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JULY 22, 1908

FARMER'S ADVOCATE AND HOME JOURNAL, WINNIPEG

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THE COUNTRY WEST OF HUDSON'S BAY.

Mr. Fred G. Durnford, C. E., of the Department of the Interior, recently gave out some very interesting information concerning the little-known region lying immediately to the west of Hudson's Bay. One of the best authorities, he said, upon Churchill in ancient days was a man of the name of Robson, a civil engineer, who constructed Fort Churchill, who was there at various periods from 1733 onwards, and who appears to have been a very careful observer as well as a good engineer. He spoke of the vegetables which he had raised there, and also of the horses which had been employed for several years, and also of the cattle at the fort. He said that in spite of the cold winds on Esquimaux Point he was able to produce excellent vegetables. He dug down in the soil—it was the month of July—and found that he had to dig down a depth of three feet six inches before he came to the frost, represented by a sheet of eight inches of ice, and he makes the note that this thin stratum of ice below does not in any way affect the vegetation. He went on to speak of the horses that were used in drawing stones and other material for the fort, and the fine butter that was made, and spoke of it generally as a good agricultural country round about there. That was in 1773 to 1747.

Mr. Durnford thought it was 1784 when David Thompson first started his diary. It extended on to 1850. He was one of the first men to cross the Rocky mountains and the discoverer of several passes. Howe's Pass should have been named after him. He went very near the Yellow Head Pass, but did not go through, passing by what he calls the Athabasca Portage. Right across the continent, from Churchill to the mouth of the Columbia river, he has left a very valuable series of meteorological observations taken every winter during the time he was with the Hudson's Bay Company, for seven years, and later, from 1797 to 1814, with the Northwest Company. He observed at Split Lake; he observed at Sepiwek Lake, also at Cumberland House, at York Factory, at the South Indian Lake, at Reed Lake, Peace river, etc., etc., and left a series of meteorological tables which are of great value.

The opinion that one must gather from his writings is that the principal reason agriculture was not carried on was because the mouths to be fed did not appreciate the benefits of eating vegetables. The Indians being all meat eaters it was thought superfluous on the part of the companies to attempt to raise vegetables or grain for them.

Mr. Durnford pointed out that the climate varies considerably. He drew attention to the fact that the further north we go the better the stamina of the men we find there. He had travelled quite largely in India, and found the nearer he approached the Himalayas the finer the class of men. The men from the mountains, the Sikhs, are men of magnificent physique. You find this applies also as regards the Esquimaux, who appear to be a fine race physically, kindly in their disposition and nature, not cruel to the same extent as those of more southern latitudes, and you find the same thing down in Patagonia. Towards the limit, as you may say, at which men or cereals can be grown you find the best. That has been brought to the notice of the witness very strongly living out in India. Rice is the staple grain of that country, and grows well, yet we find in Carolina a much better quality. The nearer to the poles it is possible for plants or the human species to survive, there the best of their species are found, and so, though the northern climate is rigorous, it is habitable.

Mr. Durnford quoted the experience of Mr. Hanbry, who started from Churchill and went north and along the Chesterfield Inlet up to the Arctic ocean, travelled west along the Arctic ocean and up the Coppermine river to Great Bear lake, passing two years amongst the Esquimaux in 1904 and 1905. He collected some very valuable information as regards the climate of that northern country. Its people, of course, have been used to the rigors of the climate. He said that new-born children are laid on the snow by their mothers, without

receiving injuries, and he makes a statement which would at first seem almost a fairy story did we not know that he had been living among the Esquimaux in their snow houses. He says that a temperature in that very dry climate of 23 degrees is equivalent to 60 degrees in a more humid one, and that when the temperature reached 28 above zero, they had to cut a hole in the snow house, because they found it uncomfortably warm. It is a strange but a very valuable statement, as tending to show that though the first persons to go into our north country, for instance, natives of the Old Country, might suffer through ignorance, those who learn how to live there would undergo no greater inconvenience than they would in a climate such as we find in Ottawa.

In connection with the projected Hudson's Bay route, it is interesting to note what experienced and observing explorers who have visited the region just west of the Hudson's Bay have to tell about the country there. Among those best qualified to inform us as to this territory is Mr. A. P. Low, Director of the Geological Survey. He was recently examined on this subject by a Parliamentary committee at Ottawa.

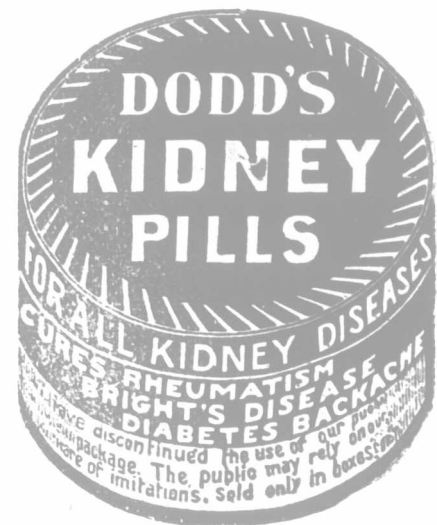
Mr. Low explained that he had some personal knowledge of the territory of Keewatin, immediately to the west of Hudson's Bay. The country between Norway House and Hudson's Bay is not very elevated. The highest points in it are probably somewhere in the neighborhood of 1,000 feet above sea level. For about half the distance to Hudson's Bay it is practically a rolling plain, and the rocks are ancient rocks of the Laurentian and Huronian age. Beyond that there was an ancient deposit of limestone and sandstone, extending in a wide line around the northern part about half way across. The country for about half way down from Norway House to Churchill slopes very gently towards the bay, so that the grade is not more than eight or ten feet to the mile, if it is that. The northeastern part is practically a plain.

There are considerable areas of low swampy lands. The surface going down into Hudson's Bay after you get into the Wolstenholme country is fairly swampy. The rivers have thrown up banks, and it is only at an occasional place that a break through those banks occurred to let out the drainage. In many places the river banks are from five to ten feet higher than the surrounding country, and in consequence the land beyond is drowned more or less, very often extending back for a distance as far as one can walk in a day.

Mr. Low considered that probably half the country due east from Norway House, say for 100 miles, would be fit for agriculture. He would rank the agricultural possibilities there as fair.

Of course there are very few settlements in there now, and the only one Mr. Low visited was a Hudson's Bay post at Trout Lake, and they were growing peas and garden truck of all kinds, also potatoes and fairly decent looking crops. They were not bothered very badly with summer frosts, as Mr. Low could see from the crop of green peas. The climate seemed quite favorable for hardy crops. The soil areas that are fit for agriculture are fairly large the rocky hills only crop at intervals, and there is quite a large area there that Mr. Low thinks will be fit for future settlement.

As to the far northern region about Chesterfield Inlet and Fullerton, it is in



the barren lands and unfit for agriculture. The tree line ceases on the coast close to Churchill and crosses off to the northwest towards Mackenzie. The country on the mainland there is quite low. The hills never extend more than 300 or 400 feet. There are no forests up there and the only natural resources would be probably the minerals, and furs and the sea and lake fisheries.

In his evidence as to the resources of the more southern sections of Keewatin which he had explored, namely, between Norway House and Hudson's Bay, Mr. Low stated that the forest, as in a great many other parts of Canada, had been largely destroyed by fire, but around some of the large lakes and on their islands and other places, a fair growth of timber is found in that region with white and black spruce, pine, aspen poplar and white birch of eighteen inches diameter. The trees are fairly clean, and a great many of them would probably make two or three logs, so that what remains of the timber there is fairly decent and good, except on the low swamp land, where the growth is confined to black spruce and tamarack of no great size.

THE FARMER'S LIABILITY

The question of the liability of the farmer in the case of the sale of a beef animal, which, on slaughter, was found to be tuberculous, has recently been tested before the Lord Chief-Justice in the English High Court, King's Bench Division. Following is the comment of the Scottish Farmer on the trial:

The argument of the butcher, based on the Sale of Goods Act, was that, seeing he bought the bullock for slaughter as human food, there was an implied warranty that its carcass would be suitable for the purpose in view. The point was very well argued. The butcher's counsel maintained that, seeing the butcher was held liable if he sold diseased meat, even when he had no knowledge of its being diseased, the farmer from whom he bought the animal should be made liable to him. Counsel argued that the butcher should not be held liable for failure to diagnose disease on a cursory glance, but that the farmer should be amenable to the law, seeing he would have the animal in his possession for possibly twenty seven or twenty-eight weeks. The farmer had opportunities for seeing and examining the bullock and if it was tuberculous, he ought to have known.

Some interesting points came out in evidence. The butcher was confronted with the resolution of one of his own trade federations, to demand an express warranty of soundness from farmers. If there was already, as the pursuer in this case maintained, an implied warranty, there was no need for an express warranty being exacted. Expert evidence was laid, and, as usual, it was contradictory. Professor Owen Williams, of University College, Liverpool, averred that some symptoms of disease would have shown themselves in an animal so badly tuberculous as the animal in dispute. He also alleged that by means of the tuberculin test farmers could protect themselves. The flesh of this particular animal was said to be excellent, and the bench had some difficulty in believing that a farmer could have supposed that such an animal was diseased. The veterinary inspector of the market gave splendid evidence. He was candid to a degree. Asked what chance there was of detecting disease in an animal through such an examination as he was able to make while the animals passed before him, he promptly answered, "Not much." Doing his best to ascertain whether beasts coming into the market were healthy or not, he was forced to admit that he could not so ascertain in one case out of twenty. In other words the meat inspection in some markets is purely nominal.

The strongest witness on the side of the farmer was Sir John McFadyen, an eminent veterinary authority. He described the tuberculin test, and expressed his opinion that it was not a reliable operation. It was a veterinary operation, and unreliable in the case of field cattle. When rightly used, it was almost infallible, but he did not tell the extent of the disease. His point in evidence was that the test did not give an implied warranty, and could not give an express

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Mrs. Thomas Miller, Allandale, Ont., writes:—"I suffered terribly with diarrhoea and asked the druggist for something to cure it. He gave me a small bottle of medicine of his own manufacture, but I got no relief from it. A friend advised me to get Dr. Fowler's Ext. of Wild Strawberry and I was cured after taking a few doses.

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In putting the case to the jury, the Lord Chief Justice asked two questions: 1, Did the plaintiff (butcher) really rely upon the defendant's skill and judgment? And (2) could the defendant, by reason of his skill and judgment ascertain whether the animal was tuberculous? The juries answered both queries in the negative so that the highest court has decided against the butcher, and practically declared that he must bear the loss, if he has invested in a tuberculous animal.

In saving banks it is customary to require a new depositor to sign an identification blank. In a certain savings bank recently a woman was somewhat unwilling to comply with this request.

"What is your husband's name?" asked the clerk.

"My husband's name is Peter Jones. What is your wife's name?" snapped the fair depositor.



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