down the Clearwater and the Athabaska to Fort Chipewyan. For over 100 years the travel incidental to the fur trade of all the far northwest country was carried over this famous route but, as stated in another part of this report, it was practically abandoned about 1885 and the traffic now goes chiefly via Edmonton and Athabaska Landing.

SOIL.

The soil throughout the district varies so much that a general report of it would be inadequate. In the south-easterly portion the soil is good, being a light loam, with a blue clay subsoil; towards the west the soil is light loam with sandy clay subsoil. North of Montreal Lake the soil is still good but large stones occur more frequently till at Lac la Ronge rock outcrop is met with. There are of course fertile spots where the soil attains a considerable depth, but no large compact areas of land occur in the northeastern part of the tract explored, except at Stanley, where, perhaps three thousand acres of arable lands may be found in one block. To the west of Lac la Ronge though rock outcrop continues, fertile spots occur more frequently, till at Trout Lake there is no sign of rock. The soil around Trout Lake is light and rather sandy, muskegs occur frequently until Snake Lake is reached. Sandy River flows through a large hay meadow, bounded on the west by a muskeg or peat bog, extending westerly to Lac Ile a la Crosse. This hay meadow varies in width from one quarter of a mile to three miles. Abundance of good hay might be cut along this river. This whole country between Snake Lake and Ile a la Crosse Lake, needs drainage and there are few high spots in it except along the shore of the lakes or rivers. On the west side of Ile a la Crosse settlement there is practically no land fit at present for cultivation, the country being all low and almost a muskeg I explored this side pretty thoroughly for a distance of about 60 miles and found it to be practically all the same, and almost the same level as the lake. Along what is termed Deep River, connecting Ile a la Crosse Lake and Little Buffalo Lake, the banks are higher and the land good, but this is only a fringe along the river, seldom extending more than half a mile inland. These muskegs could, of course, be easily drained.

The soil around Buffalo Lake is light, but appears to be fertile. It is generally a light loam rather inclined to be sandy, with a sandy subsoil. In some places the soil is much heavier and is very fertile. La Loche River flows through an immense swamp, which extends for miles on each side, no ridges being even in sight. At La Loche Lake the soil is very much better, being a heavy loam varying from 18 inches to almost any depth. Once the height of land at Portage la Loche is crossed on the portage, the whole country towards the west takes on a far better aspect, and the soil appears to be as good as could be desired.

TOPOGRAPHICAL FEATURES.

The topography of this tract varies very much as one travels north. In the ... southerly portion, on the west side, along the valley of the Big River, the ... is broken by deep coulees, and the prairie is rolling with mound topped ... admirably suited for ranching; farther north it becomes flat a... low. In the ... part of the tract it is all flat, very few ridges occurring. ... this latter ... the construction of roads would not be easy as swamps occur fre... quently. Winter roads of course might be built in almost any direction by ... driving the way.

CLIMATE.

The climate conditions seemed to be most favourable. The expression "Frozen North," sometimes used, is a misnomer. Of course the winter is cold but