

ing of the route, it is presumed, that the influx of new settlers will afford a market for the surplus produce of the settlement, and by the time this ceases to be the case, the line of communication should be so far complete as to admit of heavy and bulky freight passing over it. From its first initiation, however, there will be an outward trade of great value, in furs and peltries, passing over it, while the mineral region of the precious metals to the West will probably afford an extensive market. Horned cattle and horses could also be raised in vast numbers, and transported at a profit; and large quantities of wood could be profitably produced and transported over the route even in its preliminary stage of development.

REMARKS.

In the absence of precise information, with reference to the topography of the country intervening between Fort William at the head of Lake Superior, and the Lake of the Woods, Your Committee would doubt the propriety of appropriating either funds or land in aid of a railroad which should commence or terminate at Lake Superior. In the meantime, and with as little delay as possible, these points, viz;—Fort William and the Lake of the Woods, should be connected by good roads, over the portages, and the improvement of the connecting water links, as suggested by Mr. Dawson, in the reports which, have been laid before Parliament. This will be alike useful as facilitating access to Fort Garey and opening up, for settlement, the fertile lands around Rainy Lake.

As it is one of the chief advantages of a railroad that it can be kept in operation independently of navigation, and to prove that it is desirable that any railroad to the North West should form a link in the existing railway system of the Dominion, Mr. Russell, in his interesting book recently published, says that, “the probability of a direct railway route being found, by the valley of the Ottawa to Red River, has been to a great degree confirmed by the recent survey of the Montreal River, a tributary which joins the Ottawa in Lake Temiscaming.” On this subject, Provincial Surveyor Herriek in his report of an exploratory survey, in the country north of Lake Superior says, “from inquiries made amongst the Indians, as well as from the officers of the Hudson’s Bay Company, who have travelled much through the country, I am informed that after from thirty to forty miles of hilly country, around Lake Superior, is passed, a level country is reached which extends from the height of land between Lake Superior, and the Red River Settlement east, for several hundred miles and along the north of the sources of the tributaries of the Ottawa. If, then, at any future period, it may be proposed to connect Canada with the Red River settlement, by railroad, it does not appear that much difficulty will be experienced in this part of the route.”

In view of the great importance of this subject your Committee recommend that all doubt respecting the practicability of such a route should be set at rest by an immediate exploring survey of the country indicated.

In order to insure the orderly settlement of the agricultural lands in the North West Territory, your Committee cannot doubt that it is the intention of the Government of the Dominion, to cause an immediate survey of such lands, as will probably be in first demand, and of such other portions as the tendency to settlement indicates, so as to anticipate all possible requirements.

As settlement is of much greater national importance than the mere acquisition of territorial revenue, Your Committee recommend that the lands in the “fertile belt”, as well as in other parts of the territory, which are reported as containing valuable mineral deposits, be offered on liberal terms to settlers and to such as desire to conduct exploratory researches.

Your Committee desire to confine their attention strictly to such matters as are legitimately within their province, but, as the acquisition of a territory, of such vast dimensions, in which there are the respective claims of Aborigines, Squatters, and persons holding under dubious titles to be dealt with, Your Committee may be permitted to express a hope that the Provisional Government to be formed will, without any unnecessary delay, dispose of or adjust such claims, so that an element of danger to the peace and prosperity of future settlements may be taken out of the way.

All which is respectfully submitted.

GEORGE JACKSON,
Chairman.

COMMITTEE ROOM,
HOUSE OF COMMONS,
CANADA, 16th June, 1869.