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# AN EARLY APPRECIATION OF THE WEST.

(Special Correspondence, Journal of Commerce.)

Edmonton, Alta., April 17th.—While delving among the archives at the Parliament Building in Edmonton this week, John Blue, provincial librarian and statistician, found numerous authenticated records, which show that Pierre Esprite Radisson, a native of Quebec, born about 1615, was the first immigration agent for the country west of the Great Lakes. He was followed by Henry Kelsey, who travelled extensively in the present provinces of Manitoba and Saskatchewan, and Anthony Hendry, the first white man to visit what is now the province of Alberta.

The report made by Radisson in 1636, after his escape from a camp of Iroquois Indians, who had carried him from his home in Quebec on a trip to the north shore of Lake Superior, follows:

"The country was so beautiful, pleasant and fruitful that it grieved me to see that the world could not discover such enticing countries to live in. This I say because the Europeans fight for a rock in the seas against one another—for a sterile land where, by change of air, they engender sickness and die. Contrawise, these kingdoms (the prairies) are so delicious and under so temperate a climate, so full of things, that the people live long and lusty, and wise in their ways. What a conquest this would be! What pleasure people would have instead of misery and poverty!"

Radisson returned to the western country in company with his brother-in-law, M. Groseillers, after visiting his home on the St. Lawrence river, and together they explored the country in the vicinity of Lake Winnipeg and Portage la Prairie. His prophecy regarding the prairie has been realized by the world after a lapse of 278 years.

Anthony Hendry was sent into the western country in 1754 as an emissary of the Hudson's Bay Company to solicit the trade of the Blackfeet and Cree Indians of the prairies for the posts at York Factory and Fort Churchill, on Hudson Bay.

Hendry came as far west as the head waters of Red Deer river, passing the winter in the foothills of the Canadian Rockies and returning the following spring down the Red Deer river to the Saskatchewan river and thence to his home. He was the first white man of whom there is any record as having visited this province.

However, Hendry was not the first man sent into the western country by the Hudson's Bay Company. Henry Kelsey, a youth of 18 years, preceded him, according to the reports found by Mr. Blue, Kelsey left York Factory in 1690, several years after the French traders had invaded the prairies. He passed two years in traversing what are now the provinces of Manitoba and Saskatchewan. The itinerary of the journey is largely a matter of conjecture, and the records do not show that he ever visited this

"Radisson was the first man to make a report upon the possibilities of the western prairies, which were then the homes of buffalo and other wild things," Mr. Blue said. "His discovery is simply a portion of the romance that has no parallel in the history of the North American continent. He was captured by the Indians while still a child, and returned to the western country to do further exploring, after passing a few years with his parents in Quebec."

## MEXICO'S FOREIGN TRADE.

Mexico's foreign trade in the fiscal year 1913, the latest year for which complete official data are at hand, amounted to 248 million dollars, 150 million of which represented exports and 98 million imports. The United States took in that year 77 per cent of the exports and supplied 50 per cent of the imports.

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