centre of the canoe and with a slight motion of the wrist strike the grain off into the canoe. When the canoe is loaded they go ashore and pile up the rice on a clean clear rock to harden and dry, often turning it over to preventing it heating and spoiling. When it is nearly dry enough they place it on a stage made by dividing four sticks into the ground and then tying by the four corners a piece of rough woven canvas such as used for oat bags to the sticks, this forms a platform and on it the rice is placed lying about one inch thick. A small fire is kept burning underneath, the heat from which dries and thoroughly smokes the grain while the constant stirring and shaking necessary cleans and loosens off the husks. This is a slow and troublesome process. It is winnowed by throwing it in the air on a suitable day. This process produces the common rice in use by the Indians. Early in the season a small quantity is made as follows, and it makes a better food and is much preferred by the Indians. No doubt all the crop would be prepared in this manner if the Indians had suitable means and implements to do it. The grain after being gathered is put into a cast iron pot over a slow fire and kept constantly stirred to prevent it burning. This is continued until the husk loosens and the grains swell somewhat like parched corn. It is then put into a bag which is put into a round smooth hole made in a sandy spot in the ground. A pounder is made and the rice is gently but briskly pounded which cleans the husk completely off the kernel. This is winnowed as before and leaves a first class article of food. This is called green rice and the former kind smoked rice. Sometimes when pressed for time the Indians simply gather the grain and prepare it at leisure by the latter method during the winter months.

The question of supplying a large quantity of rice, if the Government should desire it, has some difficulties about it. In the first place, as no labor could be obtained understanding the process except that of the Indians, it would be impossible without ample notice to find labor enough for the gathering and preparing of a very large quantity. Again, a large quantity could not be shipped out in the summer without improving some twelve miles of a river by making good portage paths, &c. In winter, say December, this same rice could be teamed out to the settlements by cutting a trail suitable for a team a distance of 83 miles from Selkirk, where now only a dog-sleigh trail exists; this would be four miles long. With the appliances at present at command five tons of dressed rice could be obtained here, and if ample