

There can be no question, however, that the great predominance of muskeg and swamp in this disputed territory and the causes to which it is due, detracts greatly from its value in an agricultural point of view.

On the Mattagami, Missanabie and Abittibi branches of Moose River, the stratified or sedimentary rocks appear to crop out or terminate at or about what are called the long portages. These portages are from ninety to one hundred and twenty-five miles distant from Moose Factory, which is itself situated at or near the mouth of Moose River. Commencing at the lower end of these long portages, the country to the south rises some 300 feet in the next ten miles or so, and we enter upon what I have called the central plateau of this territory. Underlying the loose material (mostly drift) which here forms the surface, we have hitherto discovered no stratified rock, but only those belonging to the old Huronian and Laurentian systems. It is in the upper or southern portions of this plateau, that Lakes Opazatika and Brunswick, and those sections of the country upheld the last two seasons are, for the most part, situated.

Although these rocks do not, in this plateau, rise often, or to any considerable height above the general surface, they are frequently met with in the banks of the rivers and on the shores of the lakes.

Running as they appear to do in reefs having an easterly and westerly bearing, and intersected, as they are, by numerous powerful trap-dykes having generally a northerly course or bearing, the bed rock, unlike that underlying the great plain to the north, is very uneven and imparts to some extent, a corresponding unevenness of the surface. In consequence of this (or partly at least) this land in this plateau frequently appears in the form of ridges or knolls with depressions occupied by shallow lakes, marshes or swamps. As compared with the plain below, the area in proportion to the whole, of muskeg, is very much less, and that of the dry land greater, in this central plateau.

That portion of this plateau, to an examination of which my attention has been chiefly devoted this season, does not appear to include much muskeg, properly so-called. But there is undoubtedly a great deal of swampy land, especially in the south-west part.

Notwithstanding this, I am satisfied that within the bounds specified, there is a larger proportion of easily reclaimed arable pasture and meadow land fit for settlement in this tract than any other of equal extent and equally accessible in the territory.

No step, however, can be safely or prudently taken toward opening up and developing any part of this northern territory or any of its resources until the boundary question is settled and the Indian claims decided.

It is difficult to describe intelligibly a larger tract of land of which no instrumental survey has been made, and in which only a very few points (such as portages or the junctions of rivers) can be found having any known or recognized names to refer to.

For this and other reasons, therefore, I have thought it better to lay down on a map of the country much of the information which I have been able to procure in reference to the land in this part of the territory.

In regard to the soil, I may say, however, that the best soil here, as elsewhere in this territory, is the alluvial. This is met with of course on the river bottoms, and much of it is flooded for a longer or shorter period in the spring. The water, however, subsides rapidly after the snow is melted, and I have no doubt valuable crops can be raised from the greater part of this bottom land after the flood has abated. The sub-soil on these bottom lands is universally clay or marl, but sometimes there rests on this a sandy or sandy-loam soil of variable thickness.

On the higher ground clay or marl is almost always met with, either immediately at the surface or within two feet of it. It is the same as the drab or light coloured clay soil, which has proved so fertile under cultivation at New Brunswick Post. In some places the soil was found to be a sandy loam, but this was very generally observed to repose, at no great depth, on clay marl. Limited areas of very light sandy soil were met with in a few localities. One (especially noticeable) occurs about twenty-four miles up the Pazhushkootai river (of Dr. Bell's map). It is situated on the east side of the river and forms ridges, or rather mounds, sixty or seventy feet in height, from the top of which a better view of the surrounding country can be obtained than anywhere else in that section of the country.