

navy. But when his vessel sailed for England, he left the sea in order to enter upon the more lucrative business of fur-trading.

In May, 1777, Long left Montreal for Mackinac, engaged as a bourgeois to lead a party of voyageurs into the far Northwest, and trade with the Indians on their own hunting grounds. The independent Canadian merchants of this period were endeavoring to maintain the old French connections with the Indians of the "upper country," and at the same time to undermine the trade of the Hudson's Bay Company, by intercepting the natives before they reached the posts of the latter. Long was assigned to the Nipigon district north and northeast of Lake Superior — a region early occupied by the French, and the scene of their hardy and audacious enterprises against the Hudson Bay trade.

Cameron¹ defines the limits of this region as follows: "Bounded on the south by Lake Superior, on the southwest and west, by the northwest road from Lake Superior to the lower end of Lake Ouinipique (Winnipeg); on the northwest and north by Hayes river and part of Hudson Bay; and on the north-east by Hudson Bay. Its greatest length from Pierre Rouge (Red Rock), at the entrance of Nipigon River, to the Lake of the Islands, on the Hayes river, is about three hundred and fifty leagues and its greatest breadth, from Trout Lake to Eagle Lake, is about one hundred and eighty leagues, but in most parts not over eighty leagues. The two-thirds at least of this country are nothing but rivers and lakes, some fifty leagues long; properly speaking, the whole country is nothing but water and islands." Into

¹ Masson, *Bourgeois de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest* (Quebec, 1890), ii, pp. 139, 140.