

incognita. The latest and most authentic information we have respecting it is the evidence furnished by Professor Bell to the Committee on Immigration, in the House of Commons, in March, 1870. Mr. Bell made an exploratory survey, in 1869, under instructions from Sir W. E. Logan, of the Geological Survey, and he is now making a map to represent it on a scale of one mile to the inch.

The lake is 75 miles long, from north to south, and 50 miles wide, from east to west. Its shore is indented with extensive bays and peninsulas, and the body is thickly interspersed with islands. Many of these islands are of sufficient size for settlement. Some of them are 15 miles in length, and many others from 2 to 5 miles. The soil on most of these is of good quality. The aggregate area of the whole of them is very considerable; and the lake exercises a beneficial influence on the climate.

The whole of the land around the lake is not good. Some of it is hilly and rocky, and broken; but considerable areas of good land occur on the southern side. The largest part of good land is on the western side, extending from the south end of Black Sturgeon Lake, northward, to the neighbourhood of Nipigon House, a distance of about 50 miles. A level tract, probably 12 miles wide, extends to an unknown distance, northward, from the head of the lake. The eastern shore was surveyed by Mr. Bell's assistant, Mr. Peter McKellar, of Fort William. The largest continuous tract of good land, which he reported, lies along the whole of the north-east side of Umbabika Bay, which is upwards of 20 miles in length. Very little of the land along Nipigon River seemed to be good; but along the Black Sturgeon River there is a tract of very good land. Professor Bell said he felt convinced that this region would, some day, be traversed by a railway to the great North-west Territory. He made that statement, he said, after careful examination. He stated that—

“The rivers running into the lake, in their lower reaches, are very crooked, winding between muddy banks, which increase very gradually in their general height as we recede from the lake. We paddled up one of these rivers (the Kabitotiquiak) a distance of 30 miles, following its course. In that distance the water was from 10 to 20 feet deep, and the only interruption we met with, besides jams of drift-wood, was a very short rapid, with a fall of $\frac{1}{2}$ feet, and my Indian guide informed me that he could go an equal distance further before coming to the next rapid. This little rapid was the only place, in all this distance, at which we could get stones to balance our net. The upper branches of some of the rivers flow from lakes in the hilly country, towards Dog Lake. The Gull River, which is the largest of the 16 rivers entering Lake Nipigon, flows from the westward, through an apparently level country.”

In answer to the question, how far this good tract of land extended from Lake Nipigon, he said—

“We could not see the ends of it in that direction, from any point we reached. The Hudson Bay people formerly passed through it on their journeys to Sturgeon Lake, which lies 10 days' journey (say about 150 miles) westward from Lake Nipigon. Mr. D. N. Harmon, formerly a partner in the North-west Company, in his journal, published in 1820, and none the worse for being a little old, says of it (page 160)—‘The country through which we have passed since we left Fort Duncan (now called Nipigon House) is low and level; no mountains, or even hills, are to be seen; in many places it is swampy, and small lakes, and ponds, and rivers, and brooks are numerous. Where the land is dry, the soil appears to be principally a black loam.’”

With respect to the character of the soil of the Nipigon territory, he stated—

“On the higher grounds and undulating portions it is a clayey loam, sufficiently tenacious to hold together, when pressed in the hand. The lower and level sections are, generally, underlaid by a coarse clay, overspread by a sandy loam, which must be of a fertile character, if we may judge by the natural crop of grass which it produces where the timber has been burnt. In the spring, the rivers from the north are said to be loaded with whitish mud, derived, probably, from the ‘clay level.’ In the region south-west of the lake, the river banks, besides the prevailing sandy clay, expose in some places boulder clay, gravel, sand, and fine, tenacious clay. The trap hills, which I have mentioned as occurring in the tract to the south-west of the lake, are covered, to a great extent, with a loamy soil.”

In answer to a question as to the prevailing character of the rocks, he stated—

“The prevailing rock around the lake is a black trap, similar to that of Thunder Bay, belonging to the lower Silurian system. Such trap rocks are found, in all countries, to yield the most permanently fertile soil. Between Lake Nipigon, and Black Bay on Lake Superior, this is associated with large quantities of red marl, and some other rocks belonging to the same system. The geology of the territory is altogether different from what had hitherto been supposed, and more favourable for the colonization of the country.”

The following further questions, and answers of Professor Bell, are of sufficient interest to give at length:—

“What is the character of the immediate shore or beach of Lake Nipigon?—In many parts the shore is bold, with deep water; but even where it is lower, the lake has, as it were, encroached upon it—washing away the soft soil, till it has been stopped by fixed rock or boulders of the prevailing black trap. In some places, however, especially in the northern parts of the lake, there are long stretches of sandy or muddy shore.

“Has the lake, and the country around it, an attractive appearance, or the reverse?—I consider Nipigon the most beautiful of all the great lakes. The water is clear and bright,