

162. Did you go at all to the west side of the Rocky Mountains?—Not at all. Lieut.-Colonel
J. H. Lefroy, R. A.

163. The Committee will be glad to hear your opinion of the physical state of that country with reference to the capacity for cultivation and settlement? 23 February 1857.
—The general opinion which I was led to form was, that agricultural settlement can make but very slender progress in any portion of that region.

164. Did you visit the Red River Settlement?—I did.

165. Is not that a part of the country very well adapted for agricultural purposes?—The Red River Settlement is pretty well adapted for them, although it does not bear comparison with the best parts of the British American colonies; but it forms but a small proportion of the whole region.

166. Do you mean to apply the observation which you have made to the country generally that borders upon the limits of Canada at present?—I should apply it particularly to that country, so far as my observation goes. As we proceed to the interior, we do come to a region in the neighbourhood of the Rainy Lake, and between the Rainy Lake and the Lake of the Woods, which seems to me to possess agricultural facilities. It seems to have the conditions of soil and climate not much more unfavourable, perhaps not more unfavourable, than in many parts of Lower Canada.

167. When you say that you think that, generally speaking, there is not much land contained in the territories to the east of the Rocky Mountains beyond the borders of Canada, which is calculated for settlement and cultivation, do you say that chiefly on account of the nature of the soil, or on account of the nature of the climate?—On account of both causes. With regard to the nature of the soil, a very large portion of the region is primitive in geological formation, almost entirely denuded of soil. The frosts are so intense, that over a very large portion the soil is permanently frozen. The seasons are so short and so uncertain, that crops are liable to be cut off by unseasonable frosts at periods that make it almost impossible for the husbandman to reckon with any certainty on a return.

168. Do you know the Saskatchewan district?—I have been once up and once down the River of Saskatchewan.

169. Is there no land in that district which you think would be susceptible of cultivation and fit for settlement?—Undoubtedly there is such land in that district, and it is along that district and a little to the north and south of it that the agricultural land is to be found. Cultivation has actually been tried with some success at Fort Cumberland on the Saskatchewan; wheat has grown there; with uncertainty, however, from the cause I alluded to just now, but still sufficiently to add greatly to the comforts of the residents of the district.

170. Are you acquainted with the country which belongs to the United States to the south of the border between the two countries?—I am not.

171. Lord Stanley.] You spoke of an attempt at cultivation in the neighbourhood of Fort Cumberland. The settlement at Fort Cumberland, I believe, was not made for any purpose of colonisation, but simply as a trading post?—Entirely so; but there was a small attempt at settlement on a spot immediately adjoining, called on the maps the Basquiau River, but commonly called in the country the Pas; a settlement of civilised or christianised Indians has been formed there for the last 10 or 12 years, and they have succeeded, in some degree, in cultivating the ground.

172. Do you know what crops arise there?—They grow wheat, barley, potatoes, and various vegetables.

173. Mr. Roebuck.] Do they grow any Indian corn?—No. I believe that Indian corn will not ripen except by matter of accident in that region.

174. Mr. Grogan.] With regard to the wheat, was it a crop that could be depended upon at all?—I am inclined to think not, but I do not speak with much confidence.

175. Or the potatoes?—The potatoes could be depended upon, I believe. I never heard that they had had any disease. In all instances in which these crops grow the returns are exceedingly small.

176. Will they ripen?—Yes, but you do not get the same crop in proportion as you do in more genial countries.

177. Do oats grow there?—I never heard of their being tried, but they would, no doubt.

178. Mr. Roebuck.] Do not oats grow more northerly than wheat?—Certainly. 179. If