

Over ... 135

follow the rich fertile valley of Rapid river in a line nearly parallel to the Riding Mountains, for about 30 miles more, and then cross the head of Oak river, 10 miles further on. After this, it would cross consecutively two branches of Arrow river, and the sources of Pine Creek, Bird Tail Creek, and another; all rising in the Riding Mountains (about 1,000 feet above the plain), to the north-east. It would then cross Shell river, flowing from a valley further north, and distant about 40 miles from Oak river; then another affluent of the Assiniboine, and finally cross the latter in lat. 51° , half way between Fort Ellice and Fort Pelly. Total distance, through a country composed of a rich, sandy loam, sinuosities included,

110

The Assiniboine flows here in a valley about a mile wide, 150 feet below the plain. Leaving the valley, the road would enter on a rich, park-like country, similar to that previously traversed, interspersed with small lakes, and partially wooded; and crossing the head of a tributary of Calling river, reach at the end of about 40 miles a small stream flowing to the north, called Little White Sand river; 3 or 4 miles to the north of Leech Lake on the Big Cut Arm, which runs south. The road would then continue for about 38 miles more to the S.E. foot of the Little Touchwood Hills. Total distance, allowing for sinuosities,

85

The tract of country embraced by the Little and the Great Touchwood Hills, which are about 20 miles apart, is of the best quality, rich, fertile, and well wooded; coal is also said to be found in abundance. The road would pass over the first 34 miles to a point 8 miles north of the deserted Fort, at the S.W. foot of the Great Touchwood Hills, in lat. $51^{\circ} 33'$, long. $104^{\circ} 20'$, and thence cross to their north-west side, about 16 miles distant, where a tributary at the foot of Heart Hill runs S.W. towards Last Mountain Lake on Calling river. In all

50

The road now enters again on the plain, composed here in some places of a lighter soil; and crossing at the end of twenty miles a second tributary to Last Mountain Lake, would re-enter the "true prairie land" near the S.W. end of a lake in long. $106^{\circ} 03'$, lat. $51^{\circ} 58'$. Distance

78

Thence it would continue for about 22 miles to the South Saskatchewan, 180 to 200 yards wide, and 10 to 14 feet deep, flowing in a deep-cut valley, the sides of which are steep and wooded, 230 feet below the plain. This it would cross in lat. $52^{\circ} 08'$, some 35 miles below the Moose Woods and the Half-breed settlement there, and proceed over rather poor soil to the North Branch, at the confluence of Eagle Hill Creek, a distance of about 35 miles. In all

57

The road might now follow a direct line to Fort Edmonton, so as to join the beaten track by the settlements of St. Alban and St. Ann, to the Yellow Head Pass and Jasper's House. But this would take it 50 miles to the north of the straight line, besides passing through a very marshy country; and that without any adequate compensation;

Miles ... 515