

in 1785, a sum total of £180,000 yearly—no small item in the business of a new country. Considerable enterprise and capital had been expended by the various companies, principally by that known as the North-West Fur Co., of Montreal. The first adventurer went from Mackinaw in 1765, two years after the conquest, when their canoes were plundered at Lake La Pluye (Rainy Lake) by the Indians, and a like venture the following year met the same fortune. The year 1767 saw them again at Rainy Lake, where they were permitted to leave part of their goods and the canoes allowed to penetrate beyond Lake Ouinipique (Winnipeg). In 1769 the canoes were again plundered, but the following year they penetrated beyond Lake Bourbon, and thus on till 1774, during which new parts were discovered totally unknown to the French. This continued on down to 1782, by which time the Grand Portage, from the western extremity of Lake Superior, embracing a carrying place of about ten miles overland and through a chain of lakes and rivers to Lake Du Bois (Lake of the Woods) was firmly established. The North-West Fur Co, was formed during the following year, 1783, consequent upon the rumored provisions of the Treaty ordering the delivery of the western posts, and proposing for the international boundary west of Lake Superior, to follow the chain of lakes and waterways reaching to the Lake of the Woods, thereby relegating the Grand Portage, if not entirely to the United States, at least giving them equal access to the Canadian fur trade, with the Canadians themselves. This was the state of matters at the time of the Treaty of Versailles which, with a stroke of the pen, threatened to wrest the fruits of years of enterprise from the rightful owners and which caused such unwonted activity in Canadian fur traders of the west. Benjamin and Joseph Frobisher, as directors of the North-West Fur Co., in June, 1783, despatched Umfreville and St. Germain, two thoroughly trained Hudson Bay veterans, in search of a new passage at least forty leagues distant from the international boundary. They started at Lake Alempigon (Nipigon), and after much persevering toil, discovered a chain of lakes and rivers forming a portage north of Lake Du Bois (Lake of the Woods) reaching to Lakes Bourbon and Ouinipique (Winnipeg) and the further West.

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Governor Haldimand was appealed to for assistance and encouragement, and in May, 1784, he authorized Capt. Daniel