

247. Sir *John Pakington*.] Were you there yourself?—I passed about four months there; barley was even grown with success; that is to say, sufficiently so to be worth the labour bestowed upon it by the trader, and to furnish grain to add greatly to the means of subsistence of the small family occupying a trading post at that station; they were able to pick the very best pieces of ground to be found. Also at Fort Norman, in lat. $64^{\circ} 31'$, barley was grown, and that is the most northern spot in America where any grain has been grown.

Lieut.-Colonel
J. H. Lefroy, R. A.

23 February 1857.

248. Mr. *Grogan*.] Was that the only cereal crop grown in that locality?—Yes; wheat would not grow in either place; but I was told, I am not sure with what authority, that wheat had been grown about every third year, it being, in the intermediate years, cut off, at Fort Liard, not far to the south of Fort Simpson.

249. Was there any peculiar geological formation in that locality which conduced to the growth of the barley there, so much more northward than at Fort Cumberland?—At Fort Liard it is the tail of the prairies; there is a long high belt of prairie land which runs as far as the immediate neighbourhood of that spot; it is immediately under the shelter of the Rocky Mountains, and the climate is undoubtedly, as you approach the Pacific, much milder than it is to the eastward.

250. What distance would you say that Fort Simpson is from the Pacific or from the sea coast?—I think it is about 500 miles; I am not quite sure.

251. Mr. *Charles Fitzwilliam*.] Do you mean in a direct line, or to some particular point?—In a direct line. I think I made out that it was 500 miles from Sitka, which is the point where observations were made at the time that I was there; and therefore I had occasion to ascertain the distance from one point to another; but I speak from memory, and may not be accurate.

252. Mr. *Grogan*.] Do you consider that the difference of distance from the sea coast of Fort Simpson and Fort Cumberland was sufficient to account for that change?—It is one of the facts which go a long way towards accounting for it.

253. You mentioned that at Fort Simpson they were able to grow cereal crops, which at Fort Cumberland and the Red River Settlement were of so uncertain a nature that they could hardly be relied upon?—I did not intend to say so much as that. At Fort Cumberland and the Red River Settlement they grow wheat, which they do not at Fort Simpson; and with regard to the comparative uncertainty of the crops in the two places, I do not think I said anything. I suppose the crops are much less uncertain at the Red River than they are at Fort Simpson; but the cultivable portion of the soil at the latter place was confined to the island of which I have spoken; on the mainland, on either side, you get into a morass, which could certainly not have been cultivated.

254. Then you imagine that the island is the peculiarity?—Yes; it is due to the depth of alluvial soil upon an island, and to its being pretty well sheltered by large woods, which that soil enables to grow.

255. Mr. *Gordon*.] In traversing the course of the Saskatchewan had you an opportunity of making any observations upon its mineral resources?—Very slight. I ascertained that in the neighbourhood of Edmonton, one of the forts most to the eastward, coal is to be found, and workable coal, because it was used by the blacksmith for his forge; but I do not think in any great quantity.

256. Did you observe over what length of tract of country that coal extended?—It probably extends to a considerable region, because it is found again in one of the feeders of the Peace River, near Dunvegan.

257. You believe those to be portions of the same tract?—There is no doubt of it, I think.

258. Are you acquainted with both branches of the Saskatchewan?—Not the south.

259. Mr. *Roebuck*.] Are you acquainted with the length of the winter at St. Petersburg?—No; I cannot speak with any assurance upon that subject.

260. In the Baltic generally?—No; I cannot speak with any confidence upon those subjects.

261. Then you are not able to say whether the winter of that territory is shorter or longer than the winter in the Baltic?—I should be glad if you would be kind enough to define what you mean by "the winter;" meteorologists confine the term "winter" to the months of December, January and February.