

a single pair of old beaver, which once a year gave birth to four young ones. For four years he had trapped the four young beaver, and the fifth year he had caught three, making in all nineteen beaver in five years from one pair. This was a remarkably good return, especially when we consider that they are entirely self-supporting, both summer and winter. But what I wish to remark more particularly in this connection is, that this gent'eman frankly admitted he had been trying the whole time (five years) to catch the old beaver, but in vain; for up to that period their extraordinary sagacity had enabled them to elude the traps to which their inexperienced offspring had regularly fallen victims.

It is not that in the whole territory the quantity of game, in the aggregate, is insufficient to maintain the wretchedly small number of inhabitants; but that game is so scarce that the hunter, let him cover as much ground as his strength will enable him to do, cannot obtain sufficient day by day, during the winter season, to keep himself and family alive. Neither deer nor bear are at all numerous. Some few caribou and moose-deer are killed in the central and southern part of the territory; but they are very scarce I think in the flat Muskeg region, near the coast. They are much more abundant on the Eastmain coast, and throughout the whole of the Labrador peninsula. The moose-deer is only met with on or near the Height of Land.

Of winged game ptarmigan and grouse, often called partridges, are the only kind which remain in the country during the winter. Sometimes the ptarmigan or white grouse come from the north in considerable numbers, and when they do so are a God-send to the natives; but they are by no means a reliable source of food. The variety of grouse most frequently met with, is what we call the "spruce partridge;" although the ruffed grouse or common partridge of southern Ontario is frequently seen in the southern and central region. Both these varieties breed in the territory.

Wild fowl are obtainable in considerable numbers in the spring and fall, especially on or near the coast, but leave for the south before winter sets in. Pigeons, unaccountably to me, are very scarce in the territory. Nor are small birds of any kind at all numerous, excepting on the coast and islands in the Bay.

The fish in the fresh water lakes and rivers are neither so plentiful or good as south of the Height of Land. In some few places a small kind of sturgeon is caught, and is good of its kind. Pike, however, and suckers are I should say the most important as a food supply; the former, indeed, under the name of jackfish, being in many places all the natives can get during the winter. Some of the lakes contain whitefish and lake-trout; the pickerel or doré is also caught in some of the rivers. These with a few speckled trout, and in some places a variety of chub, are the principal kinds of fish in the interior of the country. In the estuaries of the large rivers and in Hudson Bay itself, there are other species; these, however, have been fully described by Dr. Bell.

On the whole the food supply is precarious and uncertain; and seasons of plenty bear, I fear, but a small proportion to those of scarcity if not actual dearth.

It was stated in my first report on this territory, that the only hope I entertained of relief from this unhappy condition of the natives was in the opening up of the country. I am still of that opinion; and this is one reason why I am anxious to see the Canadian Pacific Railway located as far north as the interests of our Province and the Dominion will permit. Even admitting that the natives may not nominally receive a greater money value for their furs than is now paid by the Honourable Hudson Bay Company, all the necessaries of life would cost the Company very much less than they now do, in consequence of the cheapness of transport by rail compared with what it is by canoes. Thus at inland posts, such as Matawagamingue and Flying Post, they could give the Indians twice as much flour, oatmeal, pork, lard, sugar, and such like, for their furs as they can possibly afford to do at present. Some of these Indian families (every member of which frequently traps and hunts) catch from two to three hundred dollars worth of furs in the season, and might live really very comfortably if the price of the necessaries of life were only moderate. I am satisfied too, that as soon as the country is opened up a very little encouragement will induce the natives to turn their attention to the cultivation of the soil and the keeping of cattle.

The Indians with their families generally gather at the Posts soon after the ice leaves the rivers, bringing the furs they have succeeded in getting during the winter. Most