

IMMIGRATION AND SETTLEMENT.

The questions of Immigration and Settlement are, in a new country, among the most vital, and we purpose in this article to state a number of facts which will, at least, aid in their investigation.

Canada is a forest country. Its whole surface, until cleared by artificial means, is covered with a luxuriant growth of timber. In this it differs from many of the United States, which have a quantity of prairie or natural meadow lands, and from our own North-west Territory, which is in great part prairie, too.

The labor of clearing the forest, and the mode of life necessary in regions called "the backwoods," *i.e.*, those remote from the main settlements and routes of travel, are peculiar, and are seldom relished by Europeans on their arrival in the country; while, on the other hand, a backwoods-man often prefers to be somewhat solitary, so that he sells his clearing and moves further back when settlements approach his land.

The first conclusion which evidently follows from a consideration of these facts is, that the efforts of the friends of emigration should not be directed to inducing emigrants to go back and settle on wild land, but to securing the influx of a class who can find employment in cities and towns or upon farms already so far cleared as to require the labor of many men to put in and harvest the crops.

The next conclusion is, that wild land, being the heritage of the people of the country, should be placed in their hands at as low a rate as will cover the cost of survey and sale. They alone can be induced, in any number, to be the pioneers of settlement. The more they can be induced to go "back," the cheaper lands at the "front" will be; the more immigrants will flow in, from Europe, or from the United States, and the more will emigration from Canada be checked.

If our wild lands were almost exhausted, these reasons and conclusions would lose most of their force, for it might be prudent to derive a large revenue from the public domain, as is now done from the remaining so-called Ordnance Lands. But this is not the case. Half a dozen years ago statements were made in Parliament that our best lands were exhausted, and great stress has been laid upon the assertion. But new surveys, new observations, and many other circumstances combine to prove that the assertion, made in good faith, should have been much qualified.

We believe the first close examination of the climatological conditions which determine the character of the agriculture possible in a country was made, for various sections of Canada, in the *Year Book* for 1868, in the article on "Climate." An attentive observation of thermometrical records kept in various parts of the country during 1868 confirms the conclusions there arrived at, excepting that even the climate of our fifth meteorological provinces (see page 50 of that work) appears less rigorous than was there stated. And this close examination extends the area within which the ordinary agriculture of the settled parts of Canada can be extended over some 5,000,000 acres, supposed, when the statement above alluded to was made to be too cold for profitable farming. Wheat, Barley, Oats, Potatoes, and even Indian Corn, it is now shewn, can be ripened in every part of the Ottawa water-shed. The question of climate being thus disposed of, that of the character of the land must be investigated.

The Laurentian range of mountains running south-westerly and skirting the north shore of the St. Lawrence between Quebec and Montreal, but gradually receding from that river on approaching the latter city, trends westward from Montreal along the north shore of the Ottawa, sending an outlier or two to remind of its neighborhood the traveller on that noble stream. Some distance above Ottawa city—notably at Portage du Fort—the most casual observer may see it crossing the river strong, and, somewhat modified in character, it runs southward to near Brockville, whence, again turning westward, it forms a ridge, or rather a collection of hillocks, which shed the rain that falls upon them southward to Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence, and north and eastward to the Ottawa or Lake Simcoe and the Georgian Bay.

A grand old formation is the Laurentian, its mountains nowhere peaked, but rounded by the weather during countless ages, and the hills along the spur just spoken of washed till they are bare, so that only near the thousands of lakes and lakelets which nestle among them, and along the beds of turbulent little streams which connect these lakes, can any fertile lands be found. When it was asserted, years ago, that the good lands of Canada were mostly sold, settlement had about reached this rocky ridge. Roads made in this region showed its uninviting character. Worst of all, the free grants located upon some of these roads gave so poor a prospect that they were abandoned.

But settlement was meantime turning the flanks of the Laurentian line. First, from the West, from near Lake Simcoe, people found the Muskoka district and Parry's Sound not uninviting. Then, from the East, the men of Lanark and of Renfrew moved up the Madawaska and the Petawawa. Then the Crown Lands Surveyors, and, better still, the employees of the lumberers, went further back. The further they penetrated into the interior, the better the land became, and the result may be stated thus, that *inside* the Laurentian barrier, best approachable from the Northern Railroad and Lake Simcoe on the one hand and from the Upper Ottawa river on the other, there is, in the basin of Lake Nipis-