

## Department of the Interior.

mouth of the Woody River, the trail passes through magnificent hay meadow, already referred to, and which is apparently miles in extent on either side.

On our return journey we camped at various points, and having with us an Indian guide familiar with the country, we made several exploratory trips on horseback for the purpose of inspecting the country which we traversed, sometimes travelling for distances of 30 miles and returning to our camp at night. The first exploration of this kind I made was towards the Porcupine Mountains, in Range 26, travelling across the Woody River, which at this point is 75 feet wide, and proceeded to within a short distance of the Porcupine Mountains; thence westerly, but parallel to the mountains, a few miles; thence easterly again striking our trail along the Swan River near the survey corner in Township 35, Range 28 West. The country passed through on this trip was sloping and rolling, with patches of poplar, willow and some wind-fall; soil good, though light in places. We made many trips of this kind in order to get a general idea of the country.

Leaving our trail on the north side of the Swan River on Monday, 18th October, we struck southerly and easterly along the north slope of the Minitonas Hill in Township 35, Range 26 West, a distance of about 18 miles. In this district a tract of fine land was passed, mostly open. From my own observations, and from what I have learnt through Indians, it would appear that the largest amount of good land lies to the south of Swan River.

I reached the Favel River on 19th October. At this point we sent our wagon transport back by way of Pelly and Aseissippi, and took pack horses over the Duck Mountain, along the line of the colonization road already referred to, which was then being constructed. I may state for your information that on this return trip we travelled through a district, 25 miles in extent, which was at one time covered with first-class spruce timber, but which has since been destroyed by fire. I think it is a fair estimate to place at two hundred million feet the quantity of lumber that has been destroyed in this way on the northerly slope of the Duck Mountain. In pleasing contrast to this, I may state also that as far as I was able to ascertain on the occasion of this trip, there is an extensive area of land on the Porcupine Mountains lying to the north of the Swan River Valley, clothed with a thick growth of green timber, not of a very large size it is true, but of such quality as to fully meet all the requirements of incoming settlers, and some means should be taken at once to protect this large extent of green forest from the ravages of fire.

The colonization road above referred to leaves the Swan River Valley just east of Minitonas Hill, crosses over a point of the mountain, thence following the Duck River till it strikes the gravel ridge already mentioned, and follows this ridge continuously to within nine miles of the town of Dauphin. We travelled on this ridge for 60 miles, and a finer natural road I do not think can be found anywhere.

We reached Dauphin on Friday evening, October the 22nd, having travelled in all nearly 500 miles.

### GENERAL REMARKS.

During the past summer, two survey parties have been in the Swan River Valley, have outlined 18 townships, and subdivided 9. Most of the land subdivided is of a very good quality and will be taken up rapidly in the spring. I notice also that the Indian Department had recently surveyed what is known as a "hay reserve" in Township 37, Range 26 West. This reservation takes in all the good hay land in that locality, and it will be a great drawback to the incoming settlers to be thus deprived of the hay. I am of opinion that it is a very unwise thing to continue this reservation here, as not one ton of hay is cut by the Indians, and the land is situated about 50 miles from the reserve on which they live. I would, therefore, strongly recommend that the reservation be thrown open to settlement so that incoming settlers may have a place from which to secure their hay supply.

### SURVEYS.

I would recommend that at least one survey party be sent to the Swan River Valley next spring to continue the work of subdivision, and that another party be sent out to out-