

APPENDIX No. 7.

(Report of Alexander McKenzie, Esq.,—in charge of the Expedition to James Bay.

KINGSTON, 27th Oct., 1871.

SANDFORD FLEMING, Esq., C. E.,
Engineer-in-Chief, C. P. R., Ottawa.

SIR,—The accompanying informal copy of the Itinerary of the Expedition to James' Bay, under my charge, will, when supplemented by the topographical map now in hand, illustrate to you the details of the season's work. You will thereby also learn the nature of the country passed through, as regards its soil, climate, timber, minerals, topographical features, and general geological structure. On all these points I have been as explicit as possible; and my object here is, to epitomize the whole, with the view of lending, if not additional, at least more immediate value to the season's work, by placing it within abstract compass.

According to received instructions, I was charged with carefully examining the country lying between the valley of the Ottawa, Lake Superior, and the waters of Hudson's Bay, with reference to the points above enumerated, commencing at the Montreal River, a tributary of the Ottawa, following the course of the Abbitibbie river, through to James' Bay, and returning by the Moose and Michipicoton river to Lake Superior.

It may hardly be necessary here to state that, in approaching a country so densely wooded, the topographical engineer is liable to some difficulty in obtaining a key, capable of placing within his professional control so vast an area, covering as it does about 30,000 square miles. Aware of this, I first endeavored to direct attention to some leading physical feature, which happily presented itself in the great mountain chain, which, at a depth and altitude more or less irregular, traverses the whole country from Labrador to the far West, and of which as a base the subsidiary triangle enclosed by the Abbitibbie and Moose rivers with the intermediate chain of lakes rests. In ascending the Ottawa river, this well defined chain of mountains follows its north-east bank to the mouth of the Mattawa river the valley of which extends up to Nipissing lake. From Mattawa, the Ottawa leads the voyageur in his upward course in a north-westerly direction for about 80 miles to Matabichwan, where it receives from the south-west the waters of the Montreal and Matabichwan rivers. Below and above this point Temiscamingue lake, through which the waters of the Ottawa flow, extends for a distance of about 70 miles. At about 60 miles up, it leaves the mountain range referred to, in a northerly direction, widens, and becomes shallow at the head, where it receives the waters of