

river was surveyed to the distance of three hundred and eighty miles from its mouth, and its tributaries explored and surveyed for lumbering purposes over an extent of upwards of fourteen thousand superficial miles.

These surveys and explorations speedily made it apparent that the valley of the St. Maurice not only contained an interminable supply of valuable timber, but also an unexpectedly great extent of valuable land for settlement; thus, as it were, presenting to the people of Canada a territory not in any remote part of the Province, but in its very centre, adjoining its densest settlements, situated half way between the sea-ports of Quebec and Montreal, with its good lands coming within a few miles of the St. Lawrence, offering a wide and easily accessible field for the extension of settlement; with an unlimited supply of an important staple of trade, calculated to benefit alike the commerce of the Province and the settlement of the territory, by creating a demand and a local market for the produce of the settlers.

As it is but recently that the character of this territory has been ascertained to any considerable extent, and what has been learned respecting it is not generally known, it may not be out of place for me to enter more amply into the description of it than of other parts of the Province longer and more extensively known.

On a late visit to the interior of the territory, I had the opportunity of obtaining much information respecting it, from personal observation and from the returns of surveys and explorations made by experienced persons employed in the department under my charge.

To commence our view of this territory at the mouth of the River St. Maurice. At Three Rivers we find a deep deposit of loose sand which reaches about twelve miles to the north, terminating in the vicinity of the "Grais Mills." The width of this barren land varies from two to three miles on each side of the River St. Maurice; the physical character of the country then changes at once, and high ridges covered with heavy timber prevail. Commencing in rear of the Seignior of Ste. Anne, a wide tract of good land reaches to the River Bastonais, bordering the valley of the St. Maurice, usually at a distance of about five miles: the land is in every respect suitable for settlement.

As we ascend still on the easterly side of the St. Maurice, the valley of the River Croche is next passed. This river winds through interval land of from three-fourths to two miles in width, and fifty miles in length, being as far as yet explored; and more fertile or productive land can scarcely be had in the Lower Province. This has been well ascertained by the produce of the farms opened here by lumbermen, where wheat and every other description of grains produced in the valley of the St. Lawrence bring an abundant harvest. There is also in the same region a great extent of sterile land that may never support settlement, though valuable on account of its timber. A glance at the accompanying sketch will show the relative extent of the poor land, and that which has been ascertained to be suitable for settlement.

The valleys of the Mekinak, Bastonais, and Croche Rivers, are all skirted by high and continuous ranges of hills, the summits of which usually spread out into table lands similar to those of the newly formed settlement of Shawenegan, and in the rear parts of Cap de la Madelaine and Batiscan.