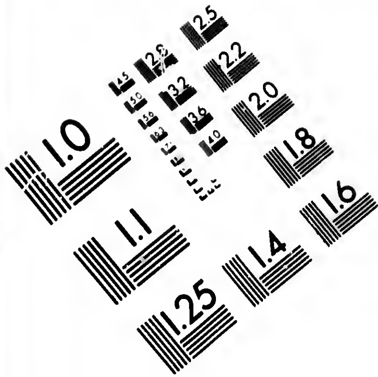
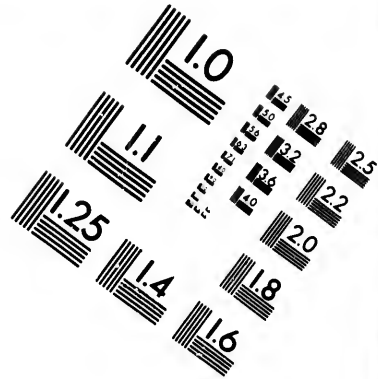

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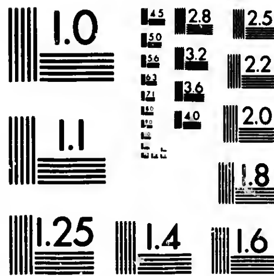
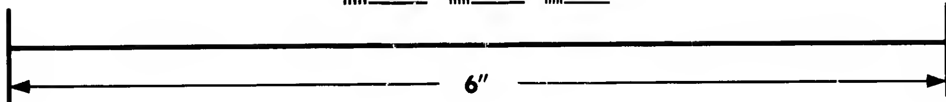

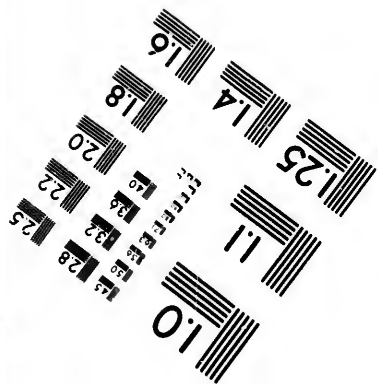
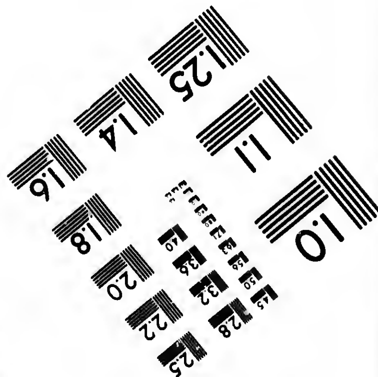

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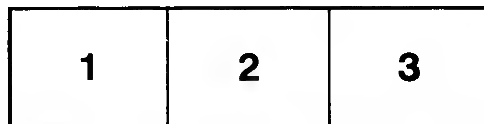

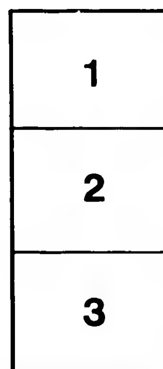

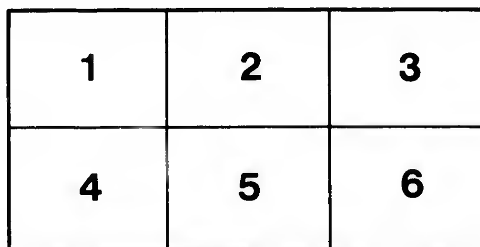

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THE

GREAT NORTH-WEST

OF

CANADA.

A Paper read at Conference, Indian and Colonial Exhibition, London, June 8th, 1886,

BY

ALEXANDER BEGG.

MARQUIS OF LORNE IN THE CHAIR.

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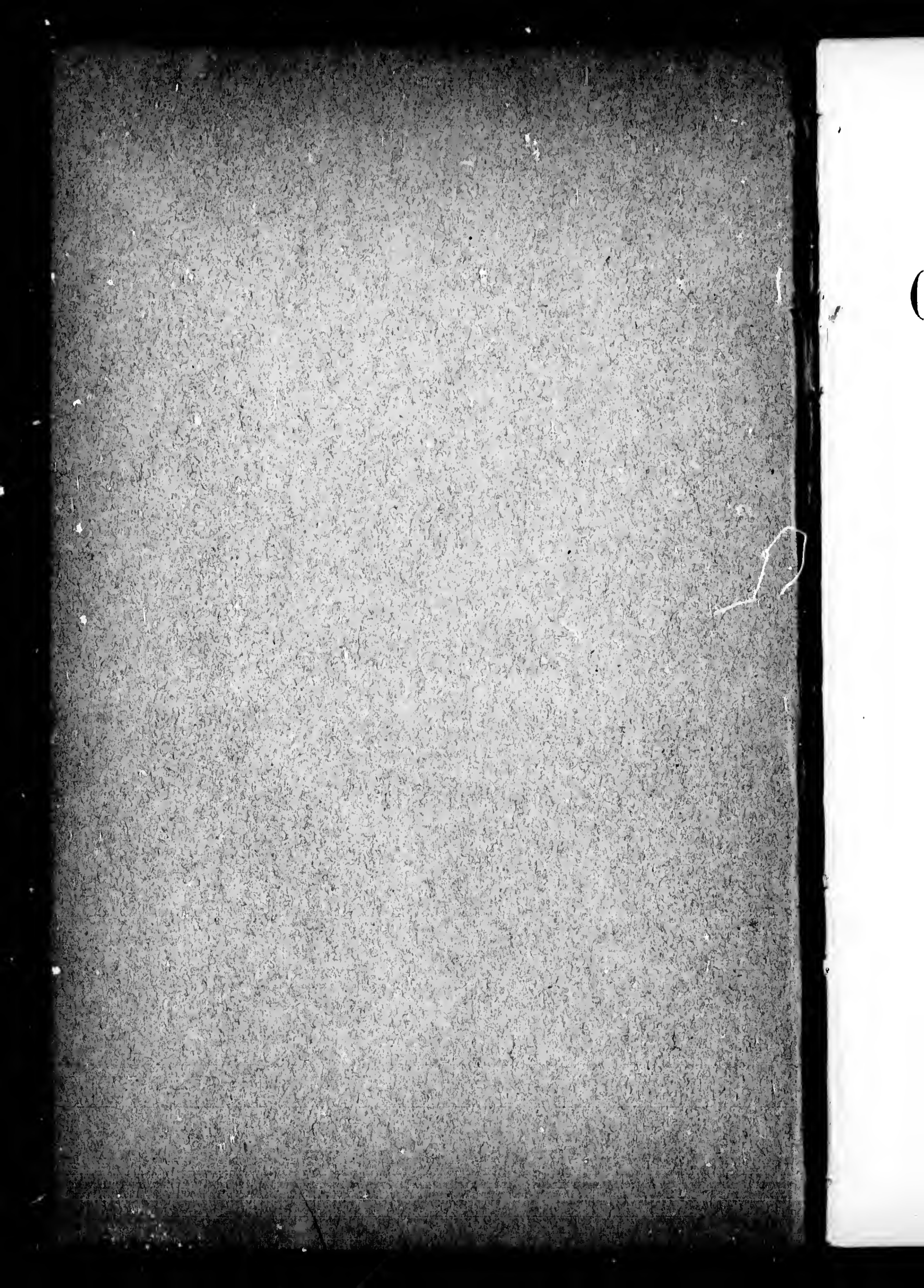

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THE GREAT NORTH-WEST
OF
CANADA.

On the 20th April, 1534, Cartier sailed from the port of St. Malo, in France, on an exploring expedition to the shores of the New World, and in the following August he discovered the river St. Lawrence, which he ascended as far as Hochelaga. In 1603, Champlain was dispatched by a company of merchants in France to make a preliminary survey of the St. Lawrence with the view of opening up a trade along its banks, and to his energy and zeal Canada is indebted for its earliest settlements. In those days, however, the course of development and settlement was slow, and in 1634, over thirty years after Champlain's first visit to the St. Lawrence, the whole white population from Gaspé to Three Rivers was hardly one hundred and fifty souls. The interior of the continent was yet to be explored. Champlain had previously ascended the Ottawa, and stood upon the shores of the Georgian Bay of Lake Huron, and he had received from western Indians numerous reports of distant inland regions, yet his knowledge of the great lakes in 1634 was exceedingly limited. He resolved to extend his explorations in the hope of establishing friendly relations with the powerful tribes living, as he was told, beyond the northern shores of Lake Huron. His imagination also was fired with the idea that by means of the great inland waters, of which he had but slight information, he might be able to discover a new highway to the East.

The dream of Champlain has now, after a period of nearly three centuries, become a reality, and the new highway to the East across the North American Continent is an accomplished fact. It is true that a

great portion of the route is overland instead of being altogether the water-way Champlain dreamt of, and the iron horse forms a very important factor in traversing it, while the great inland lakes are relegated to a secondary place. Yet the dream of a route to the East by way of the St. Lawrence, which fired the imagination of the old French navigator three hundred years ago, is practically fulfilled. The man chosen by Champlain to explore the region beyond Lake Huron was John Nicollet, who was the first white man to visit Sault St. Marie and who afterwards discovered Lake Michigan and explored the shores and part of the interior of what is now known as the State of Wisconsin. To the efforts of the Jesuit missionaries, however, is due the early exploration of Lake Superior, and their map of that greatest of inland lakes, in 1671, is a monument of their hardihood and enterprise. To Robert Cavelier, better known by the designation of La Salle, who, like Champlain, was inspired by the thought of discovering a new route to the riches of China and Japan, is due the early exploration of a large portion of the country lying west and south-west of Lake Michigan, and Father Hennepin, his lieutenant, penetrated as far in a north-westerly direction as the Falls of St. Anthony near the present site of Minneapolis. This was in 1680, and about the same time another French explorer, named Du Lhut, having reached the head of Lake Superior, continued his exploration to the south-west of that point, and when near the Falls of St. Anthony met Hennepin and joined his party in their return journeys southward.

These explorations, of which I have given a brief outline, attracted the attention of adventurous traders, who soon pushed their way beyond the farthest point reached by the explorers, and in the year 1700 fur traders from France are known to have penetrated as far as the Assiniboine Valley in the prosecution of their calling. In 1766 many traders from Montreal pushed their enterprises throughout the whole of British America, even to the Pacific shores. In 1784 the North-West Company of Montreal was formed, and carried on trade through Canada *viâ* the lakes to the head of Lake Superior, and thence across the continent to the Pacific Coast. Although the Prince Rupert Charter was granted by King Charles II. in 1670, it was not till the beginning of the eighteenth century that the Hudson's Bay Company entered the Saskatchewan and Assiniboine country to trade, and not till 1814 did

they set up their claim of exclusive rights under their charter. The effect of this latter act, however, was to arouse the animosity and resistance of rival fur companies, and it was not long ere the Hudson's Bay Company found themselves opposed by powerful organisations, such as the North-West and X. Y. Companies of Canada. So great then became the competition, and so bitter the rivalry between the three fur companies, that great loss of property and life ensued ; and finally there was every prospect of ruin falling on them all. In 1820, however, a union of the companies was effected, which resulted in their trading together under the original charter of the Hudson's Bay Company. An Act of Parliament was passed in 1821, which gave the company, as reconstructed, the exclusive fur trade for 21 years throughout the whole British North-West territory clear through to the Pacific. In 1838 a new arrangement was entered into by which the Canadian Companies, whose interests had been before united, and the stockholders of the Hudson's Bay Company, became entitled as nearly as possible to equal shares. A renewal of the license granting the right of exclusive trade was then applied for and granted to the Company for a term of 21 years from the 30th May, 1838.

The attention of the Canadian Government was first attracted to the country in 1816 by the conflict of interests between the Canadian Fur Companies and the Hudson's Bay Company, but no decided action was taken by Canada to acquire the North-West till 1868, although previous to that time negotiations on the subject had been going on between the Canadian and Imperial authorities.

The first attempt at settlement in the North-West was in 1811, when the Earl of Selkirk secured a tract of land from the Hudson's Bay Company for the purpose of planting thereon a colony of Scotch settlers, and in 1812 the first batch of these immigrants arrived in the country by way of Hudson's Bay and York Factory. The Scotch colonists at first met with many vicissitudes and trials in their new home, and it was not till 1827 that their settlement on the banks of the Red River began to show real signs of prosperity.

Lord Selkirk's colonisation scheme did not prove, so far as he was concerned, a financial success, and in 1835 the executors of his estate sold back the land to the Hudson's Bay Company for £84,111, although it had cost his lordship in the first place nearly £200,000. The Scotch

settlers named their settlement Kildonan, and at the time when it passed into the hands of the Hudson's Bay Company in 1835, the population is said to have numbered about 5,000 souls, since which time it has gone on prospering, and is to-day one of the most flourishing districts in the Province of Manitoba.

I must now deal with another body of the early settlers, viz :—the Half-breeds. Of these there were two classes, the English and the French—the former being the offsprings of marriages contracted by Company officers and servants with Indian women, the latter being descended from the pioneer traders and hunters who came from Lower Canada. These Half-breeds, accustomed to roving habits on the prairie and in the woods, were not favourably disposed to the quiet life of a settler, and therefore devoted themselves more to hunting and trading than to the cultivation of the soil. They were wont in those days to assemble in large bands in the spring, and proceed in a great body to the hunt. To give an idea of the formation of these hunting bands, I may quote the one which left the Red River Settlement for the hunting grounds of the buffalo in 1840. The brigade consisted of 1,210 carts and harness, 655 cart horses, 586 draught oxen, 403 horses used for running, with saddles and bridles. and the number of persons in the band amounted to 1,630 souls—men, women and children. These bands framed a code of laws for their guidance on the plains, and were very strict in their enforcement. The plain hunters generally returned to the settlement in August, and bringing with them, as they did, an abundance of provisions, they were not apt to pay much attention to gathering in the harvest.

The first missionaries to the North-West were the French Roman Catholic priests, for we hear of Father Dalmas, about the year 1690, engaged in the study of Indian languages to enable him to preach the Gospel to the savages of Hudson's Bay, and in 1736 Father Arnaud was killed by the Sioux in the vicinity of the Lake of the Woods while on a missionary tour. The conquest of Canada by England, however, interrupted the Catholic missions in the North-West, and it was not till 1818 that they were again resumed.

The Scotch settlers had their own Presbyterian missionaries from the first, and in 1820 the first minister of the Church of England, Rev. John West, arrived in the North-West. While noting the early progress

of settlement it may not be amiss for me now to give some particulars concerning the Indian tribes.

The original bands living to the East of the Rocky Mountains as far as Lake Winnipeg and Red River, within British territory, were as follows:—

Cree,	Shoushwap,	Yellow Knife,
Assiniboine,	Mountain,	Dog Rib,
Blood,	Saulteaux,	Strong Bow,
Blackfeet,	Takall,	Inland,
Beaver,	Nahany,	Copper,
Carrier,	Chipewan,	Swampy.

The population of the above in 1855 was, as near as it could be estimated, 47,000. A large proportion of the above bands, however, have become extinct since then, or they have become merged into other tribes, and according to the last census there were only 33,959 Indians in the North-West Territories.

It is notable that the Indians of the British North-West have ever compared favourably with those of the United States, and we have no wholesale massacres or prolonged Indian wars to chronicle such as the Americans have experienced at the hands of their Savages. This is owing to the good treatment ever extended to the Indians by the Hudson's Bay Company, and to the faithful performance of treaties and considerate management of Indian affairs by the Canadian Government.

In 1857 the Canadian Government fitted out an exploring expedition under the charge of S. J. Dawson and Henry Youle Hind, M.A., for the purpose of penetrating the North-West Territory and obtaining some definite information in regard to it. This step was probably taken under the impression that some immediate action would be recommended by the Imperial Government to bring about a transfer of the country to Canada.

In 1858 an attempt was made to organise a mail service between Canada and Red River Settlement, *viâ* Lake Superior, but in 1860 it was abandoned, having proved a failure. The United States, however, succeeded better, for in 1857 they established postal communication with Pembina on the boundary line, and a carrier from the settlement brought the mail from that place to Fort Garry.

About this time the traders had to cart their goods some six hundred miles over the prairie from St. Paul, Minnesota, and the Hudson's Bay Company, in addition to using this route for bringing in supplies, brought

a large portion of their English goods into the country *viâ* Hudson's Bay and York Factory. In 1862 the Hudson's Bay Company placed a steamer, called the "International," on the Red River, for the purpose of bringing in supplies and taking out their furs, and after this the steamboat gradually took the place of the Red River ox cart.

We now come to the time immediately preceding the transfer of the North-West to Canada.

In 1868, Sir George E. Cartier, and Honourable Wm. McDougall were appointed a delegation to England to arrange the terms for the acquisition of Rupert's Land by Canada. For some time previous to this, negotiations for the opening up of the country to settlement had been going on between the Canadian and Imperial authorities, and on the 16th August, 1865, Lord Monk forwarded copies of papers on the subject to Right Hon. E. Cardwell, Secretary of State. While, however, Canada was thus stirring herself in the matter, others were not asleep as to the importance and value of the great North-West. In 1858 a plan was submitted to Lord Stanley, then Secretary of State for the Colonies, for the purpose of opening communication with the Red River, in which it was proposed that a company should do the work with the aid of a land grant of forty million of acres in the neighbourhood of the Saskatchewan River. It would seem from this that there were capitalists in those days who had some faith in the future of the North-West. Then, again, in 1866, an application was made to Sir Edmund Head by one Alex. McEwen, to know whether the Hudson's Bay Company were willing to dispose of its cultivable territory to a party of Anglo-American capitalists, who would settle and colonise the same, etc., etc. A favourable reply was given by the Hudson's Bay Company to Mr. McEwen, but as the Canadian Government and the Imperial authorities had held a conference in 1865 on the subject of transferring the North-West, nothing could be done with Mr. McEwen's proposition pending further negotiations with Canada.

The mission of Sir George E. Cartier and Hon. William McDougall, of 1868, was successful, and as the result of it the great North-West became a part of the Dominion of Canada on the 15th July, 1870. The Hudson's Bay Company surrendered their rights to the territory in consideration of the payment to them by Canada of £300,000, and a reservation for the benefit of the company of a twentieth part of all lands set out for settlement within fifty years after the surrender.

The transfer of the North-West to Canada was unhappily accompanied by an uprising of the French half-breeds, who felt that not only had their interests been overlooked in the negotiations between Canada and the Hudson's Bay Company, but that in the proposals for the future government of the country they were not likely to obtain just treatment at the hands of Canadians. It is impossible within the compass of this paper to deal with the causes which led to such a spirit of misapprehension on the part of the half-breeds. The result was a small rebellion, and Hon. Wm. McDougall, the newly appointed Lieut.-Governor of the North-West, was refused admission into the territory. For several months the country was in a state of turmoil, until finally the passing of the Manitoba Act, and the evident desire on the part of the Canadian Government to act fairly to all classes appeased the people. In the meantime, however, Col. G. J. Wolseley, now Lord Wolseley, had been sent with an expedition composed of a detachment of the 60th Rifles, and two regiments of Canadian volunteers to the North-West, by way of Lake Superior, to be in readiness to quell the rebellion by force if necessary. The troops for several weeks had to contend against almost unsurmountable difficulties of nature between Lake Superior and the Red River, but finally, having overcome all obstacles, they entered Fort Garry on the 24th August, 1870, and instead of resistance, they received a warm welcome from all classes of the people. From that time the rapid development of the North-West may be dated. Previous to 1870 the country had been regarded as a land fit only for the hunter and trapper; and the fur traders knowing that the advent of civilisation meant the destruction of the fur trade, spared no pains to circulate the idea that it was a cold, inhospitable, and barren country. This, combined with the imperfect means of communication, was undoubtedly the cause of its remaining isolated and sparsely populated for so many years. In 1870 there were about thirty buildings in the vicinity of Fort Garry, where now stands the city of Winnipeg, with its population of thirty thousand inhabitants. At that time there was no settler away from the river. The line of settlement skirted the Red and Assiniboine rivers, with here and there a few tidy farm houses and small patches of cultivated land adjoining, but the immense plains of fertile soil, covered with verdant pasture, away to the west as far as the Rocky Mountains, were lying idle, only awaiting the coming of the husbandman to turn

them into a very paradise of beauty, and a source of almost unlimited wealth. The creation of the province of Manitoba, the establishment of a responsible and representative form of government in the country, the extinguishment of the Indian title to the land by fair treaties with the tribes, and the adoption of a system of survey to keep pace with settlement, and allow immigrants to locate and secure claims, were all preparatory steps succeeding each other in quick succession, and paving the way for the rapid development of the North-West which almost immediately followed.

The year after the creation of the Province of Manitoba, the British Columbia resolutions were moved in the Canadian House of Commons. This occurred on 28th March, 1871, and on the following 16th May the Pacific Province was incorporated in the Dominion, thus extending Canada's domain from Ocean to Ocean. The act providing for the admission of British Columbia into Confederation also provided for the building of the Canadian Pacific Railway across the Continent, as it was considered, especially by the British Columbians, that without that iron band the union with Canada would never be complete. The first step taken by the people of Manitoba, after its creation into a Province, was to exercise their right of franchise, and the first general election of members to sit in the Provincial Legislature took place on the 20th December, 1870. The formation of a Cabinet followed the elections, and this was the birth of representative institutions in the North-West. The Province was soon afterwards divided into municipalities—school districts were created, and the whole machinery of local self-government became from year to year more and more perfect.

The North-West was up to 1870 but little known and still less understood by the general public of Canada, owing in a large degree to the imperfect means of communication then existing between it and the outside world. Its productiveness and adaptability to settlement only began to dawn upon the minds of people after it became a recognised portion of the Dominion. The Canadian Volunteers, then serving in the country with the Wolseley Expedition, wrote home glowing accounts of it to their friends in the Eastern Provinces—the Press sent correspondents to spy out the land—information regarding it was collected and published, both by the Government and private individuals, and all at once the Dominion of Canada

found that in the Great North-West they had secured an estate of inestimable value, the development of which would bring about an expansion of the resources of the whole Dominion such as had never been dreamt of by even the most sanguine, when Confederation was first comtemplated. From 1870 settlers began to pour into the country; some came overland in wagons, *viâ* the United States, while others floated down the Red River in flat boats, the railway having then only reached St. Cloud, a short distance beyond St. Paul, Minnesota. Communication with the outside world was kept up by means of an irregular line of stage coaches until the 29th April, 1871, when the first regular passenger steamer on the Red River arrived at Winnipeg. The 20th November of the same year saw the telegraph system of the United States extended to Winnipeg, and on that day the first message—one of congratulation—flashed across the wires from the Lieut.-Governor of Manitoba (the Hon. Adams G. Archibald) to the Governor-General of Canada (Lord Lisgar).

The sudden influx of settlers, to which I have already alluded, naturally gave an impetus to trade in the country, but the difficulty in those days was how to supply the wants of the incomers. The farmers of the country were unprepared for so sudden a demand on their resources, for up to that time they had given little, if any, attention to extending the area of cultivation beyond their actual needs, simply because there was no market for surplus products, because of the absence of an outlet by which to dispose of them. The result of this state of affairs proved a great boon to the merchants in St. Paul, Minneapolis, and other trade centres in the State of Minnesota. Large quantities of flour, meat, butter, cheese, hams, bacon, and merchandise of every description were sent into Manitoba by our enterprising American brethren. The means of transport chiefly used consisted of flat boats, and during the summer the banks of the river at Winnipeg usually presented a lively appearance, as the numerous flat boat men carried on their trade with the inhabitants. Indeed the river opposite the city at that time had a very Celestial sort of appearance, from the number of floating stores which, Chinese-like, did business on the Levee. As settlers arrived in the country, this trade with the United States assumed large proportions owing to the lack of direct communication with the Eastern provinces of Canada, and the result was that the

flat boats were soon superseded by a large fleet of steamers on the Red River, plying between Winnipeg and points south of the American boundary line. The large trade carried on by these steamers resulted in the extension of the United States railway system to Manitoba, and on the 3rd December, 1878, the last spike was driven which connected the cities of St. Paul and Winnipeg by rail. I may here remark that it was chiefly through the enterprise, energy, and perseverance of Sir George Stephen and Sir Donald A. Smith, to whom Canada has since been so much indebted for their untiring efforts in the great work of the Canadian Pacific Railway, that the inhabitants of the North-West were then provided with this, their first railway connection.

In February, 1874, Winnipeg, which then contained nearly 1,000 buildings and an estimated population of about 5,000 inhabitants, was incorporated as a city, and in proportion as the chief trade centre of Manitoba showed signs of progress so did the area of settlement throughout the province increase in every direction. While the North-West was thus budding into prominence and progressing slowly but surely, the great question of a transcontinental railway to bind together all parts of the Dominion was not being lost sight of. Sir John A. Macdonald had almost concluded arrangements with a body of capitalists in 1871 to build the road, when his Government was defeated and Hon. Alex. McKenzie succeeded to power. An attempt was then made to carry on the work as a Government undertaking. Extensive surveys were made, portions of the railway were built and other parts placed under contract, but at the end of over six years' trial (that is in 1878) the actual completion of the road did not seem to the public of Canada to be within measurable distance. It was then that Sir John A. Macdonald returned to power, and it was not long ere he determined upon following out his policy of 1871, namely, to place the construction of the Pacific Railway in the hands of competent capitalists instead of continuing it as a Government work.

The importance of opening up and developing the resources of the North-West had become one of the burning questions in the minds of most Canadians, and the speedy construction of the Great National Highway an acknowledged necessity. Perhaps the most powerful factor in bringing about this state of feeling in the public mind was the visit of Lord Dufferin to Manitoba in 1877.

The then Governor-General met with a most cordial reception from the people of Winnipeg and surrounding country, and at a farewell *déjeuner* given in his honour in that city on the 29th September, the following remarkable passage formed part of the speech delivered by him on that occasion :—

> "From its geographical position, and its peculiar characteristics, Manitoba may "be regarded as the keystone of that mighty arch of sister provinces which spans "the Continent from the Atlantic to the Pacific. It was here that Canada, emerging "from her woods and forests, first gazed upon her rolling prairies and unexplored "North-West, and learnt, as by an unexpected revelation, that her historical "territories of the Canadas, her eastern seaboards of New Brunswick, Labrador, "and Nova Scotia, her Laurentian lakes and valleys, corn lands and pastures, though "themselves more extensive than half-a-dozen European kingdoms, were but the "vestibules and antechambers to that, till then, undreamt of Dominion whose "illimitable dimensions alike confound the arithmetic of the surveyor and the "verification of the explorer.
>
> "It was hence that, counting her past achievements as but the preface and "prelude to her future exertions and expanding destinies, she took a fresh "departure, received the afflatus of a more imperial inspiration, and felt herself no "longer a mere settler along the banks of a single river, but the owner of half a "continent, and in the magnitude of her possessions, in the wealth of her resources, "in the sinews of her material might, the peer of any power on earth."

There is no doubt that the speeches of Lord Dufferin, and the favourable opinions expressed by him, formed the keynote to the outspoken enthusiasm shown by the Canadian people, immediately after his memorable visit to the country, in regard to their North-Western possessions.

In sympathy with this state of public opinion, Sir John A. Macdonald persevered in his efforts to secure a speedy completion of the railway which was to be the means of opening up that great country, and developing the vast resources so ably referred to by Lord Dufferin.

In December, 1880, Sir Charles Tupper, the then Minister of Railways and Canals, presented to the Parliament of the Dominion the text of the Agreement between the Government and Mr. (now Sir) George Stephen and his colleagues for the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway. The agreement was carried through the House, and ultimately ratified by Act of Parliament, which received the Royal assent on February 16th, 1881. To the eloquence, power and untiring energy of our present High Commissioner in London, Sir Charles Tupper, to whom is also so greatly due the success of Canada in

our great Colonial Exhibition this year, Canada is mainly indebted for the successful carrying through of that great measure. In the spring of 1881 the Canadian Pacific Railway Company began work in earnest, and in the autumn of that year an event took place which not only gave a marked impetus to the undertaking itself, but inspired confidence throughout the world in the vast resources of the country. I refer now to the visit of the Marquis of Lorne, at that time Governor-General of Canada.

Lord Lorne arrived in Winnipeg on the 30th July, 1881, and met with a most enthusiastic reception from the inhabitants living in and around the city. The people of Manitoba recognised and appreciated the importance of his visit, and the high and generous motives that inspired it. Lord Dufferin had stood upon the threshold of the great prairies and spoken of the wonders beyond as they had been described to him; Lord Lorne threw open the portals and entered to see for himself the wonderful land.

When Lord Lorne returned to Winnipeg in the following October, he was able to speak as one having authority for what he said. He spoke not of hearsay, he spoke of what he had himself seen, and his utterances brought conviction to all who heard or read them. Lord Dufferin's words were as a tonic to whet the appetite, Lord Lorne was enabled to furnish the repast to satisfy the hunger thus created.

The journey of the Marquis of Lorne on that occasion occupied from the 4th July to the 15th October, and on his return to Ottawa it was found that during that time he had travelled 5,561 miles by rail, 1,366 miles overland, and 1,127 miles by water, or a total of 8,054 miles altogether.

On the 10th October, at a banquet given by the people of Winnipeg in his honour on his return from the West, Lord Lorne delivered a speech full of eloquent descriptions of the vast country through which he had just passed. That speech may be said to have gone from one end of the world to the other, and did more to establish confidence in the North-West, and promote the settlement of the country, than the volumes which had been written upon the subject. Even at this time, five years after the delivery of that speech, I have frequent inquiries for copies of it. At its close occurred the following passage which will commend itself to every patriotic Canadian :—

"The country you call Canada, and which your sons and your children's children "will be proud to know by that name, is a land which will be a land of power among "the nations. Mistress of a zone of territory favourable for the maintenance of a "numerous and homogeneous white population, Canada must, to judge from the "increase in her strength during the past, and from the many and vast opportunities "for the growth of that strength in her new Provinces in the future, be great and "worthy her position on the earth. Affording the best and safest highway between "Asia and Europe, she will see traffic from both directed to her coasts. With a "hand upon either ocean she will gather from each for the benefit of her hardy "millions a large share of the commerce of the world. To the east and to the west "she will pour forth of her abundance, her treasures of food and the riches of her "mines and of her forests, demanded of her by the less fortunate of mankind."

The Marquis of Lorne, in his journey westward from Winnipeg, was able to travel about 65 miles by rail to Portage la Prairie, the Canadian Pacific Railway being then built to that point, and by the close of 1881 the Company had completed altogether 165 miles to the westward of the Red River.

In 1882 the Company completed a further distance of 419 miles; and in December, 1883, the railway was finished to Calgary, a distance of 839 miles from Winnipeg. In the following May, 1884, it was finished to Stephen, the summit of the Rockies, being, altogether, a total of 961 miles, constructed in three years' time. The Government had undertaken, by the terms of their agreement with the company, to transfer, when finished, the railway already under construction and that already built, in all some 710 miles; and while the road westward from Winnipeg was being built, the line eastward to Port Arthur was completed in May, 1883, and handed over to the company to operate. The railway was therefore open from Port Arthur, on Lake Superior, to Stephen, the summit of the Rockies, in the month of May, 1884.

In the meantime the progress of the country was remarkable; new settlements sprang into existence as if by magic. The opening of the railway from St. Paul to Manitoba in 1878, gave a great impetus to the tide of immigration, which, on reaching Winnipeg, seemed to spread itself in every direction over the land. The plains back from the river became studded with farm houses and fenced fields, and as a consequence, land, which only a few years before was regarded as almost worthless, owing to its distance from the river, became more and more valuable as settlements increased. The population of Winnipeg had increased to over 20,000, and from a hamlet of some 30 houses in 1870,

it became, in 1884, a city of well laid-out streets, lit by electric light, with handsome public and private buildings, street railways, and all the principal characteristics of a metropolitan centre. To the west, towns of from 2,000 to 5,000 inhabitants, the centres of prosperous settlements, were to be found at intervals along the line of railway, and away to the north, on the great Saskatchewan River, several prosperous communities were established.

It used to be a theory in the old days that good water would be difficult to find away from the river, and this gave rise to the opinion that settlements could never extend over the prairies; but the theory did not happily hold good when put into practice, for it is now a well established fact that water can be found almost anywhere by digging wells from 10 to 40 feet deep.

Wood in some parts is plentiful, in others only sufficient for the actual needs of the settlers, and in several parts of the North-West it is wanting altogether. But a wise Providence has provided in the latter case for the wants of the people—great coal beds having been discovered in almost every direction. It is estimated that the coal area of the North-West, between the 49th and 50th parallels of latitude, is, so far as known, nearly 65,000 square miles. The coal found has proved to be suitable, not only for domestic purposes, but also for use on locomotives, and this must prove to be a very important factor in the successful and profitable working of the Canadian Pacific Railway across the continent. As settlement increased and the area of cultivation extended, the trade in the importation of food supplies from the United States became less and less, until finally it ceased altogether, and Manitoba found itself in a position to supply its own home demand. The continued influx of new settlers for some years created so great demand for farm produce of every description, that it was not till 1885 there was any important surplus of breadstuffs to export, and last year it is estimated that the surplus of wheat alone was between three and four million bushels.

There is but one opinion about the soil of the North-West—that it is good. In some parts of the country it is a deep black loam resting on a clay subsoil—in other districts it is lighter in character but extremely productive almost everywhere. The Canadian Pacific Railway passes through no desert, but all along the line from the Red River to the Rockies, a distance of over 900 miles, the country is more or less suitable

for successful settlement; and when I make that statement, what does it mean? Nothing less than that over two million farms of 160 acres each are there capable of sustaining a farming population of over ten million souls, and if devoted altogether to wheat growing of producing about 800 million bushels, or sufficient to supply Great Britain and Ireland four times over with all the bread they require. Such a country is capable of sustaining fifty millions or more of an industrious population.

This immense territory is divided into the Province of Manitoba, 123,200 square miles in extent, and the following territories:—

Territory			Area
Assiniboia ...	...	...	95,000 square miles
Saskatchewan	...	...	114,000 „
Alberta ...	...	...	100,000 „
Athabasca ...	..	...	122,000 „
			431,000 „

or, including Manitoba, 554,000 square miles, equal to 354,560,000 acres, the greater portion of which is good agricultural land. The North-West Territories altogether extending away to the north are estimated to contain 2,665,252 square miles. These figures are indeed almost bewildering in their immensity. And it must naturally occur to anyone studying them to enquire: Why has all this vast extent of land remained idle and unproductive so long? Why is it, when we are so overcrowded on this side of the water, that so much good land over there is going to waste? The answer is simple—you have only to refer to the past history of the country—the isolated position it occupied for centuries, cut off almost entirely from communication with the civilised world, and maligned for years as to its climate and productiveness with the object of sustaining the fur trade, who can wonder that it remained for so long practically an unknown land? Look at its progress, however, during the past fifteen years, from the day when the fur trade received its death-blow, and the country passed into the hands of a civilising power. Look at the North-West as it was in 1870, and look at it now. Its railways spreading out in every direction—its cities, towns, and villages—its prosperous settlements—its coal mines—its cattle ranches—and its rapidly increasing happy and contented population. The rapid develop-

ment of the Western States of America is the pride of the American people, but the progress of the Canadian North-West during the last fifteen years is the marvel of the nineteenth century.

One of the chief arguments used by the fur traders of old against the suitability of the North-West for settlement, was the severity of its climate. The winters were represented to be long and intensely cold, the summers short and extremely hot; while the delightful spring and autumn seasons were passed over and conveniently forgotten. Now what is the truth? The winter commences in November and ends in March; the spring months are April and May; the summer June, July and August; and the autumn, September and October.

To better illustrate, however, the length of the seasons, the following table is given:—

Season		Length
Winter	... ...	4½ months.
Spring	... ...	2 ,,
Summer	... ...	3½ ,,
Autumn	... ...	2 ,,
		12 ,,

The spring and autumn months are most enjoyable, the weather being in the former bright and cheerful, and in the latter balmy and pleasant. The summer is at times very hot and sultry, but the North-West possesses one peculiarity which does not belong to the country lying south of the American boundary line. No matter how hot the weather may be in the day-time, at sun-down there invariably springs up a cool breeze, invigorating and refreshing to wearied mankind, and at the same time beneficial to the growth of the plants of the earth. These cool nights are indeed a great blessing, and they make the summer-time not only endurable, but even pleasant. Now for that great bugbear, the winter. Travellers, authors, and artists have ever delighted to picture Canada in winter garb rather than depict the green fields, beautiful forests, and wild blossoms of our bright, fair-faced Dominion. Probably they thought their pen or brush pictures would be too tame or too much like home if they depicted a farm, garden, or forest scene. To suit their purpose--to stir the imagination of their patrons, they must adopt something more striking. Hence we find our ice carnivals, our sleighing parties, tobogganing, snowshoeing, skating,

and scenes of that nature, doing duty here in England as the chief characteristics of our country. Go out into the Canadian Court of this Exhibition; look at the numerous specimens of our agricultural products, our excellent grains, of almost every variety; our beautiful prairie grasses, and our luscious fruits, and tell me if it is all winter with us in Canada. Yet, until recently the idea was very prevalent in this enlightened country that Canada was but a second Siberia, only a stepping-stone to the North Pole, and that our sunshine, when we enjoyed it, was but a passing ray. Time prevents my explaining the scientific reasons why the winter cold of the North-West is not felt so much as might be supposed from the readings of the thermometer. The cause is attributed to the dryness of the atmosphere, and to the absence of wind during the extreme frost. I can only give my own experience to illustrate this. I have had occasion to frequently camp out during mid-winter in the North-West, and never suffered any great inconvenience, hardship, or suffering from so doing. I suffered more last winter from the damp, raw cold in the city of London than I ever did in the North-West during my long experience there. It is to be hoped that this great Colonial Exhibition will correct the false impressions regarding Canada, even yet entertained in many quarters throughout England, and that instead of the country of snow and ice, as she has been represented to be, her true characteristics, her resources, her productiveness, and the beauties of her climate will become better known.

The staple products of the great North-West will ever be wheat and meat. As settlement spreads the area of land under cultivation will, of course, increase in proportion, and the increase in this respect has been very remarkable during the past two or three years. It is estimated that between 100,000 and 200,000 acres of fresh land have been sown this year. That means between 3 or 4 million bushels of grain to be added to the figures of last season, and so the work will progress from year to year, until the carrying capacity of the different outlets of the country will be strained to their utmost to move the rapidly increasing surplus. I have seen the question raised whether the Canadian North-West can indeed ever become a great wheat-producing country, owing to early frosts and the injury likely to be caused thereby to the growing crops. I will only say that my belief is that, in the first place, the extent of and injury done by early frosts in the North-West have been very much exaggerated by

parties, whose motives I will not here discuss. In the next place, these frosts are of a local rather than of a general character, and, lastly, that as the country becomes more settled they will disappear altogether. I will leave it to my friend Professor Macoun, who has studied these frosts from a scientific and practical point of view, to explain their nature and extent, and I think the conclusion that will be arrived at after hearing him will be that they will never prove a serious drawback to the country.

The North-West has had several visitations which, according to the wiseacres of the day, were destined to make the county valueless, and yet it has survived and prospered. For instance, there were the floods caused by the overflow of the river. The first flood took place in 1776, the second in 1790, the third in 1809, the fourth in 1826, and the last in 1852, and since then the nearest approach to a flood has been the overflow of a few acres of low-lying land here and there close to the river bank. At no time were the prairies flooded for any great distance from the river, yet in the old days the floods were freely quoted as one of the chief reasons why the country would never be fit for settlement. I remember also, in the old days, we used to have grasshopper visitations, and very destructive pests these were, but they also seem to disappear with settlement; and although I have heard them in times past freely quoted as another reason why the country could never be successfully settled, yet one never hears of grasshoppers now in the North-West. Minnesota and Dakota suffered in their earlier days in the same way from floods and grasshoppers; but they too have survived them. So will it be with early frosts; as the country becomes settled we will hear less and less of this so-called drawback. One blessing, however, the Canadian North-West has ever enjoyed, and that is a freedom from the hurricanes which so frequently devastate the western and other parts of the United States. That this is a blessing which we North-Western Canadians have reason to be thankful for may be gathered from the sad stories of havoc and suffering of which we have recently read as taking place in different parts of America.

I need hardly refer to the different products of the North-West. A glance through the agricultural section of the Canadian Court will give you a better idea of what they are, and the excellence of their quality, than any description I can here give. That the wheat, oats and barley are unsurpassed, the potatoes and roots unrivalled, are points not disputed,

and the wealth of wild nutritious grasses indicates how peculiarly suitable is the country for stock purposes. Indeed, it is now a fixed principle in the North-West that a farmer to be successful ought to follow mixed farming, and at the eastern base of the Rockies the wonderful success and increase of cattle ranches proclaim without a doubt that the future meat supply of Great Britain will be furnished in a very large measure by our Canadian North-West. So much for the products and the productiveness of the country. That it is filling up rapidly with the best class of settlers is well known ; that there is plenty of room for more I have endeavoured to show, and that it is the duty of Great Britain in her own interests to send her surplus population to fill up our Canadian North-West will yet, I have no doubt, become apparent to her public men, who as yet do not, I fear, fully realize the fact.

On the 2nd of November, 1885, the first through train to the Rocky Mountains left the city of Montreal, and on the 7th of the same month, in the same year, the last spike to complete the line from the Atlantic to the Pacific was driven by Sir (then the Hon.) Donald A. Smith, who has been throughout one of the warmest and strongest supporters of the great enterprise. The successful carrying out of this great enterprise, so far as its physical features are concerned, is quite unparalleled in railway construction. It is in magnitude and difficulty of execution one of the greatest, if not the greatest, achievement of human labour that the world has ever seen, and Sir George Stephen and his colleagues may justly congratulate themselves on the successful issue of their labours. I look upon the completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway as the welding of the last link in the chain of confederation in British North America. Without that link the elements of disunion would, I fear, have considerably developed. This is especially the case in so far as the North-West Territories and British Columbia are concerned, for without railway connection between the eastern and western portions of the Dominion, the latter would still occupy an isolated position, such as could not last long without danger of a disruption of the union. The Canadian Pacific Railway not only strengthens confederation, but will be the means of developing in a large degree the resources of the Dominion, and with that development the railway itself must become more and more important, and can hardly fail to attain a success beyond even the expectations of its warmest friends.

The emigrant leaving Liverpool, we will say, can now, after reaching Quebec, take there the through train of the Canadian Pacific Railway, and in less than a fortnight from the time he left the old country find himself in his new home in the North-West. The Dominion Government offers the liberal grant of 160 acres free to each settler over 18 years of age, and has provided competent agents throughout the country to direct and assist the incomers to settle on these lands. As a result of this wise and liberal policy the country is filling up rapidly, and will continue to do so more and more as railway communication is opened up throughout the land.

The Canadian Pacific Railway runs for a distance of nearly 900 miles across the great prairies of the North-West from Winnipeg to Calgary at the base of the Rocky Mountains, a great plain of fertile land destined to become, ere long, the home of thousands, aye millions, of prosperous and contented settlers, then over the Rocky Mountains and right down to the Pacific, through suberb scenery. But this I will not attempt to describe, for at the close of my paper I intend to show a series of views taken in the Mountains, which must give a very much better idea of their beauty and grandeur than any description I could offer. I have omitted any mention of the game of our great North-West, of which an excellent idea may be formed by visiting the great game trophy in the Canadian Court, because I am in hopes that my friend Mr. Hubbard will favour us, ere long, with a paper on the subject, one with which I know no man living better able to deal than he.

In conclusion, the mission on which I am engaged in this old mother-country of ours, with its dreadful climate, away from the clear, bright skies and bracing air of my native Canada, is one of which I am proud. The Canadian Pacific Railway, with which I am connected, is, in my humble opinion, the cord which is destined to bind together all the parts of the British Empire. England values India highly, and justly so. She is also beginning to see through her spectacles the importance of gathering her colonies more under her wing. She has spent millions towards acquiring an interest in a short route to India and Australasia by way of the Suez Canal; but a day may come when an unfriendly power will effectually block the way, and the importance of the Canadian Pacific Railway as a short and

secure route to the East must then be realised. The character of our great national work is Imperial as much as Canadian. It has been accomplished by the energy, perseverance and enterprise of Canadians, and they may well be proud of the part they have played in this great work. It is an undertaking in which every Canadian has reason to take pride. My humble work on this side of the Atlantic is to assist in placing a guard of British subjects—of honest, sturdy settlers along that line, who will protect it from end to end by the happy arts of peace, and keep the way open for England should she ever find it necessary to use it in defending her rich possessions in the East, or to preserve the integrity of the Empire as a whole, and of this humble work, my lord, ladies, and gentlemen, I am proud.

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