

Sir G. Simpson. crops were destroyed. Several years previously to that the crops were destroyed three years in succession by locusts; myriads of locusts ate up every particle of grass.

26 February 1857.

806. In what year was that?—In the years 1818, 1819, and 1820.

807. You have mentioned one instance in which corn was imported in some quantities, you say not considerable?—Flour was imported.

808. For the supply of the inhabitants at the Red River Settlement?—Yes.

809. Is that the only instance?—That is the only instance where we have imported; it was especially for the garrison. We had a wing of a regiment there, and were apprehensive that the crops would be insufficient for their maintenance.

810. In other years has there been a sufficiency of corn grown in that district in general for the supply of the locality?—Certainly not; two-thirds or fully half of the population live by hunting and fishing.

811. Are the settlers there encouraged in regard to hunting and fishing pursuits generally, to follow those pursuits rather than agriculture?—No; we are very anxious that they should follow their agricultural pursuits.

812. Does the Company purchase their flour?—Yes.

813. The Company purchase flour at the Red River Settlement, from the farmers in the neighbourhood?—We purchase all their surplus agricultural produce.

814. Do you mean that the farmers have no more to sell than what you purchase, or do you only purchase what you want?—They have no more to sell: they have only 8,000 acres of land under cultivation at the present time, although the country has been settled upwards of 40 years.

815. I suppose it was during the time that you were Governor that a certain Mr. John M'Lean, who has published "Notes of a Twenty-five Years' Service in the Hudson's Bay Service," was a servant of the Company?—Yes, he was so a part of the time.

816. I will read you an extract as taken from his book, and you can say how far it is correct. "A single Scotch farmer," says Mr. M'Clean, "could be found in the colony able alone to supply the greater part of the produce the Company require; there is one in fact who offered to do it; if a sure market were secured to the colonists of Red River they would speedily become the wealthiest yeomanry in the world; their barns and granaries are always full to overflowing; the Company purchase from six to eight bushels of wheat from each farmer, at the rate of 3s. per bushel, and the sum total of their yearly purchases from the whole settlement amounts to 600 cwts. flour, first and second qualities; 35 bushels rough barley; 10 half firkins butter, 28 lbs. each; 10 bushels Indian corn; 200 cwt. best kiln-dried flour; 60 firkins butter, 56 lbs. each; 240 lbs. cheese; 60 hams. Where he (the Red River farmer) finds a sure market for the remainder of his produce, Heaven only knows, I do not; this much, however, I do know, that the incomparable advantages this delightful country possesses are not only in a great measure lost to the inhabitants, but also the world, so long as it remains under the dominion of its fur-trading rulers." Do you agree in the comment of Mr. M'Clean there?—Certainly not.

817. In point of fact, do the Company purchase from the farmers settled in the neighbourhood of the Red River Settlement, all the corn the farmers are able to sell?—We are not able to get the quantity of corn to be held in dépôt that we require. I have written over and over again to the person in charge, to get all the grain he could for the purpose of being held in dépôt, and we can never get our quantity.

818. Mr. Gordon.] Will you allow me to remind you of one other sentence in your interesting work. It is at page 55 of volume 1: "The soil of Red River Settlement is a black mould of considerable depth, which, when first tilled, produces extraordinary crops, as much, on some occasions, as 40 returns of wheat; and even after 20 successive years of cultivation, without the relief of manure or of fallow, or of green crop, it still yields from 15 to 25 bushels an acre. The wheat produced is plump and heavy; there are also large quantities of grain of all kinds, besides beef, mutton, pork, butter, cheese, and wool in abundance." Do you adhere to that statement?—I do.

819. And yet you think it unfavourable for cultivation?—Yes. I there referred to merely a few small alluvial points occupied by the Scotch farmers.

820. Mr.