

Sir J. Richardson, C. B.  
9 March 1857. people to feed them, to be scattered over that very thinly peopled country, otherwise they could neither subsist in it nor govern it. I look upon it that the opening of the trade would bring in rival parties; and from what I saw formerly I cannot doubt but that the same scenes would recur which I witnessed in 1819 and 1820.

2946. You have spoken of the means of living. I think you wintered for two or three years in the country: can you give us an idea of how you lived in any one of those winters; of course you were kept in the best way that you could be?—We lived in different districts in the different winters: in the winter of 1819–20, when I accompanied Sir John Franklin, we lived at the Hudson's Bay Post, upon the Saskatchewan, at Cumberland, and were fed by the Company, principally upon fish, and partly on meat; but the next winter, of 1820–1821, we lived upon the verge of the barren grounds, where there are reindeer, and we fed upon the reindeer and upon such fish as the small lakes yielded.

2947. Sir J. Pakington.] Where was that?—At Fort Enterprise, some distance north of the Great Slave Lake.

2948. Mr. Edward Ellice.] Had you any farinaceous food or vegetables?—We had none whatever; no vegetables of any description.

2949. Nor flour?—Nor flour; and we lived that year entirely in the same precarious way that the Indians themselves did; towards the spring frequently passing two or three days without anything to eat at all.

2950. Mr. Bell.] In what latitude was that?—It was in 64 degrees.

2951. Mr. Edward Ellice.] You wintered one year up at Great Bear Lake, did you not?—Yes.

2952. I think there was one winter that you were there when you had hardly anything but fish to live upon?—We passed an entire winter at Fort Franklin, almost wholly upon fish; only in the spring we got a little animal food.

2953. In fact, there were six or seven months in which you tasted nothing but fish?—More than that; I should say we were eight months at least without tasting anything but fish, except a hare occasionally, and a little moose meat towards the beginning of summer.

2954. That may be the fate of any people I suppose who go up to live in that country?—Any one wintering at the west end of Great Bear Lake would have to depend entirely upon fish.

2955. Mr. Kinnaird.] Is that fish dried or fresh fish?—It is frozen; it keeps the whole winter.

2956. Chairman.] When you talk of transferring the country, do you mean the whole country?—The whole country.

2957. Do you think it would be desirable, if it could be done in an equitable manner, to separate any portion of the country now administered by the Hudson's Bay Company which would be available for the purposes of colonisation and settlement, leaving the rest to be managed as mere hunting ground by the Hudson's Bay Company?—There is no doubt that the Red River and Vancouver's Island might be separated, but I do not think that settlers would go to the Red River until the progress of settling in Canada had advanced so far.

2958. Would there be any harm in making such arrangements as would enable settlers to go there if they wished to go there?—I see no objection to it, provided there is an arrangement made to govern the colony sufficiently.

2959. You mean that if the internal administration of such districts could be sufficiently provided for, you see no difficulty, so far as the Hudson's Bay Company are concerned, in their surrendering the administration of such districts, maintaining their administration over land which was calculated for nothing but for the fur trade?—I can see no possible objection to separating the Red River if such is desired, provided a sufficient number of troops are sent; there must be a military force, I think, otherwise it would not be safe.

2960. Why would that be more necessary in the event of a separation than it is now?—At present the Hudson's Bay Company's influence over the Indians is beneficial; the natives are dependent upon the Hudson's Bay Company for supplies; but if they could get supplies elsewhere, and if spirits were brought in (for there is nothing which will prevent the introduction of spirits but the resolution of the Company not to take them in) I think it would require a strong military force to keep the Indians in subjection.

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