

effort at improvement and to magnify every defect while the Company's prospects are steadily improving, is a course as unpatriotic as it is unfair, and should be frowned upon by every one, concerned in the prosperity of Canadian enterprises, and interested in the development and progress of the country.

OUR UNEXPLORED LANDS.

Until quite recently it has been generally believed that the large extent of country between the head of Lake Superior and the settled districts of Ontario, and extending northward to James' Bay, was utterly barren and uninhabitable. Recent explorations, however, would go to show that this description is entirely overdrawn, and that, at the very lowest estimate, there are many tracts of good land to be found, which are quite capable of settlement.

It is not very creditable to us, as a people, that so little should be known of the real character of the interior of our country. It is only within comparatively a few months that we have known anything about the Lake Nepigon region. We had heard, it is true, that there was a sheet of water of some kind somewhere north of Superior and connected with it. But it is only since the recent visits of Prof. Bell and staff, Messrs. Herrick, Fleming, Beatty and others, government engineers, and a few adventurous travelers, that we have learned that Nepigon is a large and beautiful lake; that it is connected with Lake Superior by a fine river, and that in the region there is sufficient fertile land to afford homes for a goodly number of settlers.

Further evidence that the interior of the country is not so inhospitable as it has been painted, comes to us from Moose Factory, one of the Hudsons Bay Company's posts. This place is situated near James' Bay, about 500 miles north of Toronto. Scarcely anything is known by the people of Canada regarding this section of country. It has been the interest, heretofore, of the great fur monopoly and its agents, to represent it as utterly barren and useless, and this has long been the general opinion. But a letter recently published in Ottawa from a gentleman at Moose Factory, bearing date the 25th August last, speaks quite favorably of the character of that comparatively unknown region. If his statements can be relied upon, not only the soil, but in many sections the climate, is equal to "central or even western Canada."

The soil of the country around Moose Factory is described as very fertile, and finer crops the writer of the letter referred to never saw, than those growing

there this summer. Wheat is said not to be a sure crop there, but about 100 miles inland there is a belt or plateau of very fertile land, which extends over a large surface of country, which is quite suitable for wheat-growing. This has been frequently proved by experiments at the Hudson Bay Company's posts. At Moose, besides barley, oats and peas, lettuce, rhubarb, cabbage, cauliflower, cucumbers, radishes, turnips, carrots, beets, parsnips, and many varieties of both annual and perennial flowers, were grown this season to great perfection. The country is well-wooded, abounds in mineral wealth, and contains many splendid lakes and rivers, which are alive with wild fowl and fish. The writer urges that the Pacific railway should pass through that country, "keeping well clear of the mountainous districts north of Lake Superior," for "a railroad passing through this country would have a two-fold object; firstly, to open up this vast country for agriculture; and secondly, as being the easiest and safest route to Red River."

We confess to having read this valuable letter with surprise, and, if the writer has correctly represented the facts, we consider that he is quite justified in asking: "With a fertile soil, and a climate suitable for grain-growing, is it too much to hope that this will be a great agricultural country at a day not very far distant?"

The above may be too sanguine a view to take, but after the experience we have had in the Free Grant district of Muskoka, we cannot doubt that there are large tracts of land in the interior of the country well worthy of our attention. Only a few years ago, the country around Lakes Muskoka, Rousseau and Joseph, was as much a *terra incognita* as the more distant regions of the Nepigon and Moose Factory are now. And yet, we now find that the former district contains much fertile land, and is rapidly filling up with hardy and industrious settlers. The possibility is that tens of thousands of acres of good land, not a little of it better than the lands of the Free Grant district, exist in the unexplored country to which we have been alluding, and that before many years these localities are destined to be opened up, and become the abode of a happy and thriving population.

We hope the work of exploring the interior of the country in the direction of James' Bay, will be prosecuted by our Government with increased energy. The officers of the Geological Survey, and the engineers sent out by the Ontario Government, returned from their explorations to the north of Lake Superior, recently. The result of their labours should be speedily laid before the public, and preparations should be made

during the winter for beginning the work next spring as soon as the season opens. Every acre of farming land found north and east of Lake Superior, adds to the importance and brightens the future of Canada, and we cannot know a day too soon how much of such land we really possess.

THREATENING THE PRESS.

An unseemly disagreement has arisen between the *London Reporter* and the Royal Insurance Company. In consequence of some strictures by that journal upon the management of the Royal, the Managers seem to have been aroused into a state of unwonted indignation; they cut off their subscriptions, and attempt to terrify the editor with the announcement that all future advertising patronage will be withheld from his publication. The conduct of these Managers appears to us, at this distance, to be little else than childish.

But the sensible thinking public will be tempted to ask—Why take such mortal offence at a little criticism? Has the Royal become so accustomed to the smoothing-down process that a slight back-stroke not only raises its hair, but rouses its ire? Or is it possible that this editor has told some pointed truths, which can be better "bluffed" than denied? The *Reporter* man declares his intention—now that his wrath is stirred up—of pricking "this over-blown bubble," and laying bare to the public gaze the affairs of an Institution which he declares is "rotten to the core." If the editor of the *Reporter* can establish his allegations, or even a moiety of them, this quarrel will possess great interest in more than one corner of the globe.

While the spokesmen of the Royal have acted a foolish part, we cannot acquit the *Reporter* of folly. Its criticisms display too much temper. It would seem that the editor has for the moment lost sight of the interests of the public in the pique of the journalist. No journal should be made the vehicle of personal spite, nor should its utterances be dictated by mere private interests.

In another London paper—one of the best and most enterprising of our English exchanges—*The Review*, the European Assurance Society displays similar sensitiveness to criticism. The directors, through the Company's solicitors, inform the editor that they "have reason to believe that the ensuing number of *The Review* will contain libellous matter affecting the Society," and state their determination to prosecute him forthwith if anything defamatory appears. To our mind, this is putting the meekness and forbearance of an editor to a too severe test. Such unwarranted interference with the liberty of the press would not be tolerated for a moment in this country. If it is possible to control the utterances of British journalists in this manner, it is little wonder that a host of swindling life insurance and other organizations have sprung up, flourished, and fattened on the spoils of an unsuspecting public. Against this kind of mischief there is no remedy so effective as a free press; and we at once become suspicious of the soundness and honesty of any institution which shrinks from criticism, and seeks to elude it by attempting to muzzle the press.