

EXPLORATION,---EDMONTON TO PORTAGE LA PRAIRIE.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,
COMMITTEE ROOM No. 34,
TUESDAY, December 18, 1906.

The Select Standing Committee on Agriculture and Colonization met here this day at 11 o'clock a.m., Mr. McKenzie, chairman, presiding.

The CHAIRMAN.—Gentlemen, as you will see by the notice calling the meeting we have with us to-day Prof. John Macoun, Naturalist and Botanist, who has been engaged in the western part of our great Dominion during the past season and who will address us upon what he has seen there during that time. I have much pleasure in calling upon Prof. Macoun to address you.

Prof. JOHN MACOUN.—Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,—Before entering upon a description of the country, permit me to make a remark or two in connection with the past. I want to say to you at the start that I am not a tyro in the examination of the country and therefore my statements to you to-day you can take, not perhaps as Gospel truth, but as scientific truth.

EXPLORATIONS PREVIOUS TO 1906.

When many of you, gentlemen, were much younger than you are now—34 years ago in fact—Mr. Sandford Fleming invited me to accompany him across the prairies when he made his great trip in 1872. On that occasion I acted as a botanist to his party. Next year my report of that trip was published and it was the first revelation of the possibilities of the Northwest. In 1875, I was invited by Dr. Selwyn to go with him to make an examination of British Columbia and the Peace River country, especially the latter, and Mr. Mackenzie, who was at that time Premier, appointed me to that expedition. I returned through the prairie country and afterwards made another report on the immense west. Again in 1877 Mr. Mackenzie, when he was pushing, as much as he could, the construction of a railway through to the west, asked me to write a report on the interior plains. I did so and it was published in the year 1877 in the Railway Report. Afterwards, when the new government came in under Sir John Macdonald, ten parties were fitted out in the spring of 1879 to go and examine the whole of the Northwest. I was invited to take charge of one party and made only slight objection. They sent me to the south and I came through this country (pointing to the map). I started from Winnipeg and went right through to the head of Long lake, then to the Saskatchewan, passed along here to the Hand hills, next south to the Blackfoot crossing, then up into the mountains by the Bow River pass, and then north to Edmonton, and eastward to Battleford and Winnipeg. My report of the journey in that one season did more than anything else to wake the people up. It set them on fire.

METHODS OF TRAVEL.

By an hon. Member:

Q. Would you tell us your mode of travel?

A. I was the first man that took iron-bound carts on to the prairie. The opinion up to that time was that an iron-bound cart used on the prairie would shrink up and