

On reference to the map it will be seen that Lac Dauphin, and part of Winnipegosis Lake approach within seventy or seventy-five miles of the Assiniboine. These places being accessible to steamers, land roads might be made across the country, which would afford all the accommodation required by a settlement in its first stage. Indeed, so obvious is this way of reaching the Assiniboine, that the Hudson's Bay Company supply their establishment at Fort Pelly by way of the lakes and Swan River, carting their goods from the latter place across the country to the Assiniboine.

In speaking of the navigable lines that might be made available, I should mention that at the Grand Portage there is said to be an old watercourse by which the Assiniboine, in all probability, has at some period discharged its waters into the Manitouba Lake. Now, as the Assiniboine is navigable, or in a state that it might easily be made so, as far as the Grand Portage, it may yet be found advantageous to open a water communication between it and the Manitouba Lake. The advantages which this route would possess over those by Lake Winnipeg and the Little Saskatchewan are that it would be considerably shorter, and would be open somewhat earlier in the spring.

In considering the project of colonising a country so remote to this, and of which so little is as yet generally known, the question will naturally arise as to whether the native population would be likely to offer any opposition to settlement, or whether the country, if occupied, would be easily governed. Believing that any information which will enable the Government to judge of these important matters will be acceptable, I shall, before concluding, describe the present state of the country through which we passed, confining myself to what has come under my own observation.

At Manitouba, Lac Dauphin, and Partridge Cross there are small settlements of Indians and people of mixed origin. At the first and last named settlements the people are pretty industrious, and raise wheat, Indian corn, and a variety of articles. At Lac Dauphin the settlers simply grow potatoes and Indian corn. They are gradually acquiring habits of industry, but they can live so easily by fishing or hunting, as Mr. Wells says in his report, that they are slow to adopt the more laborious pursuits of civilized life. Ducks, geese, and aquatic fowl of all sorts frequent the waters in that quarter in great numbers, and the lakes and rivers literally swarm with fish.

Near the Grand Rapid of the Saskatchewan we saw about fifteen families of Indians from Swan River, who migrate there annually to catch sturgeon. They seemed to me to be a very quiet and orderly people, and I thought that I could detect on their countenances that they were not wholly of Indian origin. On inquiring as to this point, some of them were proud to boast of their descent from the Canadian fur traders, who had occupied this country many years ago. At the upper end of Winnipegosis Lake we only saw one family engaged in making salt, and from thence, in a journey of 500 miles, by the valleys of Swan River and the Assiniboine, we saw not a living being, except the few people in charge of Hudson's Bay Company's establishment of Fort Pelly and Fort Ellice, until we got to the settlements in this neighbourhood. At Fort Ellice we were told that the hunters had gone further west. But from all we could see or learn, there was no avoiding the conclusion that the population which once wandered over the vast plains of the Assiniboine had decreased to an unexampled extent. This I attribute partly to the indiscriminate slaughter of the buffalo to supply the pemican required for the trade of the country, and partly to the introduction of horses, which has rendered these clumsy animals, the buffalo, an easy prey to the hunter, and the Indian, so that he can supply his immediate wants, in a profusion however boundless, never troubles himself about the future. Numerous, therefore, as the buffalo still are, there can be but little doubt that they will soon be destroyed. Large supplies of pemican used to be obtained at Fort Pelly and Fort Ellice; these establishments can furnish but little now. At many places we observed the plains furrowed with old tracks of the buffalo, and in some cases the banks of the Assiniboine were strewn with their bones; but there were none of these animals, we were informed, to be seen within several days' journey of any place we were at. This shows how fast they are being destroyed, and it leaves but the reflection that as their staple article of food diminishes, the Indians must decrease in numbers, unless they can be induced to adopt the habits of civilized life. That with proper management they may be so is fully shown by the success which has attended the labours of the zealous missionaries at the Grand Portage, Red River, Partridge Cross, and elsewhere. As to the people of the Red River Settlement, they are as orderly and quiet a community, I may safely say, as can be met with anywhere, and I believe there is nothing they desire more than to see the country opened up. In leaving this part of the country I have much pleasure in saying that, both from the people of this settlement and the officers of the Honourable Hudson's Bay Company, we have met with every kindness and civility. It is almost invidious to mention names, and yet I cannot omit those of Chief Factor M^r Tavish, at Fort Garry, who furnished us with many articles which we could not have otherwise obtained, and of Chief Trader Murray, at Pembina, who always had his hospitable quarters open for any of the party that passed his way.

The Hon. Provincial Secretary,
Toronto.

I have, &c.
(Signed) S. J. DAWSON.

P.S. Both Mr. Wells and I made a cursory survey, taking the courses, and correcting the distances by numerous observations as we proceeded, and I have left a letter for Professor Hind, informing him of our operations.

S. J. DAWSON.

Sub-Enclosure in Enclosure 1.

Sir,
Red River Settlement, June 30, 1858.
After leaving the Mossy Portage, on the morning of the 4th June I proceeded agreeably to your instructions to make a cursory survey of the west shore of Lake Winnipegosis, the River Dauphin and the lake of that name, the Little Saskatchewan, and the southern part of Lake Winnipeg, and would beg leave to submit the following report of my operations.

The western shore of Lake Winnipegosis, in common with the other lakes through which I passed, is much better adapted for settlement than the eastern one, inasmuch as the land is higher and the climate, if anything, a little better. In crossing Lake Winnipegosis from east to west, a distance of only about