

Leaving Duluth by the railway, the party travelled for 30 miles up the gorge of the St. Louis river, the scenery of which is remarkably bold and picturesque, the stream following a number of precipitous descents, broken by large pools of still, clear water, around which immense slabs of rock lie tossed in every conceivable position. The railway runs along the north side of the gorge, and crosses the numerous lateral ravines, which open into it, on high trestle bridges, mostly built on a curve plan, and so arranged that the traveller, looking out of the carriage windows, sees no roadway beneath him but only the rocks, perhaps 100 feet below. Although the delicate but strong construction of these bridges was admired, yet a feeling of relief was experienced when they had been all passed. Emerging on to the level country at the top of this gorge, the North Pacific Railway carried the party due west, to its intersection with the Red River of the north, a distance of 350 miles, the first 150 being through woods and swamps, after which the open prairie was reached.

The first aspect of scenery over country similar to which the party were destined to work for so many miles, could not fail to be interesting, and even impressive; but, as a mere landscape, the prairie, as seen from a small elevation, has few elements of beauty. The spectator appears to be in the middle of a small circle, just as is the case at sea, and the feeling which is induced is that of an oppressive monotony. After about 18 hours travel by rail, the detachment reached Moorhead on the Red River, where they overtook the Commissioner and the Secretary. Arrangements were here made for the transport of the baggage and stores, &c., by carts, along the coach road northwards, and the party commenced their march in the same direction. The road follows the general course of the Red River, running from point to point of the numerous bends of that stream, and on the evening of the third day, the head of the navigation at that season was reached at a place called Frog Point, above which, during most of the year, the water is too shallow for steamers. The men, baggage, and stores were all embarked here, on the "Dakota," one of the Kitson Red River line of steamers. These vessels, on account of the shallowness of the stream and its numerous bends, are of peculiar construction. The hull is very shallow, drawing only about three feet of water, and they have a single paddle wheel placed at the stern. When one of these steamers takes barges or freight boats with her, they are lashed to her sides, or even placed in front of her bows, it being impossible to take them in tow on account of the paddle wheel. In ascending the river when a sharp turn has to be passed, it is usual to run the steamer sideways against the bank in the angle of the bend, get her head round, and start again in the new direction.

After two days steaming the commission arrived at the frontier on the 20th of September, and went under canvass on the prairie on the north side of the line; the United States commission were camped a short distance off, having arrived about ten days before. The Canadian officers and other members of the British commission had also arrived by the "Dakota," or by the previous steamer, and the entire staff was now ready to commence work.

At this time there were only three or four buildings on or near the 49th