
 MINUTES OF EVIDENCE.

Veneris, 20^a die Februarii, 1857.

MEMBERS PRESENT.

Mr. Adderley.	Mr. Percy Herbert.
Mr. Bell.	Mr. Kinnaird.
Mr. Blackburn.	Mr. Labouchere.
Mr. Edward Ellice.	Mr. Lowe.
Mr. Charles Fitzwilliam.	Sir John Pakington.
Mr. Gladstone.	Mr. Roelback.
Mr. Gordon.	Lord John Russell.
Mr. Grogan.	Viscount Sandon.
Mr. Gurney.	Lord Stanley.

THE RIGHT HON. HENRY LABOUCHERE, IN THE CHAIR.

John Ross, Esq., called in; and Examined.

1. *Chairman.*] I BELIEVE you are a Member of the Canadian Parliament? *J. Ross, Esq.*
 —Yes. to February 1857.
2. How long have you belonged to that body?—Since 1848.
3. You were also, I think, a member of the Canadian Government for several years?—From 1851 until 1856.
4. What situations did you hold?—I was first Solicitor-general, subsequently Attorney-general, and afterwards Speaker of the Legislative Council.
5. You are aware of the objects for which this Committee has been appointed?—Yes.
6. Has your attention ever been directed to the question of the affairs of the Hudson's Bay Company, in so far as they affect the interests of Canada?—Yes. I have thought very much upon the subject for several years. I do not profess to be intimately acquainted with the affairs of the Hudson's Bay Company, but upon that branch of the subject with reference to how far it may affect Canada, I have thought a great deal.
7. You have never yourself, I believe, been in the territory of the Hudson's Bay Company?—Only upon the borders of their territories. I have never been further westward than Lake Superior.
8. I think you are connected with a railway in Canada?—Yes; I am at the end of the trunk railway of Canada.
9. You have probably often considered the subject with reference to the importance of extending communications in British North America?—I have thought very much of it.
10. Will you have the kindness to state to the Committee any views which you may have been led to entertain upon this subject?—The first subject, as it appears to me, which has been very much discussed (at all events it is now being discussed in Canada), is the occupation of that part of the North American Continent now under the control of the Hudson's Bay Company. It is very much discussed whether it is desirable that their privileges and control there should entirely cease. I have considered that subject very much, and the opinion that I express to the Committee of course I only give for what it is worth, and as my own opinion. I believe that when the subject is well discussed and presented to the

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Canadian public, it will then be considered somewhat in the light in which I view it. It is complained that the Hudson's Bay Company occupy that territory and prevent the extension of settlement and civilisation in that part of the continent of America. I do not think they ought to be permitted to do that, but I think it would be a very great calamity if their control and power in that part of America were entirely to cease. My reason for forming that opinion is this: During all the time that I have been able to observe their proceedings there, there has been peace within the whole territory. The operations of the Company seem to have been carried on at all events in such a way as to prevent the Indian tribes within their borders from molesting the Canadian frontier; while, on the other hand, those who have turned their attention to that quarter of the world must have seen that from Oregon to Florida, for these last 30 years or more, there has been a constant Indian war going on between the natives of the American territory on the one side and the Indian tribes on the other. Now, I fear very much, that if the occupation of the Hudson's Bay Company, in what is called the Hudson's Bay Territory, were to cease, our fate in Canada might be just as it is with the Americans in the border settlements of their territory.

11. How do you propose to reconcile the two purposes which you think ought to be aimed at, namely, the power of allowing the spread of settlement in such territory as is adapted for settlement, and yet maintaining the authority of the Hudson's Bay Company in any portion of their present dominions?—I think the most desirable course, and the most convenient one, would be this: So fast as the Canadian Government might wish to open up any part of the country for settlement, which they might upon exploration find it would be advantageous to open; say that they desired to open ten, twenty, or fifty townships of land, I think the convenient course would be to give notice to the Hudson's Bay Company that in a certain space of time, say in one year, or two years, whatever period of time might be considered best and most fair, they intended to make a survey of the space of country which they thought that they could conveniently occupy for settlement, and the Hudson's Bay Company should be required to surrender that territory within the period of time indicated. If they arranged to have what is called a post within the precincts of the territory, I think a reservation ought in fairness to be made for them to settle their people upon the land so to be surrendered.

12. Do you apprehend that there is any considerable extent of country near the Canadian frontier which would be adapted for settlement and the habitation of civilised men?—As I have already stated to the Committee, I have never been within the territory myself; I have never been further westward than Lake Superior, and all that I know of it is from what I have read and from conversations with some who have been born in the territory, and have gone up there and gone across the continent several times, and from others who have travelled over it once. I believe that at the west of Lake Superior, and from that to the Red River, there are parts of the country that might be very well settled. I fancy that an impression prevails that the whole of it is good country. The information which I have received leads me to believe that the greater part of the country is not good; that is, that it is broken and intersected by swamps to a very great extent. The country round the Red River is said to be very good producing land indeed; it is chiefly prairie land; I mean in the valley of the Red River; and there is great difficulty in obtaining wood, as I am informed; and I am told that there is no coal on the Red River.

13. Do you think there would be any difficulty in establishing regular communications between the Red River settlement and the present province of Canada, if any such arrangement as you have described could be effected?—If any project were mooted and were set afloat for carrying a railway across the continent, I believe it is conceded that that portion of the continent of North America over which the Queen's Government extends is the most feasible route that can be adopted. I believe that is conceded by all the American gentlemen who have investigated the subject, and I think it is so accepted now.

14. You have heard that opinion generally expressed?—I have heard that opinion expressed by leading and influential Americans who have investigated the subject; I believe it is Mr. Whitney's opinion; at least it is the impression that that is his opinion.

15. What is about the distance from the Red River Settlement to the extreme

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treme portion of the occupied part of Canada at the present moment to the west?—I should think about 1,000 miles from the Sault St. Mary, at the foot of Lake Superior, but I may be wrong, as there is no map in the room to which I can refer.

16. Have these questions only recently occupied public attention in Canada, or have they been discussed for some time there?—I think it was during the very last summer that the discussion first commenced upon the subject. The question of the opening up of the territory has often for years been incidentally mooted, but a regular discussion of the question has never arisen until the course of the last summer, that I am aware of.

17. Do you think that if some arrangement could be made, such as that which you have described, by which the Red River Settlement, for instance, was taken out of the control of the Hudson's Bay Company, it could be conveniently governed and administered from Canada, or that it would be necessary to have some form of local government?—I do not think that, at present, it could be conveniently governed or administered by the Canadian Government. There should either be a railway constructed from the west end of Lake Superior to the Red River Settlement, or a good broad open road cut out and made; and land, such as might be fit for cultivation, laid off on each side of it for settlers to occupy, and as the occupation took place, and settlers went in, it could be extended; and in that way the Red River Settlement could be connected with our present lines of communication.

18. With regard to the country more to the north and north-east, do you imagine that there is any extent of country now belonging to the Hudson's Bay Company on the frontier of Canada, which it is probable would be occupied for settlement within a few years?—I think not; I do not think that in that direction there is any territory which could be occupied, or that it is probable will be occupied. I know that the Hudson's Bay Company held within the Canadian boundary a section of country which was called the King's Posts. They lay up towards the Labrador border, along the gulf of the St. Lawrence, from below the Saguaney River. They surrendered those posts to the Canadian Government, and during the time that I was acting as Attorney-general in Canada they were again leased to the Hudson's Bay Company. It is not a country which can be occupied with any advantage, because I believe that the natives, and the people who are there connected with the Hudson's Bay posts, if the Hudson's Bay Company were not there to assist them during severe winters, would starve.

19. Mr. Roebuck.] Do you know anything about the territory round the Saguaney River?—I have been along the whole of the Saguaney River, navigated by steamers.

20. Is not all the land at the Saguaney River very fertile?—No; I do not consider it is.

21. Do you remember M. La Terriere being there?—Yes, I know him very well.

22. It was his opinion, I believe, that it was a very fertile territory?—I may state for the information of the Committee what I know to be the fact. I have first of all been along the whole of the Saguaney River, during weather when I had an opportunity of observing the shores on both sides. I have been at the leading milling establishments on the river. It very often happens that when grain is sown there in the spring of the year, it does not ripen in the fall. That has very often happened during these last few years; almost every two years. The inhabitants living along the Saguaney River have suffered from that cause; and Dr. La Terriere has himself been at the head of deputations making applications for assistance from the Government to keep the people from starving. I believe that there are now quite as many people along the banks of the Saguaney River as can be maintained. I am aware that the opinion which I am expressing here may, perhaps, hurt the feelings of some of the gentlemen who live in that part of the country, who would desire to have a large settlement near them; but I must say, that I do not think it would be advantageous to the settlers, or for any other purpose, that an increase in the number of inhabitants should take place there.

23. Chairman.] Has any inconvenience ever arisen from the circumstance of the limits of Canada not being actually defined?—No; I think not. It is desirable that they should be; but up to this moment, I do not know that there has been any inconvenience from that cause.

24. In point of fact, are they ascertained and defined very accurately to your mind?

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mind:—They are not so accurately defined to my mind as is desirable. I have never been able to discover the distinct boundaries.

25. Does that observation apply only to the country to the west, or does it apply to the whole circuit of the boundary of Canada?—It applies more to the country to the west.

26. The water-shed line is the recognised boundary to the north and north-east, is it not?—That is taken to be the boundary. There is very often a dispute as to where that is.

27. Mr. *Kinnaird*.] Are you not apprehensive that in that part of the territory which comes in contact with the United States, there will be settlements made by the Americans, and that there will be difficulty hereafter, unless the boundary is defined?—The Americans are extending their settlements very rapidly towards the Red River, and it is very important that that boundary should be distinctly marked, and as soon as possible. That is my opinion with regard to that point.

28. Are any of them already, do you think, coming over and settling on our territory?—It is stated that numbers have crossed the boundary; of course that can only be ascertained by drawing the line.

29. Lord *Stanley*.] At present the Red River Settlement is not open to traffic in any direction, except that traffic which comes by canoes?—It is not.

30. Is there, in your judgment, any probability of a line of communication fit for traffic being established between the American settlements and the Red River?—I think it is tending to it very rapidly.

31. Do you know what the distance is from the nearest inhabited point within the United States?—I should think it about 400 or 500 miles.

32. Mr. *Charles Fitzwilliam*.] Do not the Red River half-breeds continually come down from the Red River Settlement to St. Paul's?—Certainly they do.

33. I think every summer they come down?—They do; but they have to cross a very large extent of territory on horseback to do so.

34. Do they not come down in their carts?—Yes, so I have been told; but a gentleman with whom I am very well acquainted, who recently crossed the country from St. Paul's to the Red River, and who was born there, informed me, I think, that it took him 16 days to cross from the last settlement to the north of St. Paul's, to the first settlement as he approached the Red River.

35. Mr. *Edward Ellice*.] You have never been there yourself, have you?—No.

36. *Chairman*.] If a man wanted to go from this country to the Red River, what route would he take as the easiest?—By St. Paul's.

37. Lord *Stanley*.] Through the United States?—Yes.

38. Mr. *Roebuck*.] But if your scheme of a railroad were carried into effect, he would go by that, would he not?—Most unquestionably; I should be very glad to see a railway made.

39. Mr. *Edward Ellice*.] In what direction do you propose to run that railway from Canada to the Red River; you alluded to the railways contemplated by Mr. Whitney and others; do you know that that scheme of railways is in connexion with the Minnesota scheme of railways running up from St. Paul's?—I do; the railway that I should desire to see carried out would be one to connect with our own scheme of railways in Canada.

40. Are you at all aware of the practicability of a railway, except at a most enormous expense, from the head of Lake Superior, from the Canada frontier, to the Red River?—During the last 18 months an exploration has taken place along the north shores of Lake Huron and a part of Lake Superior, and inland from the borders of both lakes along the valley running westerly, and the report of the gentlemen who were instructed to make the survey represented the land to be very good, bearing very fine timber, and to be well fitted for settlement; so that if we accomplished a connexion between the Canadian system of railways and the Red River country, it would be through the valley to the north of Lake Huron and Lake Superior until we got round Lake Superior.

41. The country of which I am speaking lies to the west of what I understand to be the Canadian boundary, taking the water-shed as the boundary; it runs about 500 or 600 miles from the extreme west end of Lake Superior, from the extreme west boundary of Canada to the Red River; I suppose your attention has not been directed to that country?—The extension of a railway over that country is just that of which I have been speaking; you would only have to make a curve if you could find a valley and get out of it at the west end of Lake Superior upon this country which I have been mentioning.

42. Your

42. Your surveyors have not been through that country?—No.
43. Mr. *Roesbeck*.] Where does your railway end?—It is now very nearly carried to Lake Huron; there is another railway connecting with it which also runs to Lake Huron, but it runs north from Toronto to Nottawassaga Bay.
44. I suppose you require Acts of the colonial Parliament to enable you to make those railroads?—We do.
45. How far have you got Acts of the colonial Parliament enabling you to do so?—We have an Act of the colonial Parliament authorising the construction of a branch from a town called Belleville, near the head of the Bay of Quinte, an arm of Lake Ontario, northerly to Lake Huron; that is the farthest point to which the branch goes; by extending that line you could get into the valley to the north of Lake Huron, of which I have been speaking, and over which an extension to the Red River might be made.
46. You contemplate the extension of that railway to the north of Lake Huron and to the north of Lake Superior?—Yes, when we can get settlements and get it carried out.
47. The extension of the railway, I suppose, is dependent upon the settlement of the country?—Very much, I think.
48. Do you believe that a country can be settled which is retained for hunting ground?—I do not.
49. Then the hunting ground is incompatible with the settlement of the country?—That is my own impression, merely speaking from my own notion of the matter, without being a practical hunter; we find, as a matter of fact, that the wild animals recede from the settlements.
50. Then the exclusive power of the Hudson's Bay Company over the country, as a fur-hunting company, is opposed to colonization?—I think if the Hudson's Bay Company asserted their power over any part of the country that is fit for cultivation, it would be an obstacle if they resisted the settlement of it.
51. In fact, then, the contemplated extension of the railway by you is incompatible with retaining the power now possessed by the Hudson's Bay Company?—It would be so most certainly, if they resisted the giving up of any of the territory fit for the purposes of settlement.
52. That is to say, that so long as they retain their power over the country which can be settled, it will not be settled?—I do not say that, because I do not know what they are willing to do; I have had no conference with them, and I am not able to say whether they are willing to give up the country which is fit for settlement.
53. But it is to be supposed that a fur company promote the interests of a fur company?—It would be reasonable to suppose so.
54. Then those interests which are contemplated by the extension of the railway are opposed to the interests of that Company?—As I tell you, that must depend entirely upon whether they would resist our carrying a railway through their country; they might give up their rights there; it may be that there are not furs there now, or that they might think it more advantageous to have settlements which would afford them supplies, where they could get corn, grain, beef and pork more cheaply than they could bring them from abroad; I do not know what their views are, for I have not conversed with any of the members of the Company upon the subject.
55. Have you ever contemplated a scheme of colonization by the Canadian Government like to that which is now pursued by the American Government?—I have never contemplated it in any other way than I indicated, I think, in my second or third answer to Mr. Labouchere; which is, that so fast as any part of the country adjacent to the settled parts of Canada is required for purposes of settlement, I think we ought to have the power of settling it, and I think the Hudson's Bay Company ought to be required to give it to us.
56. I suppose you are perfectly familiar with the system of colonization on the part of the United States under the Ordinance of 1783?—Yes, I think I know the whole of the system as it is pursued.
57. Have you ever contemplated the propriety of giving that power to the colonial Government to make territories after the fashion of the American Government?—It was at one time spoken of in Canada, and it was considered that there would be very great difficulties connected with it; I may mention a fact which probably will be within your recollection; I think it was in the year

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1849. The Canadian Government had previously granted licences to certain companies for mining purposes on Lake Superior; one company, I think it was called the Quebec Company, took possession of an island, Michipicoton Island in Lake Superior, and established works there. Certain Indians, the Garden River Indians, known as the Garden River Tribe, and certain half-breeds, asserted that they had a right over those lands for which a licence had been granted, and they went by force and took possession of the Island of Michipicoton and of the works of the mining company. The Canadian Government of course arrested the parties, and so far as the Indians were concerned, upon the expression of their contrition for doing wrong, they were forgiven, and in the end a compensation was given to them to surrender their rights; but that cost the Canadian Government so much money, that I think whatever they might have considered as regards colonization, they have felt very much alarmed at the idea of getting into contact with Indians since.

58. Then I understand your objection to be, that money should be paid by the Canadian Government. If it were paid by the Imperial Government I suppose you would see no objection to that compensation being made?—The question of compensation as regards the Imperial Government I have not raised at all. I think if the Canadian Government required for purposes of settlement any portion of the territory which is not now within their borders, such compensation as might be considered fair they might fairly be called upon to pay.

59. You did not perceive the force of my first question. When they acquired land beyond their borders, I propounded to you the inquiry whether you thought it better that the acquired territory should be made a territory, or aggregated to Canada?—I do not think that under the system of government which exists in Canada now, such a course of acquiring new territory, and governing it by means of territorial government, would be convenient or conducive to the interests of Canada. I think they had better take what land they may require for purposes of actual settlement, say to the extent of 10, 20, 30, or 50 townships of land, and so fast as they want more, obtain it in the way I have suggested, by notice to the Hudson's Bay Company, than that they should get a large extent of country with tribes of Indians, perhaps, occupying it, and perhaps a border difficulty, or war to deal with; I think that would not be advisable.

60. Would not the difficulty arise just as much whether you acquired 20 settlements or townships or 30?—It might in that proportion of 20 and 30; but if notice were given to the Hudson's Bay Company that within 12 months or two years the Canadian Government desired to occupy such part of the country as might be fitted for settlement, the Indians whom the Hudson's Bay Company employ and deal with, finding that settlements were to be established, it might become a question of compensation to the Indians to leave their hunting ground, which I think the Canadian Government should pay, and they would remove off that part of the territory, or not continue to occupy it. The thing, I hope, would be fairly and equitably done as regards the Indians, and in that way I think difficulties perhaps would not ensue. But if you take a very large extent of territory, and by so doing take away the employment which the Hudson's Bay Company at present give to tribes of Indians, and leave them in want, they may perhaps find means of helping themselves, and they may come down upon the border settlements.

61. *Mr. Kinnaird.*] You rather think that the fact of the occupation given to the Indians by the Hudson's Bay Company has been a protection to the border country?—I am clearly of that opinion.

62. *Mr. Adair.*] To what degree do you think the Canadian Government could extend its system of administration from head quarters?—At present I am not sure that it would be convenient to extend it at all.

63. Talking of the extension of the colony of Canada, do you consider that it could, by degrees, take in the whole of the habitable part of the Hudson's Bay territory?—I think so.

64. Under the Government of Canada, without any local or subordinate system?—Yes, I think so, in case they could lay off the townships; but the fact is, that it would not be desirable to settle them any faster than that.

65. The compensation which you suggest, I suppose would be from the Canadian territory, both to the Hudson's Bay Company and to the Indians?—I have not suggested any compensation at all. I only say that if the giving of compensation

compensation be equitable and fair, if the Canadian Government require the territory for purposes of settlement, whatever that compensation may be, I think it fair that they should meet it.

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66. Compensation to both parties, the Company and the Indians?—To both parties, if any compensation should be paid. If the Hudson's Bay Company surrender a territory fit for settlement, which of course should only be where the Canadian territory approaches it, I am not sure that for that any compensation should be given. I only suggest that if they are called upon to give up posts they should be allowed to retain a certain portion of the land for their employes about them, and hold it as a part of their own property.

67. When you speak of the possibility of carrying out a railway depending upon settlement, might it not be possible that the more distant parts might be settled first, and that the railway might pay as the means of thoroughfare to the furthest point?—The usual way of beginning such a settlement is by cutting a good broad road through the territory which you intend to open up, and then laying off your allotments of land on each side for actual settlers. That would, I suppose, be usually the first process before the railway was attempted to be made. You would carry on the thing in that way by degrees.

68. Talking of a great continent like that, supposing Vancouver's Island and the western side of the Rocky Mountains settled, although the part between that and Canada was still wild, might not a railway be a very feasible plan as a means of thoroughfare to that part which was settled?—I think it might, but I think that more of an imperial question than a colonial one.

69. Do you think that too large an experiment for Canada to make?—Yes, with her present resources.

70. If the whole of the Hudson's Bay territory were settled, do you not think that Vancouver's Island would be most attractive to settlers?—Yes.

71. Long before the intervening portion of the territory between that and the western side of Canada could come into settlement?—So far as my information goes, that is the best for settlement, and would be the first settled.

72. The idea of a railroad, ultimately, is not so much for the benefit of the interior of the country, as for a means of thoroughfare and access to harbours on the western coast of America, is it?—That is so, and for the through trade from China and India. The construction of that railway is a most important subject; apart entirely from the opening of the country through which it would pass.

73. Mr. Gordon.] Are you aware that a society has been established, at Toronto, for the purpose of forming a colonization to the west of Lake Superior, between that and the Lake of the Woods?—I believe there are certain gentlemen at Toronto very anxious to get up a second North-west Company, and I dare say it would result in something like the same difficulties which the last North-west Company created, I should be very sorry to see them succeed. I think it would do a great deal of harm, creating further difficulties for Canada, which I do not desire to see created.

74. You do not know anything of the nature of the society or association, recently formed, and what weight deserves to be attached to it?—I do know several of the gentlemen who are moving in it; I know that at least one of them was very instrumental in making the difficulty which was made with the Garden River Indians, and the half-breeds in 1849, of which I have been speaking. I believe he was at their head at the time that they seized upon and took possession of the Quebec Company's works upon the island of Michipicoton.

75. Then you do not apprehend that there is any general wish, on the part of the people of Canada, to have that portion of the country added to what they now have?—I believe there is a general wish that so fast as the territory can be occupied, for purposes of settlement, means should be taken that it should be so occupied.

76. Do you believe that those portions of the territory, capable of being colonized, are such as to afford sufficient attractiveness to bring colonists to that distance, in preference to more attainable points of settlement, much nearer the settled parts of Canada?—I should say not at present; I should say they much prefer the nearer lands to more distant ones.

77. Mr. Roebuck.] Do you say that from your experience of colonization in the United States?—I say it from my knowledge of public affairs in Canada

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solely; I speak of what I think desirable for the Canadian Government and people.

78. Do you know the extent to which new territories are created by the United States?—I know the usual process.

79. I refer to the extent of territory over which they pass; take Iowa, for instance?—Iowa has been settling for these last 20 years; I believe the first settlements in Iowa were made in 1834 or 1835.

80. When Iowa was begun to be settled there were very large masses of unsettled land, but still people went to Iowa?—There were, but they were not very good lands, poor lands.

81. *Chairman.*] Iowa, I believe, is a country of remarkable fertility?—It is.

82. *Mr. Roebuck.*] But on the Genesseees there were very large quantities of very fertile land unoccupied?—If there were, they were held at so high a price that it was not within the means of the class of settlers to occupy them; they were held, for instance, at the rate of 100 dollars, or about that; they could not be bought for twice that now.

83. Before Iowa was settled, did they not create a new territory west of Iowa?—My impression is that they did not; I think the territory of Wisconsin was a little before that time begun to be settled, and within the next year or so, Iowa was thrown off, but I do not think that previously to the opening of the Iowa Settlement, there was any country to the west of it at all.

84. Before Iowa was filled up, they began a new territory west of Iowa?—They did.

85. Might not that same circumstance occur in Canada, that, before Canada was filled up, people might travel farther westward?—You will observe that all these territories are adjacent to settlements; for instance, if a settlement began on Iowa, there would be a starting point for the settlement of a territory beyond, but when you have a space of 1,800 miles intervening, as in the case of the Oregon territory, and probably more than that, it does not seem to me a convenient course of settlement.

86. Is that accurate respecting the Oregon territory; that was not contiguous to any territory whatsoever?—The Oregon territory was not settled from Canada.

87. I am talking of a settlement from the United States?—Oregon had been partially settled before the United States got possession of it.

88. I am endeavouring to point out to you that Oregon is an isolated territory, far from any other settled territory, and still people go there?—If people go there, they usually go by sea; at least, they did so until the overland route to California was established. Of course, it is well enough known that a few persons had travelled across the continent before that time, but very few persons, however; and in going there they went round by sea; now there is no way of getting round by sea to the Red River Settlement. If you go there you must either go directly across the country from the west end of Lake Superior, or you can take the better route through the United States, and by St. Paul's.

89. *Mr. Charles Fitzwilliam.*] Is it not the fact that, annually, at least 4,000 emigrants cross from the Missouri River to the Oregon territory?—I should doubt it; I am not inclined to believe it.

90. To California?—I am not able to say the number.

91. *Chairman.*] Is not settlement progressing fast in the vicinity of the Red River, on the American side of the frontier?—Not in the vicinity, I think. I stated awhile ago that I thought it was at least 400 or 500 miles from the last settlement to the north of St. Paul's, to the first settlement at the Red River.

92. *Sir John Pakington.*] Do you mean that there is no intervening settlement whatever in those 400 or 500 miles?—I believe there is no intervening settlement; I may overstate the distance a couple of hundred miles.

93. *Mr. Grosvenor.*] There are railways running into St. Paul's, are there not, or very near it?—Within a few miles.

94. Are any extensions of those lines contemplated, in the direction of the Red River, which would shorten the distance that way?—I think the Americans, who are interested in those roads, contemplate their extension. I do not know anything about those companies, beyond the fact that one year you have no railroad at all, and the next year a great many miles are made.

95. *Mr. Edward Edlice.*] I think you said just now that Mr. Whitney, who had

had surveyed that territory, had gone all the way north there?—Yes; and I believe he has been across the continent there. J. Ross, Esq.

96. Mr. *Addley*.] What is the nature of the country there, north of St. Paul's?—A very good country, I believe. 20 February 1857.

97. Is it more or less squatted upon by stragglers beyond the settlements?—That is the way the settlement is now going on.

98. What is the first point of actual settlement within what you would call the squatting district?—The latest information that I have upon the subject is in a work of Mr. Oliphant's, and in conversation with a gentleman who went across the country, and I believe there is no settlement at all. Mr. Oliphant has written a work called "Minnesota and the Far West," giving an account of a trip which he made from the head of Lake Superior across the country to the river above St. Paul's, and he came down that river, and so homeward. I believe there are no settlements between the most southerly point of the Red River Settlement, and the most northerly point of the St. Paul's Settlement. I believe there is a space of from 400 to 500 miles without settlers; there is a long extent of country where there is not even a squatter.

99. Mr. *Roelback*.] Have you any notion whether any attempt has been made to number the Indians upon the territories of the Hudson's Bay Company?—There is a work of Sir George Simpson's which I remember to have read. I think it is called "A Voyage round the World," or some such title as that, in which, I think, he gives some account of the numbers of the Indians approximately. That is the only authority that I have seen upon the subject.

100. You have no knowledge of what the numbers of the Indians are upon that territory, which you suppose may eventually become inhabited from Canada?—No; the Canadian Government has no information upon the subject.

101. Then you have no grounds for an opinion as to the danger arising from the opposition on the part of those Indians?—I know that there are large numbers of Indians within the territory, from the statement of Sir George Simpson, for instance; I know it from others who were born on the territory, and have grown up in it, and who have come to this country to be educated, who say that there are large numbers; but I would not attempt to give to the Committee a statement of anything like the exact numbers, for I am not sufficiently informed.

102. *Chairman*.] Is it not the case that that part of the territory of the Hudson's Bay Company which is valuable for the fur trade is not the part which is properly adapted for settlement, but is rather a more northern and a colder part?—That is our impression in Canada, but in that we may be wrong.

103. Mr. *Blackburn*.] I think you say that you know no parties in Canada wishing to settle the Hudson's Bay territories?—There are parties who wish to get up another North-West Company.

104. An opposition company?—Some company who will lead to profitable speculation. I do not think any person seriously desires to settle any of the Hudson's Bay territory at present.

105. Mr. *Gordon*.] The association of which I spoke is not a fur company at present, is it?—It might be converted into anything.

106. Lord *Stanley*.] Can you state to what extent occupation has gone on up the Ottawa River?—I could send, I think, from papers which I have in my possession, the last census returns on the Ottawa.

107. Mr. *Edward Ellice*.]—Are you aware that the Government has offered 4,000,000 of acres on the Ottawa to any company who will undertake a railway there?—I am.

108. Mr. *Roelback*.] How near do the head waters of the Ottawa approach to the territories of the Hudson's Bay Company?—You go north to the watershed, I suppose, towards Hudson's Bay.

109. Have the boundaries between Canada and Hudson's Bay ever been settled?—I think not on the west.

110. That is on the north?—That would be north-west.

111. Mr. *Loxe*.] Has the valley of the Ottawa ever been completely surveyed?—The greater part of it.

112. Are there not some of the tributaries not yet surveyed, or traced?—Yes; a great deal of the valley has been surveyed, however.

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113. Is the valley at all completely settled?—It is not.

114. A very small portion of it?—A considerable portion of it; it is merely a narrow strip of settlement so far as the north shore of the Ottawa is concerned.

115. Do you think that persons will be likely to go on, and settle on the Red River, till the good land on the shores of the Ottawa is taken up?—I think not, from my own experience.

116. *Mr. Rosbeck.*] Does that arise from experience of the United States?—I speak from what I think are the dispositions of the Canadian people.

117. I am speaking now of emigrants?—I think that emigrants would prefer getting good and cheap land as near the great lines of communication as possible.

118. Is that the case in America?—I think so.

119. Would you say that that is the case in the United States, that large territories have not been colonised, when very large portions of very fertile land lying intermediately have remained uncolonised for a long time?—I know that it has so happened, but they have always a starting point; they have always a settlement adjacent to them.

120. Is that true?—I think so as a rule.

121. I point out Oregon?—I told you that they went there in ships; they had communication in that way.

122. They had no place lying near Oregon?—They have now California to the south of them; but the settlement of Oregon first began from sea; there was an occasional pilgrimage across the country, at intervals of long years, of a few people; but it began by sea, and it chiefly goes on in that way now; they go across the country now in part to California, and partly by sea; from California they go northwards in ships and steamers.

123. *Mr. Kinnaid.*] I gather from your evidence that you think that what is taking place in the United States is no guide for what would take place in Canada; do you think there is a difference of feeling altogether among the two people?—I believe they all desire to get land as fast as they can on both sides.

124. *Lord John Russell.*] Is there any difficulty in governing people at a great distance from the seat of government in Canada, with regard to police or the collection of taxes?—No; if land be laid out in townships for settlement under the authority of the Government, it is included in the adjacent county, and it comes within the municipal regulations of the county within which it is included.

125. *Chairman.*] But I believe you stated that you thought a settlement at so great a distance as the Red River is from Canada would be, at present at least, an inconvenient adjunct to the province of Canada?—Yes.

126. *Mr. Gordon.*] Until a road and railway were made?—Yes, until means of communication are opened up. I think if the Canadian Government desired to settle any part of the country west of Lake Superior, and desired to bring the Red River Settlement under their control, they would first begin by cutting a broad road through some good land next Lake Superior, and laying off allotments of land, and promoting the occupation in that way.

127. *Chairman.*] You think that accessibility should first be established, and that then annexation might follow?—Yes.

128. *Mr. Gordon.*] Do you say that accessibility alone would be sufficient, or accessibility and the annexation of the colony?—I think it desirable to have access first, and afterwards the annexation of the colony.

129. Is it not practically found that a population consisting, as that of the Red River Settlement does, of a very great proportion of half-breeds and Indians, is more difficult to govern than one consisting entirely of whites?—I think so; all half-breeds are difficult to govern. I speak now particularly of the difficulties which they created in connection with the mining licences.

130. You think a half-breed population is more difficult to govern than a white one?—I think it is less governed by those rules of order and that sense of propriety which prevail in a white population.

131. Then that fact would increase the difficulty of governing the Red River Settlement?—I think it would.

132. *Mr.*

132. *Mr. Edward Ellice.*] Do you think it would be possible to govern the Red River Settlement, from the head seat of government in Canada, until there were good communications made between those two parts of the country?—I think it would be possible, but very inconvenient, and that the country would not be well governed.

133. Are you aware that for seven or eight months in the year it would be impossible to communicate from Toronto with the Red River, except through the United States?—I think it would be impossible, or nearly so, at present.

134. *Lord Stanley.*] You do not mean that mails could not be sent?—I think it would be almost impossible to send mails in the present state of the communications.

135. *Mr. Roebuck.*] Could not the country govern itself?—I dare say it could.

136. Do not they do it in the United States?—Not in small communities.

137. Take a territory; do not they immediately form a government?—When a territorial government is authorized they immediately form that government.

138. Could not that be done in the Red River Settlement?—I dare say it could.

139. *Chairman.*] Do you know what the rules are upon that subject?—There is a law of Congress of the United States fixing it.

140. *Mr. Edward Ellice.*] What effect do you suppose would be produced upon the Indian population by forming the Red River Settlement into a separate territory for government under its present circumstances?—I think experience has shown that in the United States, wherever these governments have been formed, they have come into collision with the Indians on their borders.

141. Are you aware of the war which is at present going on in the Oregon territory?—I know from the newspapers that there is a war going on there, and that it has been going on for some time.

142. *Mr. Gladstone.*] Will you explain your answer as to the impossibility of communication with the Red River for several months in the year except through the United States?—There are points of settlement along the north shore of Lake Huron, extending up to Garden River, and so on, up to St. Mary. During a great part of the year the mails are carried from Penetanguishine across the ice to the different points where they are desired to be left.

143. On Lake Huron?—On Lake Huron; that is the only way in which the mails are carried during winter; very often the ice is in such a dangerous state that the crossing may not be made for a month; the Bruce mine is another point, and the Island of St. Joseph's another, and there are other large islands lying adjacent to the north coast of Lake Huron and so up to St. Mary's Falls at the foot of Lake Superior. When you take into consideration the great depth of the snow, the thinness of the settlements, and the fact that you have to carry the mails on foot across the ice, I think till you really carry the settlement into the valley to the north of Lake Superior, you are completely cut off from communication through Canada with the Red River during the winter months.

144. What was the route through the United States which you indicated as possible?—Round by St. Paul's, and from St. Paul's to the Red River.

145. *Mr. Roebuck.*] There is no difficulty, then, in your view in settling the north shore of Lake Huron or the north shore of Lake Superior?—Judging from the reports which we have had during the last 18 months from our surveyors, there is no difficulty.

146. So that if settlement went on there would be no difficulty in opening the Red River?—If settlement went on there would be no difficulty, as far as I am informed, in settling the Red River.

147. Then the idea which some people have got into their heads of an impassable morass between Lake Superior and the Red River is in your opinion incorrect?—That it is impassable is, I think, incorrect. I have been told by those who have travelled across the country that there is a great deal of swamp there; I believe there is more broken and bad land than good lying in that country between Lake Superior and the Red River Settlement.

148. But you think it possible to run a railway there?—Quite.

149. *Mr. Edward Ellice.*] What is the distance, do you think, in miles, from

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the western portion of the Ottawa to the head of Lake Superior, near the country that you have been talking of, where a railway may be run; is it 1,000 miles?—It is about 800 I should think.

150. *Mr. Bell.*] What is the distance from the most distant point of Lake Superior to the Red River Settlement?—In round numbers, 1,000 miles from the Sault St Mary.

151. *Mr. Roebuck.*] What is the extent of your contemplated railway, from the point to which you have now obtained an Act of Parliament, to the point which you contemplate eventually?—We desire to have it carried across the continent, believing that it will be for the interests both of the Imperial and of the Canadian Government; and we think that the trade with China and India might be drawn over that line of communication. Perhaps it is taking rather a long flight.

152. You contemplate, then, going across the Rocky Mountains to Vancouver's Island?—Yes, we hope to see it extended there in time.

153. How far is it from the head of your present railway concession, if I may use that term, to the Red River?—It is upwards of 1,200 miles, I should think.

154. Then the railway to get to the Red River would pass to the north of Lake Huron and the north of Lake Superior?—Yes.

155. And you think it perfectly feasible?—As at present informed, I do.

156. *Mr. Gordon.*] Is it not the fact that the banks of the Saguenay are extremely precipitous and inaccessible, and that that is one of the difficulties in the way of having a prosperous settlement there?—The banks are very precipitous; but I was speaking of those parts which are cultivated.

157. The valleys?—The valleys.

Lune, 23^e die Februarii, 1857.

MEMBERS PRESENT.

Mr. Adderley.

Mr. Bell.

Mr. Edward Ellice.

Mr. Charles Fitzwilliam.

Mr. Gordon.

Mr. Gregson.

Mr. Grogan.

Mr. Garney.

Mr. Percy Herbert.

Mr. Kinnaird.

Mr. Labouchere.

Mr. Lowe.

Sir John Pakington.

Mr. Roebuck.

Lord John Russell.

Viscount Sandon.

Lord Stanley.

THE RIGHT HON. HENRY LABOUCHERE, IN THE CHAIR.

Lieutenant-Colonel *John Henry Lefroy*, Royal Artillery, called in; and Examined.

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158. *Chairman.*] I BELIEVE you are connected with the War Department?—I am; I am Inspector-general of Army Schools.

159. Have you had occasion to become acquainted with British North America?—I resided 11 years in North America, and passed nearly two years in the territories of the Hudson's Bay Company.

160. In what capacity did you visit the territories of the Hudson's Bay Company?—I was employed under the general direction of the Royal Society to make magnetical observations over the whole of the accessible portion of their territory.

161. In the performance of that task did you travel very much over the territories of the Hudson's Bay Company?—I visited almost the entire region; every place of any consequence on the east side of the Rocky Mountains.

162. Did

162. Did you go at all to the west side of the Rocky Mountains?—Not at all.

163. The Committee will be glad to hear your opinion of the physical state of that country with reference to the capacity for cultivation and settlement?—The general opinion which I was led to form was, that agricultural settlement can make but very slender progress in any portion of that region.

164. Did you visit the Red River Settlement?—I did.

165. Is not that a part of the country very well adapted for agricultural purposes?—The Red River Settlement is pretty well adapted for them, although it does not bear comparison with the best parts of the British American colonies; but it forms but a small proportion of the whole region.

166. Do you mean to apply the observation which you have made to the country generally that borders upon the limits of Canada at present?—I should apply it particularly to that country, so far as my observation goes. As we proceed to the interior, we do come to a region in the neighbourhood of the Rainy Lake, and between the Rainy Lake and the Lake of the Woods, which seems to me to possess agricultural facilities. It seems to have the conditions of soil and climate not much more unfavourable, perhaps not more unfavourable, than in many parts of Lower Canada.

167. When you say that you think that, generally speaking, there is not much land contained in the territories to the east of the Rocky Mountains beyond the borders of Canada, which is calculated for settlement and cultivation, do you say that chiefly on account of the nature of the soil, or on account of the nature of the climate?—On account of both causes. With regard to the nature of the soil, a very large portion of the region is primitive in geological formation, almost entirely denuded of soil. The frosts are so intense, that over a very large portion the soil is permanently frozen. The seasons are so short and so uncertain, that crops are liable to be cut off by unseasonable frosts at periods that make it almost impossible for the husbandman to reckon with any certainty on a return.

168. Do you know the Saskatchewan district?—I have been once up and once down the River of Saskatchewan.

169. Is there no land in that district which you think would be susceptible of cultivation and fit for settlement?—Undoubtedly there is such land in that district, and it is along that district and a little to the north and south of it that the agricultural land is to be found. Cultivation has actually been tried with some success at Fort Cumberland on the Saskatchewan; wheat has grown there; with uncertainty, however, from the cause I alluded to just now, but still sufficiently to add greatly to the comforts of the residents of the district.

170. Are you acquainted with the country which belongs to the United States to the south of the border between the two countries?—I am not.

171. Lord Stawley.] You spoke of an attempt at cultivation in the neighbourhood of Fort Cumberland. The settlement at Fort Cumberland, I believe, was not made for any purpose of colonisation, but simply as a trading post?—Entirely so; but there was a small attempt at settlement on a spot immediately adjoining, called on the maps the Basquiau River, but commonly called in the country the Pas; a settlement of civilised or christianised Indians has been formed there for the last 10 or 12 years, and they have succeeded, in some degree, in cultivating the ground.

172. Do you know what crops arise there?—They grow wheat, barley, potatoes, and various vegetables.

173. Mr. Roebuck.] Do they grow any Indian corn?—No. I believe that Indian corn will not ripen except by matter of accident in that region.

174. Mr. Grogan.] With regard to the wheat, was it a crop that could be depended upon at all?—I am inclined to think not, but I do not speak with much confidence.

175. Or the potatoes?—The potatoes could be depended upon, I believe. I never heard that they had had any disease. In all instances in which these crops grow the returns are exceedingly small.

176. Will they ripen?—Yes, but you do not get the same crop in proportion as you do in more genial countries.

177. Do oats grow there?—I never heard of their being tried, but they would, no doubt.

178. Mr. Roebuck.] Do not oats grow more northerly than wheat?—Certainly.

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179. If wheat would grow there oats would grow there?—According to the best data we have, which are very imperfect, wheat will grow where the mean summer temperature gets up to 59°, and Fort Cumberland is pretty near the limit of that.

180. Mr. Grogan.] Do you mean that it will ripen?—Yes.

181. Mr. Bell.] Are you acquainted with the statement of Sir Alexander Mackenzie, that he saw on the Elk River a kitchen garden as fine as any in the world?—I do not remember that particular statement, but I dare say it is true.

182. Have you reason to believe it is correct?—Yes; most vegetables, or anything requiring a short summer, will grow there very well. The summer, while it lasts, is a very genial one, although there happen in it frosts; but if a little care is taken in covering the things over they grow very well. I have seen near Norway House, at the top of Lake Winnipeg, rhubarb, peas, cabbages, and many other vegetables growing with success.

183. Mr. Grogan.] But it would be impossible to cover in the crops on a large scale?—Quite so.

184. Mr. Reebuck.] When does the winter begin upon the Saskatchewan River?—The Committee could get very accurate data upon that subject by calling for a return of the dates at which the traders at each post leave their district with their boats, because they invariably do that the moment the ice in the river breaks up; and it is hardly fair to consider that the spring begins till that time; as to the winter, the weather gets very cold, I believe, and such as to occasion hard frosts, early in October, but the region is very large.

185. I pointed your attention to the Saskatchewan River; when does the winter begin there?—I am unable to answer that question.

186. Then you do not know when the winter ends there?—I can only speak from general impressions, but not with statistical accuracy; the winter, speaking roundly, may be considered, upon the Saskatchewan River, to last from October to April, both months inclusive.

187. Then summer, beginning in April, begins earlier than it does in Canada?—There is an intermediate season between winter and summer, namely, spring.

188. Spring begins earlier than it does in Canada if it begins in April?—Am I to speak of Eastern Canada or of Western Canada? I shall have the greatest pleasure in preparing myself to give the most accurate information I can upon this point on another occasion. I cannot state any precise data, but can only speak in a general way.

189. Lord Stanley.] From your experience of Canada, and of the Hudson's Bay territory, have you formed any opinion respecting that which is said by many persons to exist, namely, a gradual amelioration of the climate?—I have met with no facts which give me any such impression, nor should I credit it.

190. In your opinion, taking the country which you refer to as the most favourable part for cultivation of the Hudson's Bay territory, namely, that between the Rainy Lake and the Lake of the Woods, is there anything in that country which would be likely to attract settlers who have the unsettled lands of Canada at present open?—There are always a class of adventurers who will push to the most remote region wherever it is, but if they were acquainted with the relative advantages of the two positions I do not think they would choose the former.

191. Lord John Russell.] With regard to any settlement that you are acquainted with, who are the class of people that go and make settlements; are they from Canada, or are they from the United States; take the Red River Settlement and others?—The Red River Settlement is, I believe, composed almost entirely of persons sent out by Lord Selkirk about 35 years ago. The Hudson's Bay Company did not, within my information, add to the settlement, except by the importation of a limited number, I think about 20 families, from Lincolnshire, perhaps 20 years ago; I think it was about the year 1838; the rest of the population is made up of half-breeds and French Canadians, who have straggled there from all directions. The purely English element is not very large. The Hudson's Bay Company make little use of English labour; they make use of Scotch and Orkney labour, and there are a good many Scotch and Orkney men there.

192. Is there any part of the territory that you are acquainted with to which persons who go to the far West from the United States seem desirous to go?—I think not; the difficulty of access is so very great that it never has attracted emigration, I think, from any quarter; it had not done so down to the time that I speak of, from the south.

193. You have not since heard that there is any great desire to settle in those districts either from Canada or from the United States?—I know that there are many persons in Canada who have a strong impression that it is a productive region for settlement; I do not think anything that can be called a pressure in that direction exists.

194. Mr. Roebuck.] Do you know the United States territory in Minnesota at all?—I do not.

195. That is just south of the line running between the two territories?—Yes.

196. And it is about, I think, the latitude of Quebec; directing your attention to that line, you see there a river called the Red River?—Yes.

197. Do you know that at all?—I know the Red River running into Lake Winnipeg, but not the Red River running into the Missouri.

198. I speak of the Red River running into Lake Winnipeg; looking at that river running out of Minnesota into the territories of the Hudson's Bay Company, do you know whether, on the northern parts of that river, the banks are habitable, or not?—The Red River Settlement occupies, in a straggling manner, about 50 miles of the course of the Red River itself, and a portion of that ground is under cultivation; not very much, because the habits of a great proportion of the population of the country are opposed to regular industry.

199. It being under the command of the Hudson's Bay Company, does not the Company rather favour hunting than cultivation?—At the Red River Settlement I think the Company favours cultivation, because unfortunately the buffaloes swarm in the surrounding regions, and the great difficulty is to keep the people to steady habits of industry, and to induce them to refrain from hunting them.

200. Buffaloes, you say, swarm?—Yes, at certain seasons.

201. Upon what do they live?—Upon the herbage of the plains.

202. Where that herbage is, is not the land fertile?—Undoubtedly where that herbage is other things might be grown, as we find at the Red River Settlement itself, until you get to a certain distance to the westward, where I have reason to think but little rain falls; that is one way in which I account for the physical fact of its being a prairie, and there the soil is, as far as my observation goes, not very favourable to cultivation; it is generally along the banks of the river limestone or gravel; there is very little alluvial soil at the surface; there is no depth of alluvial soil anywhere that I saw.

203. You say limestone is there?—Yes.

204. Is it not a remarkable fact, established by all experience, that wherever limestone is, cultivation is possible?—I believe so; it is a most favourable district.

205. You say that the geological condition of the country is primitive?—Not there.

206. But by the Saskatchewan River?—To the eastward of Lake Winnipeg and along the line of descent to Canada on the north side, and northwards again through the line that I travelled, except the Peace River, where we come to the secondary formation, the general character of the region, I should say, without giving myself authority as a geologist, is primitive.

207. Is not that the case with Lower Canada generally?—On the north shore of the St. Lawrence, but not the south; but there you have very little cultivation; the north shore of the St. Lawrence below Quebec is a primitive region.

208. Above Quebec?—I think not; but I speak with deference there.

209. Are you at all aware of a publication, by Mr. Isbester, of the geology of that country?—I have never seen it.

210. While you were there had you occasion to see much of the Indians?—I took a great interest in the Indians, and I took what opportunities were given me of inquiring into their condition, and of seeing them, but my scientific duties left me very little leisure for anything else.

211. What were your scientific duties directed to?—To terrestrial magnetism; making observations of the magnetic dip, and the magnetic variation, and the magnetic force of the earth in that region.

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212. Then if you had not much time to consider the state of the Indians, had you much time to consider the physical condition of the country?—The physical condition of the country meets one's eyes in all directions, whereas the Indians are but rarely met with; and I did not speak their language, and did not always have an interpreter with me, but I used to converse with the residents at the forts.

213. How do you judge of the fertility of a soil which is not cultivated?—By those portions which are cultivated; by the known facts of science affecting cultivation, and by the proportion of alluvial soil visible at the surface.

214. Over that territory did you find large woods?—I have placed before the Chairman a map on which the region of prairie is indicated by a green tint; north and east of that region there are woods.

215. All to the north of Lake Superior is woody country?—Until you get to a very considerable distance north; but I beg to say that the wood in that country, the pine, which is the most prevalent wood, will grow in any crevice in which there is any moisture, and I have seen pines of large size growing on a granite rock as hard as this table, simply by the moisture which was found in the crevices. You cannot infer that that is a soil fitted for agricultural purposes from the fact of there being wood.

216. Not from the fact of there being pine-wood, but if other hard wood grows you may do so?—Yes; those woods having a tap root, but a great number have not.

217. Is not that the mode by which people who explore a country for agricultural purposes determine the capability of the country for agriculture, namely, from the wood upon it; in America, I mean?—It is one of the modes; it is a superficial one.

218. Where you find large quantities of trees of five feet in diameter, and large beech trees, would you not at once say that that is a cultivable soil?—Unquestionably; but there is not a tree of any description five feet in diameter in the Hudson's Bay territory on the east side of the Rocky Mountains; the largest pines, which are the largest trees there, seldom exceed three feet in diameter.

219. Supposing there were trees of three feet in diameter, would you not say the soil was good?—Yes. I have seen that in islands possessing a depth of alluvial soil brought down by floods. The island on which Fort Simpson, on the Mackenzie River, is built, is of that description; and very fine timber is to be found there.

220. You say that you have not seen any evidence that the climate has ameliorated?—I have seen none.

221. Are you at all aware historically of the state of Europe in centuries past?—Yes; I am aware that there is reason to suppose that the climate of Europe in former times, before cultivation was so general, was colder than it is now; the winters were colder. Having given considerable attention to that subject, I may state generally that the result of my inquiries leads me to this conclusion, that the effect of cultivation anywhere in America is to diminish the extremes of temperature both in summer and in winter, but to leave the mean annual temperature not much affected by it. Meteorological observations were commenced at Toronto, in Canada, in 1840. I was myself engaged with them about 11 years; and I of course had experience of a great variety of hot winters and cold winters, and summers also. Since I left it, which was in the year 1853, they have had extremes in both directions that fall far without the limits of my observation; they have had three winters of such severity as I never encountered in all that period, and they have had hotter summers; it therefore shows that conclusions based on data not derived from observations over a long series of years, comparable and accurate ones, are very likely to deceive us.

222. The sensations of a man are very misleading; but supposing, for example, that formerly the territory bore reindeer, and that the rivers of that territory were annually frozen, and that now reindeer will not live there and the rivers are never annually frozen, would you not say from those data that the country had ameliorated in climate?—I should say so, if I was acquainted with no other facts; but I am acquainted with a fact with regard to the habits of the reindeer which

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which would render such a conclusion insecure; until the year 1832 the reindeer were in the habit of migrating in enormous numbers along the west shore of Hudson's Bay, passing York Factory to the south; in that year their numbers were greater than usual, and a most extraordinary and wanton slaughter of them took place by the Indians; the Company were unable to restrain them; from that day to this, according to the best of my information, the reindeer have never been seen in that region, although there is no reason to suppose that there is any change in the climate or its capacity for furnishing them with food.

223. As you say you have paid attention to the state of the climate in Europe, I suppose you are perfectly aware that reindeer used to live upon the banks of the Danube and on the Rhine?—I was not aware of the fact; I had forgotten it if I had ever seen it.

224. That fact is adduced by Gibbon as a proof that the climate has very much ameliorated by time?—Yes.

225. The freezing of rivers, for example, is another evidence; I suppose there is nothing that could contradict that?—I should think not.

226. Taking the same circumstances, namely, that Gaul and Germany were in times past, very shortly after the Christian era, in the same state that Canada is now; having paid attention to the climate of different countries, would you not conclude that the same circumstances occurring in Canada as have occurred in Europe, namely, the clearing of woods, and the draining of morasses, would lead to a great amelioration of the climate?—There are some circumstances which make an essential difference in the two problems. In the first place, the actual soil of Western Europe is deeper, and better suited to the growth of grains of every description than the soil of the Hudson's Bay territory, from my knowledge of it.

227. Is that the case with Prussia?—The district of Prussia, I believe, is generally sandy, but I have not travelled there; I speak of the country in a general way. Then there is this cause ameliorating the climate of Western Europe, which we feel in our own islands particularly, namely, the influence of the Gulf Stream. Our condition is abnormal; but if you refer on the map to the lines of equal temperature, passing through both continents, through America, and through Europe, you will find that the lines descend, that is to say, you will find the line of equal temperature, of 50° we will say, which is the limit of the profitable cultivation of barley, is much lower latitudes in the Hudson's Bay territory than you will in Western Europe.

228. I suppose the southern point of Lake Winnipeg is about the latitude of some of the finest countries in Europe?—I believe it is.

229. Do you know anything of the actual physical condition of the northern shore of Lake Superior?—Merely from having coasted it before the explorations which have subsequently taken place; I mean those connected with mining speculations; therefore I had only ocular inspection from passing along it.

230. You have not travelled on the land there?—No, except for a very few miles.

231. Have you any evidence that there are large morasses there which render it impassable?—Immediately adjoining the shores there cannot be large morasses, because the land rises rapidly; there are two terraces indicating changes of level at former periods, and the land rises rapidly, and in fact the north-west shore is mountainous.

232. There is a lake called Lake Nipigon—Yes.

233. Does not that fall into Lake Superior?—It drains, I believe, into Lake Superior; I never was there.

234. Therefore, may we conclude that it is higher than Lake Superior and the land through which it runs?—Of course.

235. If on the shore of Lake Superior there are not morasses, we may conclude that there are not morasses between those two points?—Hardly that. Morasses are to be met with at the highest points. In fact, it will be found, as a general rule, I believe, that the districts which furnish the sources of rivers are always districts of morass. I could point to three or four instances of that on the map. Probably, Honourable Members can find on their maps the River Savan; the Dog Lake will be found on the map not far above Lake Superior. If you follow the line of boundary between Lake Superior and the Rainy Lake, about midway between the two you come to a very elevated

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district which furnishes the source of rivers falling in both directions into Hudson's Bay, and into Lake Superior and the Atlantic. That region is one of immense physical difficulty in consequence of morasses, and every trader knows the Savannah morass, the Prairie portage, and the great interruptions which he has to pass, with extreme difficulty, in consequence of there being swamps at what is the height of land of that region.

236. Are you aware that there is a scheme now in commencement, rather than anything else, of carrying a railway along the northern shore of Lake Superior, and eventually across the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific Ocean?—I have seen proposals to that effect.

237. Do those plans contemplate any impassable barrier on the northern shore of Lake Superior?—Those plans have always seemed to me to be drawn on the engineering principle of laying down an air line, and then assuming that capital will carry you along it; but the physical difficulties of doing it would be enormously great, and I cannot persuade myself that such an undertaking would be conducted with any commercial advantage.

238. Mr. Grogan. You spoke of the population on the Red River Settlement not being very large, owing to the difficulty of access. If there were a railway in that direction capable of being constructed, would not that difficulty be obviated?—It would, undoubtedly; but it always appears to me, on studying the map, that the natural affinities of the Red River Settlement are with the valley of the Missouri, and that we shall be going against nature if we try to force it into the valley of the St. Lawrence.

239. You consider that the natural direction is to go into the United States?—I think so; I do not think that the route by the St. Lawrence can ever compete commercially with the route to the south.

240. You have illustrated your local experience for a period of 12 or 14 years; you have said that your general observations in the country were insufficient to enable you to form correct data?—They were insufficient to obtain the fact of the highest or the lowest temperature, or to furnish a mean which was not liable to be disturbed by the observations of another year.

241. Do any records exist at the different stations of the Hudson's Bay Company whereby the increase or decrease of temperature can be ascertained?—I am sorry to say that the records of that region are exceedingly slender, almost valueless in a scientific point of view. Sir John Richardson has collected in his last work of travels the best information he could get, but the data are most scanty.

242. In point of fact, does the impression exist in the country that the climate of that district is ameliorating?—I never heard of it.

243. With regard to limestone, is the district where the limestone prevails of any extent?—The western shore of Lake Winnipeg is entirely limestone, but there is no soil on it; it has literally no soil in many places; it is as bare as your hand.

244. The rock is on the surface?—Yes.

245. The soil does not cover the surface completely?—I did not explore with sufficient accuracy to give an opinion upon those points. I must beg that my observations may be considered as relating principally to the routes that I travelled over. I did not explore the interiors; I went over the great routes of communication only.

246. Are you able to speak of vegetation, whether it exists in detached portions of that district?—I can speak more positively of that, because I made inquiries about it, the subject having engaged my attention. The points where cultivation was more carried on were these: there was the Red River Settlement, where there was very considerable cultivation, and Fort Cumberland, and the Basquia River, in the Saskatchewan district, and Lake La Crosse; at Fort Cumberland there were about 10 acres of ground under cultivation; at Lake La Crosse, a little to the north of Cumberland House, there were also about 10 acres of ground under cultivation, yielding barley; at Lake Athabasca, where I passed a winter, which is further north again, potatoes of a small size could be grown, but there had been no success in growing barley, or any cereal at all. At Fort Simpson, on Mackenzie's River, where it turns to the northward, just at the angle, on a large island of deep alluvial soil, farming was unusually successful; there were regular crops of barley, regular cattle, and a very good garden. That is in about latitude 62° I think; barley grew there very well indeed.

247. Sir

247. *Sir John Pakington.*] Were you there yourself?—I passed about four months there; barley was even grown with success; that is to say, sufficiently so to be worth the labour bestowed upon it by the trader, and to furnish grain to add greatly to the means of subsistence of the small family occupying a trading post at that station; they were able to pick the very best pieces of ground to be found. Also at Fort Norman, in lat. 64° 31', barley was grown, and that is the most northern spot in America where any grain has been grown.

248. *Mr. Grogan.*] Was that the only cereal crop grown in that locality?—Yes; wheat would not grow in either place; but I was told, I am not sure with what authority, that wheat had been grown about every third year, it being, in the intermediate years, cut off, at Fort Liard, not far to the south of Fort Simpson.

249. Was there any peculiar geological formation in that locality which conduced to the growth of the barley there, so much more northward than at Fort Cumberland?—At Fort Liard it is the tail of the prairies; there is a long high belt of prairie land which runs as far as the immediate neighbourhood of that spot; it is immediately under the shelter of the Rocky Mountains, and the climate is undoubtedly, as you approach the Pacific, much milder than it is to the eastward.

250. What distance would you say that Fort Simpson is from the Pacific or from the sea coast?—I think it is about 500 miles; I am not quite sure.

251. *Mr. Charles Fitzwilliam.*] Do you mean in a direct line, or to some particular point?—In a direct line. I think I made out that it was 500 miles from Sitka, which is the point where observations were made at the time that I was there; and therefore I had occasion to ascertain the distance from one point to another; but I speak from memory, and may not be accurate.

252. *Mr. Grogan.*] Do you consider that the difference of distance from the sea coast of Fort Simpson and Fort Cumberland was sufficient to account for that change?—It is one of the facts which go a long way towards accounting for it.

253. You mentioned that at Fort Simpson they were able to grow cereal crops, which at Fort Cumberland and the Red River Settlement were of so uncertain a nature that they could hardly be relied upon?—I did not intend to say so much as that. At Fort Cumberland and the Red River Settlement they grow wheat, which they do not at Fort Simpson; and with regard to the comparative uncertainty of the crops in the two places, I do not think I said anything. I suppose the crops are much less uncertain at the Red River than they are at Fort Simpson; but the cultivable portion of the soil at the latter place was confined to the island of which I have spoken; on the mainland, on either side, you get into a morass, which could certainly not have been cultivated.

254. Then you imagine that the island is the peculiarity?—Yes; it is due to the depth of alluvial soil upon an island, and to its being pretty well sheltered by large woods, which that soil enables to grow.

255. *Mr. Gordon.*] In traversing the course of the Saskatchewan had you an opportunity of making any observations upon its mineral resources?—Very slight. I ascertained that in the neighbourhood of Edmonton, one of the forts most to the eastward, coal is to be found, and workable coal, because it was used by the blacksmith for his forge; but I do not think in any great quantity.

256. Did you observe over what length of tract of country that coal extended?—It probably extends to a considerable region, because it is found again in one of the feeders of the Peace River, near Danvegan.

257. You believe those to be portions of the same tract?—There is no doubt of it, I think.

258. Are you acquainted with both branches of the Saskatchewan?—Not the south.

259. *Mr. Roebuck.*] Are you acquainted with the length of the winter at St. Petersburg?—No; I cannot speak with any assurance upon that subject.

260. In the Baltic generally?—No; I cannot speak with any confidence upon those subjects.

261. Then you are not able to say whether the winter of that territory is shorter or longer than the winter in the Baltic?—I should be glad if you would be kind enough to define what you mean by "the winter;" meteorologists confine the term "winter" to the months of December, January and February.

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262. I am talking of a matter of fact, not of the number of months; I mean when the earth is so frozen that you cannot plough it; can you say that the winter on the Saskatchewan is shorter than the winter at St. Petersburg, or longer, giving you that as a datum?—I cannot answer that question.

263. If it is not longer, and St. Petersburg is habitable, and covered with a vast population, this territory might be covered also?—St. Petersburg has a seaport to supply it, and it has productions of various kinds which have a commercial value; this region not only has no seaport, but it is about 700 or 800 miles from one, to be reached by a very difficult navigation, leading not into the Baltic, which has its outlet to the south, but into Hudson's Bay, which has its outlet to the north, and which is only navigable for about three months in the year; those are essential differences in both the physical and commercial conditions of the two regions.

264. Is the Baltic at St. Petersburg navigable for more than three months in the year?—I apprehend that it is navigable for seven or eight months; I speak under correction.

265. Sir John Pakington.] You mentioned the difference in climate on the western side of this great district as it approaches the Pacific; can you give the Committee any idea of the extent of that difference, either the extent geographically to which it prevails, or the degree to which it prevails?—I should be unwilling to speak from memory upon such a subject, because it is one which must be brought to figures; I could easily ascertain the facts as far as data exist for doing so, but I would not venture to speak from memory.

266. Is the difference a marked and decided one?—Unquestionably so; it meets you everywhere in America, that the further you go to the westward along the same parallel of latitude, you come to a milder climate.

267. Mr. Roebuck.] Is that the case on the east of the Rocky Mountains?—It is so in the southern latitudes.

268. Sir John Pakington.] To what cause do you attribute the difference in climate?—It is difficult to give an answer to that question directly. The prevalent winds in the region beyond the tropics have a great influence upon the climate of the countries which they pass over. You find that the prevalent winds in the extra tropical region being from the westward, those winds bring from the Pacific Ocean a large quantity of moisture, which moisture has a tendency to ameliorate the climate of the regions which receive its first benefit. As they proceed further to the eastward they lose a portion of that moisture, and pass over regions, frozen or covered with snow through a large part of the year; they come down to Canada more severe, of course, and charged with less moisture, and actually colder by having given up latent heat to the regions they have passed over, than nearer to the west.

269. What are the prevailing winds on the eastern side of this part of America?—I should be glad to reserve my answer to that question because I should wish to speak with accuracy. The prevailing winds, on the whole, are westerly; they are rather from the western semicircle than from the eastern. I believe they are north-westerly.

270. How far to the westward have you penetrated?—Nearly as far as the Rocky Mountains, but not over them. My limits westward were Dunvegan, on the Peace River, and Edmonton on the Saskatchewan.

271. Do you attribute the power of producing barley so far north as Fort Simpson to that comparative neighbourhood to the Pacific to which you have referred?—In a very great degree I do.

272. Can you state what is the general difference in climate between Fort Simpson and these other settlements in the neighbourhood of Lake Winnipeg?—The difference of mean summer temperature between those two regions I believe to be but little; but I am reluctant to speak with precision upon these points, because if they have value at all, it is as scientific facts, and I confess that I am not sufficiently armed with them at this moment, to be able to be positive.

273. Fort Simpson has, of course, a much severer climate, I presume?—Very much severer, taking the year round.

274. You spoke in the early part of your examination of the district which you were then speaking as being permanently frozen, so that the crops could not be grown; to what part of this district did you apply that expression, of
"permanently

"permanently frozen":—I am unable to state very extensive facts upon that subject; the soil at York Factory, on Hudson's Bay, is permanently frozen.

275. Mr. *Roeback*.] How far north is that?—It is about 57 degrees, I think, not so far north as Fort Simpson; the soil there does not thaw in the summer more than about three feet deep, and it is frozen to about 20 feet permanently.

276. Sir *John Pakington*.] I apprehend that you did not mean to apply that expression, "permanently frozen" in the sense in which I think you used it, namely, as applying generally to this district, but only to particular parts?—Of course; it is a very large region; the district is as large as Europe, and has great differences of climate.

277. You applied the term generally. I presume there is nothing to which you could apply the term "permanently frozen" in the nature of the climate about the Red River Settlement, or even at Fort Cumberland Station?—Fort Cumberland, I believe, is near the limit of the region where the ground is permanently frozen; more accurately speaking, I think Lake La Crosse is about that limit.

278. There is cultivation at Fort Cumberland, is there not?—I do not mean to say there is not cultivation where the ground is permanently frozen; at the most northerly point I have spoken of, namely, Fort Norman, on Mackenzie's River, the ground is permanently frozen to the depth of 45 feet, yet there is cultivation.

279. What do you mean by "permanently frozen"?—I mean that it never thaws except at the surface. I had a remarkable opportunity of ascertaining that fact by a great landslip on the banks of the Mackenzie River, exposing a completely permanent frozen soil to the depth of 45 feet. The surface thaws to the extent of a foot or two. In the more open situations, it thaws of course to a greater depth.

280. Under those circumstances, with a depth of permanently frozen ground of many feet, and only thawed very superficially, does the ground admit of cultivation?—Not, I think, with any profit; indeed, a white population accustomed to civilised life cannot find subsistence.

281. The ripening of the crops under those circumstances must be precarious?—Yes. There is a difference between absolute cultivation yielding small returns for the support, or the assistance of other means of support, of a very small community, such as is to be found at all these forts, and one on which a large community can permanently depend. All over that country, although they have a crop in many places, they depend principally upon fish, and the dried meat of the buffalo.

282. What is the population of the Red River Settlement?—In 1843 or 1844, it was about 5,000, according to the information given me.

283. What population is there at the northern settlement of Fort Cumberland, or Norway House?—It does not in any one instance, I imagine, amount to 20 persons permanently resident. At some seasons of the year there are others coming and going, and the Indians occasionally frequent them. Not, of course, including the Indians inhabiting the districts supplying those stations with their furs; but taking the residents, you will find 10, 20, or 30, according to the means of subsistence.

284. Are there any European inhabitants in the district between the Red River and Cumberland Fort and Norway House?—None, but the traders in the Hudson's Bay Company's employment.

285. Is Lake Winnipeg open for navigation for any length of time in the summer?—Not for long; I should suppose that Lake Winnipeg is open for navigation from May till about the end of October.

286. The whole lake would then be open?—Yes.

287. Mr. *Roeback*.] Do you know how long the St. Lawrence is open at Quebec?—It varies extremely in different seasons; but the St. Lawrence at Quebec is generally open early in April.

288. I beg your pardon?—In April.

289. Not till May. Do you not know that after the month of November begins, the insurance upon ships doubles?—I am quite aware of that; but I am equally aware that the last vessels leave Quebec very late in November, and I have known them leave in December.

290. You say that you attribute the possibility of growing barley at Fort Simpson to its proximity to the Pacific?—I attribute it in a great degree to that fact.

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201. Does not Fort Simpson lie very near the Rocky Mountains, to the east of the Rocky Mountains?—Yes.

202. Do not the Rocky Mountains continue frozen throughout the year upon their summits?—The Rocky Mountains there are very much lower than they are in lower latitudes. I have seen snow over the whole region of the Rocky Mountains within view in June; therefore, I presume that they are covered with snow almost all the year round.

203. The proximity of Fort Simpson to the Rocky Mountains would lead to the chilling of the atmosphere, would it not?—It depends a little upon the distance; the actual distance is rather considerable. The Rocky Mountains approach the Mackenzie's River at a much lower latitude; at the limit of the Arctic region the chain comes nearest, but at Fort Simpson it recedes to some distance. I have in many instances observed that a sudden change of the wind from the eastward to the westward would almost immediately raise the temperature of the air ten degrees at Fort Simpson.

204. South-west?—Yes, south-west.

205. Sir John Pakington.] Has the altitude of the Rocky Mountains in the British dominions ever been ascertained?—No; the altitude of the great passes between the Saskatchewan and the Columbia has been ascertained with tolerable precision, but not further to the north.

206. What is it there?—I do not like to speak from memory.

207. Mr. Edward Ellice.] On ordinary maps the highest range is marked at about 15,000 or 16,000 feet, is it not?—But the pass is much lower than that.

208. Mr. Grogan.] You spoke of the barley, for instance, having been ripened at Fort Simpson; do you attribute that to any greater quantity of rain that may fall there than down at Fort Cumberland?—No.

209. Mr. Lowe.] Have you had occasion to observe the effect of summer frosts in these territories upon crops?—No, not personally; but I have made inquiries concerning them.

300. Will you state what is the fact in that respect?—Summer frosts come at night in all months of the year, frequently with very great severity, and the ground will be frozen in June; of course that cuts off all delicate cultivation.

301. Does that interfere with the certainty of crops at the Red River?—I believe very much.

302. And of course further north?—Further north still more so.

303. Have you observed the Indians on the Saskatchewan River?—Yes.

304. What is the nature of the Indians there; are they very fierce?—Some of the tribes on the Upper Saskatchewan are very warlike and untameable.

305. What are they principally; the Blackfoot?—The Blackfoot; there are five or six tribes which go under the general name of Blackfoot; the Crees, who inhabit the lower portion of the region, seem to have less savage tendencies.

306. Is it safe to travel there, one or two people together?—Under the protection of the Hudson's Bay Company it could be done with perfect safety.

307. Do you think that a railway could be made with facility, from any point in Minnesota, to the Red River?—Yes.

308. From what place?—I think almost anywhere.

309. From St. Paul's?—Yes; I should think it might.

310. Mr. Percy Herbert.] You spoke of the district between the Rainy Lake and the Lake of the Woods, as being not much inferior to Lower Canada; is that district of which you spoke of considerable extent?—I do not think it is of great extent, but it must be to the extent of several townships, as they are laid out in Canada.

311. Would the district between that and Lake Superior admit of a communication with Lake Superior?—It would admit of a communication by going to a very great expense; the distance is not very great, but you have to pass over a region of swamp and morass, and a river which is not navigable; there is a line of detached lakes, communicating by streams and rivers, which are not navigable.

312. Mr. Gregson.] Upon the whole, what inducements are there to attract emigration to these regions?—I do not myself think that emigration can be judiciously

Judiciously directed to those regions. Undoubtedly there are the attractions of a wild, romantic mode of life. There is an abundance of the necessities of life at the Red River Settlement, but there is no trade, or next to none, because its interior position and its want of communication with the ocean add so much to the freight upon all articles that they cannot be exported at a profit. But persons who will be content with sufficient for the passing hour, and who have a turn for wild semi-civilised life, will enjoy themselves there very much.

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313. *Chairman.*] It is a pretty healthy country, is it not?—Very healthy.

314. During your residence in that country had you any opportunities of forming an opinion of the general character of the government of the Hudson's Bay Company, so far as relates to their conduct towards the Indians and their mode of preserving the peace of the country?—The best preservative for the peace of the country was taken by the Hudson's Bay Company about the year 1832, when they entirely discontinued sending spirits into it, or, I believe, not entirely, but almost entirely. Since that time blood feuds and quarrels among the Indians have diminished very much indeed. The white population is so very small that there is very little crime, necessarily. What crime does occur there, is, I believe, treated at the Red River Settlement by a recorder, the law officer there, and he told me that the gaol was generally empty. I believe there is very little crime there.

315. Is there security of travelling there?—Perfect security, except at the head of the Saskatchewan, and among the warlike tribes, who are sometimes no respecters of persons, and who will pillage their best friends.

316. *Mr. Charles Fitzwilliam.*] What do you call the warlike tribes?—The Blackfeet, mostly.

317. *Mr. Edward Ellice.*] Those which are nearest the frontiers?—Yes.

318. *Chairman.*] Do you apprehend that there has been a very effectual check to the use of ardent spirits among the Indians, by the measures taken by the Hudson's Bay Company?—I am confident that there has, over the whole region except the Saskatchewan, where the necessity of meeting the Americans in some degree with their own weapons had obliged a very limited use of spirits; but the rule, if I am not misinformed, was, that for one gallon of rum they put seven gallons of water; the spirit issued was so much diluted that it had not much effect.

319. *Mr. Charles Fitzwilliam.*] Is it not true that Americans trading in liquor are subject to a very severe fine?—I believe there is that law in the United States, but it is evaded constantly.

320. Have you not heard of a trader being sent down in chains from the post to the United States?—No; I know that Americans do trade largely in liquor on the Missouri.

321. *Mr. Reebuck.*] You know nothing, you say, of Minnesota?—Not personally.

322. I suppose you know from its position on the map, that there are no further means for going to Minnesota than to Lake Winnipeg?—Minnesota has a dense, industrious, enterprising population to the south and east of it, constantly pressing in that direction, but the Hudson's Bay territory is not quite in that condition; you come down to the lower parts of the Missouri, where you get into a comparatively dense population.

323. Iowa comes between?—I include all that. There is no physical reason why the people there should not press onwards; and they are perpetually pressing onwards into Minnesota.

324. Is there any physical reason why they should not press across the border, and come from Minnesota to Lake Winnipeg?—None at all. They do not do so from the United States, which fact I think shows that the inducements are not very great.

325. Would not the fact of its being British territory be a reason why they should not come across the border?—I do not think that that would have any influence; if they found it advantageous I think they would do it.

326. *Sir John Pakington.*] Is the Indian population supposed to be decreasing in those regions?—I fear there is no doubt that it is decreasing very rapidly.

327. From natural causes, not from the effect of European encroachment?—I apprehend that European encroachment has had a great deal to do with it.

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but it has been rather more from moral influences than from any direct physical influences. I do not think, for example, that the traffic in liquor has been chargeable with it, which undoubtedly has been chargeable with it in other countries, or more to the south.

328. *Chairman.*] When you say that the Indians have diminished, are you speaking of the Hudson's Bay territory, as a whole, or are you referring to particular districts only: are you prepared to say that you believe that the number of Indians within the limits of the Hudson's Bay territory, taken as a whole, has diminished?—When I was able to compare the estimate of the number, which I procured in 1844, with Sir John Franklin's of about 20 years previously, I found a diminution of number; and the aggregate number which I was able to establish by the best statistics that I could get was so very small that I cannot but believe they must have been more numerous, from the accounts which we read of a century ago.

329. Did their physical condition appear to you to be bad?—Miserable in many cases.

330. *Mr. Roebuck.*] Is it not a known fact that the brown race disappears in proportion to the coming on of the white race?—I think it is.

331. And the mere fact of a settlement, even at the Red River, would of itself tend to diminish the red population?—It would undoubtedly lead in that direction; but the Red River Settlement is peculiarly situated; the Indians in that part of the country are not diminishing so fast, because the buffalo is not decreasing, which is their great means of subsistence. As I mentioned before, the buffalo swarms to the south of the Saskatchewan, and even to the north of it; the Indians there are the finest, and I do not think they are diminishing so much as elsewhere.

332. *Chairman.*] Did you think that the physical condition of the Indian was worse as you got to the north?—Unquestionably, and also worse to the south; the physical condition of the Indians about the Lake of the Woods and the Rainy Lake is very much worse, and all round Lake Superior, within our own region, than it is on the Saskatchewan, because the resources of subsistence are so much less; the Indians there are again and again in the most abject misery by the failure of the precarious means of subsistence which they have.

333. Had you any opportunity of seeing the condition of the Indians within the Canadian territory?—I have seen a good many of them from time to time.

334. What is their condition?—They are comparatively comfortable; if not, it is their own fault.

335. They have property?—Yes.

336. Even money in the funds?—Some of them have.

337. *Sir John Pakington.*] Looking to this vast district between Canada and the Pacific, there is a great portion of it, I apprehend, in which the white race can hardly be said to be advancing as yet?—Yes.

338. And over a great portion of that tract I presume there is no reason to suppose that the Indian population is deteriorating or diminishing?—It is so, I think, from causes which may appear rather remote. I believe there is a constant depressing moral influence, which is caused by association with classes in a superior condition of comfort to themselves; then they become reckless and improvident; they barter what is necessary to their own subsistence, or to that of their wives and children, which is equally important, for finery, things which are of no real good to them; their good furs, which they had better wear themselves, they trade away for beads, and they go half clothed, and they contract pulmonary complaints, and their children are born with weakened constitutions, and their families are diminished in number; the result is, that it is hard to find an Indian family of more than three or four children. I remember an instance of one man who, I think, had nine children, who was quite a phenomenon of paternity.

339. But surely your last answer applies to those cases in which the Indian has been brought into contact with the European?—They are all brought into contact with the Europeans by constantly trading with them and depending upon the European trade for their means of subsistence.

340. Is that answer correct as affects the whole of the great district to which I have referred?—With the exception of a very small district to the north, on what are called the barren grounds, where there are bands of Chipewyan Indians subsisting on the flesh of the reindeer, and where the skin of the reindeer is their

their clothing, who rarely come to any forts for trade, because their country has nothing valuable.

341. Do all the tribes between Canada and the Pacific occasionally visit the forts for trade and communication?—I can only speak of the west side from hearsay; the Indians there have a great resource in the salmon, which abounds, and, I believe, do not all come to the forts: on the east they all come to the forts.

342. Mr. Gurney.] With reference to the river between the Lake of the Woods and the Rainy Lake, does the river at that part form the boundary between the United States territory and the British territory?—I think it does; the boundary starts at the parallel of forty-nine degrees, I think, to the northward of that river.

343. Then one bank of the river is American and the other bank British?—Yes.

344. Is there any marked difference as to the degree of settlement on the two banks?—There is none on either.

345. Although both are sufficiently fertile to allow of some settlement there?—I think there might be some settlement there.

346. Mr. Bell.] Are you aware of any settlement in the Hudson's Bay territory besides the Red River where any attempt has been made to civilize the Indians?—Such an attempt was made near Norway House, at the head of Lake Winnipeg, where there was a village of Cree Indians in a tolerable state of civilization when I visited it.

347. Do you think they were diminishing or increasing?—The experiment had been so recently tried that I think it was impossible to say.

348. That is the only case you know of?—That is the only case I know, of an attempt to collect the Indians and to settle them in a village. Since that time a small settlement has been formed at the Pas, at the Basquiau River. It was occasioned by the bequest of a private benevolent person, who left a sum of money to be laid out for that purpose, and it has been so done.

349. You have visited most of the establishments of the Hudson's Bay Company?—Yes.

350. And that is the only instance?—That is the only one that I can think of at this moment.

351. Mr. Roebuck.] Speaking generally, have not all attempts to civilize the Indians in North America failed?—They die out in the process; some progress has been made.

352. They disappear?—Yes.

353. Mr. Adairley.] You stated the population of the Red River Settlement at 5,000?—Yes.

354. What time were you speaking of?—Of 1843 and 1844.

355. Do you know at all what the population now is?—I do not.

356. In your opinion, how have the Company generally treated the Indians?—It is necessary, in answering that question, to draw a distinction between the Company in its corporate capacity as a body of non-resident shareholders, and the Company as a body of resident traders, its servants. The traders, almost without exception, as far as my observation went, treated the Indians with signal kindness and humanity. Many instances of their relieving them in their distress, and taking great pains to do so, came to my knowledge. But then their means of doing so are in some degree contingent upon the financial arrangements of the Company at large, over which they have no control, or but little.

357. Drawing that distinction, what do you think is the effect upon the Indians of such arrangements made by the absentee proprietors?—I think the Indians sometimes suffer, because I think that the supplies of goods sent by the Company are sometimes inadequate. The traders can only do the best with the goods which they have; they have nothing to do with what are sent in.

358. Is the want of supplies the only arrangement which you think defective?—The principal one.

359. Chairman.] What is the general character of the agents of the Hudson's Bay Company; as far as you could observe, were they respectable men?—Very generally so; I never mingled with a body of men whose general qualities seemed to me more entitled to respect. They are men of simple

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primitive habits, leading the most hardy lives; generally speaking, contented, doing their duty faithfully to their employers, and in many instances taking sincere interest in the welfare of the Indians around them, and doing all they can to benefit them, but the Indian is a very difficult subject.

360. You think, upon the whole, that their conduct was that of men who were doing their duty, and acting in a considerate manner towards the Indians?—I think so, most eminently.

361. Mr. Charles Fitzwilliam.] You say that the buffalo exists over this territory on the bank; can domestic cattle live there also?—The buffalo exists over it; there are domestic cattle at most of the forts now; a cow or two; even low down on the Mackenzie's River they have domestic cattle. I was a fellow-passenger with a bull in a small boat on that river.

362. They can exist in the winter?—They have to be housed; but horses exhibit extraordinary hardihood there; the horses I have known to pass the winter in the open air at Edmonton, subsisting themselves by what herbage they could find under the snow.

363. The buffaloes are generally fatter in winter than in summer, are they not?—I believe so.

364. As spring comes, the cows, which are the fattest, I believe, immediately waste almost to skeletons?—I cannot speak with much authority upon that point, but the annoyance of flies in summer is so great, that I know it frets the animals almost to death, and they lose flesh very much.

John Rae, Esq., M.D., called in; and Examined.

J. Rae, Esq., M.D.

365. Chairman.] I BELIEVE you are very conversant with the territory now in the occupation and management of the Hudson's Bay Company?—With the large portion east of the Rocky Mountains. I have never been across to the west.

366. Will you have the goodness to state under what circumstances you have become acquainted with that country?—I entered the service of the Company in 1833, and was stationed at Moose Factory, in latitude 51°, on Hudson's Bay, as medical man, 10 years; during that time I saw a good deal of the natives of that part of the country. After that, for the last eight or 10 years, I was employed in arctic service, and spent some short time in Mackenzie's River. I then, in a winter journey, passed from Mackenzie's River by the usual route to the Red River, and down to St. Paul's across the frontier through the States. Those are the only two districts in the country that I have been engaged in; at Moose Factory ten years, in the Mackenzie River one year, and at York Factory for one season; all the rest of the time I have been employed in arctic service.

367. How long have you been employed in arctic service?—Eight years altogether; eight summers and four winters.

368. Speaking generally, what is your opinion of the capacity of this territory for the purposes of settlement and cultivation?—I have never been in Saskatchewan, but I know the character of the country from others; it is all capable of cultivation I believe. The difficulty is the same as Colonel Lefroy mentioned, the difficulty of carrying out the produce by Hudson's Bay, or by communication by the States, because in the States of course there is the same sort of produce nearer at hand, and of course the expense of carrying this produce from the Saskatchewan to market would do away with any profits that could be derived from it.

369. But you believe that, as far as soil and climate are concerned, there is in that part of the Hudson's Bay territory a considerable district of country suitable for cultivation and for settlement?—Quite so; it will be capable of production as soon as the country grows up to it; the country must grow up to it, the same as it does in the States. I passed through the States from the Red River, and the country has gradually been settled up; there was still about 400 miles of quite uncultivated country lying between Pembina and the farthest part settled by the Americans, when I passed down in 1852.

370. As far as you can form a conjecture, supposing that country was entirely open for purposes of settlement, do you think that there would be a disposition on the part of emigrants to go there?—Never, until the country is settled up near to it from the States, because as soon as settlers attempted to settle there

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the Indians would attack them; it is a buffalo-hunting country. The greater portion of the Indians are warlike in that part; I should believe that that would be the consequence; I only speak from supposition, because I have never been in the Saskatchewan; but I know that the habits of the Indians are rather warlike.

371. Your opinion seems to be, that if there was nothing to prevent it, settlement in that district of the country would not be immediate, but would be gradual, and would be certain?—Quite so; when the country gradually settles up to it; the produce cannot be carried out to Hudson's Bay, the difficulty of road is so great; that is my impression.

372. You have stated that you were in the service of the Hudson's Bay Company?—For 23 years.

373. Are you still in their service?—No; I left their service last year.

374. You are now quite independent of them?—Yes.

375. What is your opinion of the system pursued by that Company, so far as relates to the Indian population?—The system pursued is as fair, I think, towards the Indian as possible; the Company's tariff with the Indians is one of the principal things I wish to mention; the tariff is formed in a peculiar way, and necessarily so; the sums given for furs do not coincide with the value of the furs traded for with them, because the musk-rat, or the less valuable furs, are paid for at a higher rate; were the Company to pay for the finer furs at the same rate, the Indians would hunt up the finer furs and destroy them off, as has been done all along the frontier, and we should then require to reduce the price for the musk-rat and the inferior furs, and the Indians would not hunt them at all; the Indians would never understand our varying the prices of the furs according to the prices here; the consequence would be that the Indian would not be a bit better off, and he would kill up all the finer animals and leave the musk-rat and ordinary furs unaffected.

376. You have stated that, in your opinion there is a portion of the territory now belonging to the Hudson's Bay Company to the south, which may be at no distant period available for the purposes of settlement; what is your opinion, in that respect, with regard to that vast district of country which lies to the north of the region which you have referred to?—As far as I can answer, we could not grow wheat. At Moose Factory, in latitude 51°, barley would not ripen; you could not depend upon it. Potatoes were very variable; sometimes they would give five or six fold; that was the highest I saw, I think, during 10 years; sometimes the crop yielded scarcely the seed.

377. Do you believe that, under any circumstances, there would be the slightest probability of settlement taking place in that great district of country within the next 20 years, for instance?—I think decidedly not; it must be pushed up from the south; I mean, not to pay; people might settle. No person would go there to settle unless he was paid for it, and paid well. I apply my answer to the wooded country.

378. You think there would be no inducement for persons to go there except for the purposes of fur trading?—Only that; and then they would require to have the exclusive right to trade; any opposition would do away with any profits or advantages from it to a great extent.

379. What, in your opinion, would be the consequences of throwing open the present exclusive system of fur trading to the public generally, and letting anybody who chose go and trade for furs there, and kill the fur-bearing animals?—The effect would be, the introduction of spirits among the Indians again, and the demoralization of the Indians.

380. Do you think that the effect would be the extirpation of the fur-bearing animal?—In a great measure; it would lead to that, because trappers would be sent in. People would come up and kill the animals themselves instead of leaving the Indians to hunt over the grounds; they would kill them at all seasons, whereas the Hudson's Bay Company discourage the killing them in the summer time; they discourage the Indians from killing them in the breeding season.

381. Do you consider the fur trade in its very nature to be necessarily and essentially a monopoly?—I think that to continue it regularly it requires to be a monopoly in some hands something similar to what it is now.

382. Would not the effect of throwing it open be that it would give a great stimulus to it for the next few years, and absolutely destroy it afterwards?—

J. Kee, Esq., M. P.

Yes, and when the fur-bearing animals were hunted up, the country would be left a wreck.

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383. What would be the effect of such a process upon the Indian tribes?—Most injurious, I should fancy.

384. You say because spirits would be introduced?—That would be a great injury. They would get much better paid for their furs for a time, but the effect after, say eight, or 10, or 12 years, or I will not say what number of years; but after a lapse of years, not a very long period, would be to demoralize the Indians; they would kill up the principal finer furs, and it would do no good to any person, because the parties coming in, if there was opposition, could not make a profit.

385. Do you think that it would be possible to provide, by some arrangement with the Hudson's Bay Company, for the retention of the fur trade in their hands in those regions which are fit for nothing but the fur trade, and can be only fit for the fur trade for some time to come, and at the same time to open up, for the purposes of colonization, all such parts of the country as it is at all reasonable to suppose within the next 20 years, for instance, could be settled and colonized?—I should be rather at a loss to give an opinion upon that subject, as I have not studied the circumstances; it would be very difficult to make the arrangement; it would be an excellent one, I believe, if it could be effected.

386. You think that if it could be done it would be a desirable arrangement to make?—A very desirable one indeed.

387. Why do you think that it could not be done?—I do not say that it could not be done, but it would be difficult; I could not give a reason why it should not be done. I have not studied the subject.

388. I believe the Russians have a fur trading establishment on the extreme north-west point of North America?—Yes; it comes in contact with Mackenzie's River, the district of which I was in charge for one season.

389. Are you aware of any arrangement which the Russian Company have made with the Hudson's Bay Company, by which the most valuable portion of their fur-trading territory is leased to the Hudson's Bay Company on certain conditions?—There was an arrangement of that sort some years ago; I cannot say whether it is still in force; it was a lease not of the whole, but of the strip of land which you will see in the charts running along the shore.

390. Do you know what were the motives of the Russian Company for coming to that arrangement?—I do not.

391. Mr. Charles Fitzwilliam.] You say that you were in charge of the district on Mackenzie's River; can you state to the Committee the climate and the capabilities of the land there?—The climate is a severe one; but we grew barley at Fort Simpson, in latitude 62° or 63°, I think; we grew barley at Fort Liard; we grew barley at the Yukon, which is close to the Russian territory; that is a post which was established some time ago; we could grow wheat at no place in the district; barley is grown at all the posts except three, Fort Norman, Peel's River, and Fort Goodhope, which are far down the river.

392. Mr. Adirivik.] In what year were you on Mackenzie's River?—In 1849–50.

393. Have you been at long intervals of time on the same spot?—I have been four years there at different times; I was two years wintered there in the expedition, but I was only one year in charge of the district.

394. Did you see anything of the Red River settlement at long intervals of time?—No; I was only there part of a winter on two occasions, and once in spring.

395. You cannot speak to any alteration of climate in spots which have been settled?—No, I cannot; but I can say with regard to the tract of country of which we are speaking, namely, the woody country, that there is an influence against its being affected by clearance, which does not exist in other parts of the world. There is the large Hudson's Bay opening up to the north, where there is a continual flow of ice during the whole summer; it is frozen up seven or eight months in the winter, and in the summer season there is a constant influx of ice which keeps the climate colder than it otherwise would be for perhaps 100 or 200 miles inland in all directions; that is an influence which does not exist elsewhere, and which would affect the climate, I think.

396. Mr. Charles Fitzwilliam.] While you were at Mackenzie's River, you, I

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