

Dominion Lands.

Up to 31st December, 1874, 1,042 assignments had been registered under the Dominion Lands Act; 2,059 applications had been filed, of which 614 had been examined and recommended for patent; 2,000 township maps had been prepared, and some 23 parish plans, involving a mass of detailed information. Maps were also compiled and published showing the lands available for settlement. A map has also been prepared and published of the territory between Lake Superior and the Rocky Mountains, showing the tracts of country surrendered by the Indians, &c. The total number of townships subdivided up to the close of 1874 was 440, representing about 9,658,156 acres, of which 6,572,238 acres are in Manitoba. A party is engaged in marking and defining the 49th parallel east of the Lake of the Woods, as a base line for block surveys, and another blocking the country south to Rainy River. Applications for land in Rainy River Valley are numerous. There is a large area, with excellent soil and abundant timber. A saw-mill, with planing and shingle machines, has been erected at Fort Francis, which will greatly aid settlement in this valley. A number of the Indian Reserves have been surveyed and marked out. The survey, in detail, of all holdings in the parishes on the Red River and Assiniboine have been completed. Surveys have been made of several different timber limits on Lake of the Woods, Rainy River, and Lake Winnipeg. The lands in the Lac-La-Pluie district reserved to the Hudson's Bay Company were surveyed during 1874. A special survey of meridians and bases in the North-West Territories is being carried on under the superintendence of the Assistant Surveyor General, Lindsay Russell, Esq. The objects of this survey are to establish a practical ground-work for the extension of township surveys along the line of the Canada Pacific Railway, to facilitate the location of the land grant along the line, and to obtain a knowledge of the character and resources of the territories covered by the survey. It is possible also that data of value may be obtained for estimating the length of a degree of the meridian in that region. The work will extend over some 12 degrees of latitude. Careful triangulation will be made, under Mr. Russell's personal direction, northerly from the 49th parallel, and westerly from the principal meridian, unless the country north of the Saskatchewan should be too heavily wooded, until the McKenzie River is reached, near Lake Athabasca. Mr. H. B. Smith, C. E., was employed during last season in obtaining a section on the principal meridian, connecting at Pembina with the surveys effected by United States engineers, and north of the Assiniboine with those for the Canada Pacific Railway. He also surveyed the Assiniboine from Red River to the parish of High Bluff, and connecting through Long Lake and the intervening country with Lake Manitoba. Special facilities were found to exist for opening up a navigable communication between Winnipeg

and Lake Manitoba. A channel through a nearly level country could be cut from the south end of Lake Manitoba through Long Lake to the Assiniboine, giving a volume of water sufficient with one lock only to render that river navigable for steamers throughout the season. The distance would be only 26 miles, and there are no rock cuttings. The estimated cost is about \$875,000. The Assiniboine in its present state is unfit for anything but canoe navigation. The banks are of a soft, yielding nature; in many places pure sand; and every year large portions are carried off into the river; sometimes masses of many tons in weight precipitated into the stream. The only way of effectually deepening it is by letting in such a body of water as would keep it at a sufficient level for navigation. The population of Manitoba largely increased during the year. The settlers, with the exception of the Menonites, were principally from Ontario. The city of Winnipeg has increased sevenfold in three years, and has now a population of nearly 5,000. Between thirteen and fourteen hundred Menonites settled in the Province, and are a valuable addition to the population. 1,376 homesteads were entered in 1874. The total number entered up to December, 1874, was 2,537, representing 405,929 acres. 636 entries have been made under the Act allowing persons entering for homesteads to enter also for an adjoining quarter section reserve, of which he takes possession, and for which he will receive a patent on completing his homestead entry. 50,123 acres of Dominion lands had been sold up to the close of the year, and 118,240 acres entered by Military Bounty Warrant. \$73,422.60 had been received at that date from Dominion lands; 977 patents had been issued. Enquiries for maps and information about these lands are constantly being received, and a concise description of them has been prepared. The allotment of Half Breed lands was unavoidably delayed, owing to claims which have now been finally settled, and the allotment need no longer be delayed. The Reports of the Township Surveys show the character of the soil, of 135 townships east of the principal meridian, and between 300 and 400 townships west of the line. In by very far the greater number of cases the soil is said to be of superior quality, and water generally easily obtainable. The want of wood is the most frequent defect, but a good many of the townships are well timbered. In some of the ranges east there is a good deal of marsh land. The shores of Lake of the Woods and Shoal Lake, where traversed, have the same rugged, rocky appearance as the north shore of Lake Superior. There is a great deal of fallen timber, and at one point a level country with green timber was discernible, stretching to the west as far as the eye could reach. Almost the entire country between Shoal Lake and Lake of the Woods has been swept by fire. The height of the coast of these lakes varies from 20 to 80, and in some places 100 feet.