

*J. Rae, Esq., M.D.* Yes, and when the fur-bearing animals were hunted up, the country would be left a wreck.

23 February 1857. 383. What would be the effect of such a process upon the Indian tribes?—Most injurious, I should fancy.

384. You say because spirits would be introduced?—That would be a great injury. They would get much better paid for their furs for a time, but the effect after, say eight, or 10, or 12 years, or I will not say what number of years; but after a lapse of years, not a very long period, would be to demoralize the Indians; they would kill up the principal finer furs, and it would do no good to any person, because the parties coming in, if there was opposition, could not make a profit.

385. Do you think that it would be possible to provide, by some arrangement with the Hudson's Bay Company, for the retention of the fur trade in their hands in those regions which are fit for nothing but the fur trade, and can be only fit for the fur trade for some time to come, and at the same time to open up, for the purposes of colonization, all such parts of the country as it is at all reasonable to suppose within the next 20 years, for instance, could be settled and colonized?—I should be rather at a loss to give an opinion upon that subject, as I have not studied the circumstances; it would be very difficult to make the arrangement; it would be an excellent one, I believe, if it could be effected.

386. You think that if it could be done it would be a desirable arrangement to make?—A very desirable one indeed.

387. Why do you think that it could not be done?—I do not say that it could not be done, but it would be difficult; I could not give a reason why it should not be done. I have not studied the subject.

388. I believe the Russians have a fur trading establishment on the extreme north-west point of North America?—Yes; it comes in contact with Mackenzie's River, the district of which I was in charge for one season.

389. Are you aware of any arrangement which the Russian Company have made with the Hudson's Bay Company, by which the most valuable portion of their fur-trading territory is leased to the Hudson's Bay Company on certain conditions?—There was an arrangement of that sort some years ago; I cannot say whether it is still in force; it was a lease not of the whole, but of the strip of land which you will see in the charts running along the shore.

390. Do you know what were the motives of the Russian Company for coming to that arrangement?—I do not.

391. *Mr. Charles Fitzwilliam.*] You say that you were in charge of the district on Mackenzie's River; can you state to the Committee the climate and the capabilities of the land there?—The climate is a severe one; but we grew barley at Fort Simpson, in latitude 62° or 63°, I think; we grew barley at Fort Liard; we grew barley at the Yukon, which is close to the Russian territory; that is a post which was established some time ago; we could grow wheat at no place in the district; barley is grown at all the posts except three, Fort Norman, Peel's River, and Fort Goodhope, which are far down the river.

392. *Mr. Adderley.*] In what year were you on Mackenzie's River?—In 1849–50.

393. Have you been at long intervals of time on the same spot?—I have been four years there at different times; I was two years wintered there in the expedition, but I was only one year in charge of the district.

394. Did you see anything of the Red River settlement at long intervals of time?—No; I was only there part of a winter on two occasions, and once in spring.

395. You cannot speak to any alteration of climate in spots which have been settled?—No, I cannot; but I can say with regard to the tract of country of which we are speaking, namely, the woody country, that there is an influence against its being affected by clearance, which does not exist in other parts of the world. There is the large Hudson's Bay opening up to the north, where there is a continual flow of ice during the whole summer; it is frozen up seven or eight months in the winter, and in the summer season there is a constant influx of ice which keeps the climate colder than it otherwise would be for perhaps 100 or 200 miles inland in all directions; that is an influence which does not exist elsewhere, and which would affect the climate, I think.

396. *Mr. Charles Fitzwilliam.*] While you were at Mackenzie's River, you, I dare