

constituents of the Laurentian rocks, forms the fertile soil which makes this district of so much importance to the province. About twenty years ago, one of the largest bush fires on record devastated the whole country on the south of the lake from the Descharge to Point Bleu. Many poor habitants lost their lives in this conflagration. The burnt country soon attracted fresh settlers, and being now more easily cleared, and possessing such good soil, this part is the most thickly populated. From the comfortable appearance of the people and their homes, the well-fenced fields and fine crops of wheat, oats, barley, potatoes, &c., it is evident that the praise bestowed on this region is no more than it deserves. There is said to be another flourishing settlement on the western side of the lake on Ashuapmouchuan. At the Indian reserve at Point Bleu there is a settlement of Montagnais Indians, pure Indians, veritable hunters. Houses have been erected for them, but they prefer living in their tents, using the houses as repositories for their various belongings. They go into the woods in the winter, seeking furs, and are said to endure great hardships being often in want of food when game is scarce. Indeed, it is said, many have died of starvation. The young people are, as a rule, healthy looking and round faced, but the older people carry signs of their hard life in their bent forms and hollow cheeks. It may be noticed that very few old men are seen among them.

As a consequence of the great fire, the trees on the south side of the lake are but small. On the north side and in the country around the Saguenay, lumbering operations have been for many years carried on by the Messrs. Price, Brothers, of Quebec, and most of the valuable timber taken out. The principal trees are spruce, balsam, white and yellow birch.

Leaving Lake St. John and turning southward, with the exception of some good land on the Metabetchouan river, there appears to be little to entice the settler till you approach St. Raymond. Other fertile spots may be found when the country is better known, but at present the