

## OTTAWA COUNTY.

### Its Resources and Capabilities.

Exactly what area of country is comprehended under the above title, cannot as yet be stated. Its northern limit has not been determined by actual survey, and may, perhaps, be placed at the south-west shore of 'St. James' Bay, or else at the southern boundary line of the Hudson's Bay Company's territory, at the height of land. If we give 14,000 square miles as its contents, we shall, perhaps, be near—certainly inside of—the mark for this last supposition for the northern boundary. Although it is the county which has paid the greatest revenue to the Provincial treasury, it has, so far, received very little in return. As yet quite a large portion of it has not even been surveyed for settlement. Its natural wealth has been the cause of much of this neglect. The millions of dollars worth of lumber its forests contained, has been conserved for the enriching of three or four firms, whose only care has been the barring out of settlers, who might intrude upon their timber limits, and a steady resistance to all improvements which might direct attention to their monopoly, and also enhance the value of the commodities they purchase in the district. This furnishes an answer to the query, why so valuable a section of country is so thinly populated. Farmers must depend altogether upon the lumber trade. It is that which sets the value both on labour and produce. Of late years, fair roads have been constructed in some localities, and this has struck a heavy blow at the lumberers' power; for improved travelling facilities have militated greatly against the nefarious "truck" system, which is generally made the rule in backward places. Wherever it is possible for the produce to be brought to market, and for necessities to be purchased without restrictions of "truck" or barter, prosperity is invariably the rule. The Townships of Lochaber, Buckingham, Templeton, Hull, Eardley and West Wakefield may be cited as proofs of what I assert. There is no reason why the Townships of Egan and Kensington, for instance, should not be as opulent and prosperous as any of these, had they the same advantages of travel. The soil is said to be equally good, probably better, and the land generally is not so rough. When the length of the journey to market has been reduced from four days to as many hours, we may expect the natural richness of the land to declare itself. At present these more northerly townships produce for sale only hay, oats and potatoes, as these products always sell in the shanties. Very little wheat is grown there, although a late *Pere* of the district declared that sixty bushels had been reaped for one bushel sown. There is no rotation of crops, and the little farms are robbed of the material which should be returned to them in the form of manure. What wonder if the inhabitants of this end of the County are few, when the virtual rulers there are men whose interests clash so decidedly with those of the settlers. But the lack of inhabitants is