

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

23 February 1857.

primitive habits, leading the most hardy lives; generally speaking, contented, doing their duty faithfully to their employers, and in many instances taking sincere interest in the welfare of the Indians around them, and doing all they can to benefit them, but the Indian is a very difficult subject.

360. You think, upon the whole, that their conduct was that of men who were doing their duty, and acting in a considerate manner towards the Indians?—I think so, most eminently.

361. Mr. *Charles Fitzwilliam*.] You say that the buffalo exists over this territory on the bank; can domestic cattle live there also?—The buffalo exists over it; there are domestic cattle at most of the forts now; a cow or two; even low down on the Mackenzie's River they have domestic cattle. I was a fellow-passenger with a bull in a small boat on that river.

362. They can exist in the winter?—They have to be housed; but horses exhibit extraordinary hardihood there; the horses I have known to pass the winter in the open air at Edmonton, subsisting themselves by what herbage they could find under the snow.

363. The buffaloes are generally fatter in winter than in summer, are they not?—I believe so.

364. As spring comes, the cows, which are the fattest, I believe, immediately waste almost to skeletons?—I cannot speak with much authority upon that point, but the annoyance of flies in summer is so great, that I know it frets the animals almost to death, and they lose flesh very much.

John Rae, Esq., M.D., called in; and Examined.

J. Rae, Esq., M.D.

365. *Chairman*.] I BELIEVE you are very conversant with the territory now in the occupation and management of the Hudson's Bay Company?—With the large portion east of the Rocky Mountains. I have never been across to the west.

366. Will you have the goodness to state under what circumstances you have become acquainted with that country?—I entered the service of the Company in 1833, and was stationed at Moose Factory, in latitude 51°, on Hudson's Bay, as medical man, 10 years; during that time I saw a good deal of the natives of that part of the country. After that, for the last eight or 10 years, I was employed in arctic service, and spent some short time in Mackenzie's River. I then, in a winter journey, passed from Mackenzie's River by the usual route to the Red River, and down to St. Paul's across the frontier through the States. Those are the only two districts in the country that I have been engaged in; at Moose Factory ten years, in the Mackenzie River one year, and at York Factory for one season; all the rest of the time I have been employed in arctic service.

367. How long have you been employed in arctic service?—Eight years altogether; eight summers and four winters.

368. Speaking generally, what is your opinion of the capacity of this territory for the purposes of settlement and cultivation?—I have never been in Saskatchewan, but I know the character of the country from others; it is all capable of cultivation I believe. The difficulty is the same as Colonel Lefroy mentioned, the difficulty of carrying out the produce by Hudson's Bay, or by communication by the States, because in the States of course there is the same sort of produce nearer at hand, and of course the expense of carrying this produce from the Saskatchewan to market would do away with any profits that could be derived from it.

369. But you believe that, as far as soil and climate are concerned, there is in that part of the Hudson's Bay territory a considerable district of country suitable for cultivation and for settlement?—Quite so; it will be capable of production as soon as the country grows up to it; the country must grow up to it, the same as it does in the States. I passed through the States from the Red River, and the country has gradually been settled up; there was still about 400 miles of quite uncultivated country lying between Pembina and the farthest part settled by the Americans, when I passed down in 1852.

370. As far as you can form a conjecture, supposing that country was entirely open for purposes of settlement, do you think that there would be a disposition on the part of emigrants to go there?—Never, until the country is settled up near to it from the States, because as soon as settlers attempted to settle there
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