

Department of the Interior.

DOMINION LANDS.

The general depression affected unfavorably the settlement of Dominion lands during 1876. Many important surveys were made. The latitude of Battleford, the capital of the N. W. Territories, was determined with precision at 52°42'39"-60" N. and an exact survey of the place and its surroundings made. Battle River and the Saskatchewan form, at their junction, a long narrow peninsula about 5½ miles long and from three quarters to one and a half miles wide, in great part composed of a sandy ridge 60 or 70 feet high, destitute of wood except on the flats, and gradually leaving the Saskatchewan till it terminates a mile and a quarter from the forks, whence it is continued south-easterly on the other side of Battle river. Good water can be obtained anywhere at the foot of the ridges by digging, and natural springs occur in many places. The only land which has been cultivated was first ploughed in the spring of 1876, and yielded 25 bushels of wheat to the acre, and the same of barley. Wheat was sown on 17th May and harvested on 20th August, being sown on the sod. Barley sown at the same date was harvested 31st July. The soil on the flats below the ridge is considered much better but is liable to summer frosts, and that to the north of the Saskatchewan better still, but destitute of wood. Near Battleford there is plenty of firewood and there is coal some distance up the river. An unusually wet season retarded the progress of the survey of meridians and parallels; 189 miles were surveyed, and a l line carefully chained twice over throughout. The land south of the Qu'Appelle river was found to be a good sandy loam with plenty of good water, and a fair supply of timber; in the valleys of the streams this was abundant and of good size. Two miles north of the river, the land becomes rolling and sandy for 11 miles, when it again improves for 55 miles, the northern part particularly being excellent, well wooded and watered, and this continues all the way to Fort Pelly. On the 8th base line westward from the 10½ meridian, for 49 miles, poplar bush and willows predominate. The land is good and water abundant. To the north there is an open prairie, the soil still of good quality but little timber. The first frost was on the 31st August. On the 9th base line, for 5 miles south and 14 west, the soil throughout was good sandy loam, and much of the timber fit for use. Fishing Lake, several miles long, was at the end of the line surveyed. From a very careful survey, it is concluded that the whole region west of the Assiniboine between Forts Pelly and Ellice, with the exception of a few small sections, is well adapted for settlement.

No sub-division surveys were made during the season of 1876, except the laying out of five of the fractional townships on the west shore of Lake Winnipeg, for the Icelanders. Since the establishment of

the Dominion Lands Office in 1871, 10,574,915 acres have been surveyed into townships, sections and quarter sections, at a cost of 38.83 cents per acre. 341,866 acres of the old settled parishes, on the Red and Assiniboine rivers, have been surveyed and mapped at a cost of \$4.57 per acre. All the settlement surveys in Manitoba were completed in 1876, except one on the Seine River.

Twenty-eight Indian reserves were surveyed and others commenced.

The total amount of lands taken up during the season of 1876 was 154,533 acres. The Mennonites have completely settled the lands allotted to them, and are prospering. Those who settled in 1875, near the boundary west of Red River, had already at the close of 1876 built 17 villages and had 1500 acres of land broken up. The crops in Manitoba were excellent, and there was entire immunity from grasshoppers. The country about the forks of the Saskatchewan, for a hundred miles up the river, offers great inducements to settlers.

Scrap to the amount of \$518,083 has been issued for Half-breed heads of families, and the original white settlers in Manitoba. Only 47 cases of a special character remain to be dealt with.

NORTH WEST TERRITORIES.

In October, 1876, the "North West Territories Act" of 1875 was put in operation, the whole of the territories of the North West being detached from the Government of Manitoba, and erected into a separate Government, and the easternmost of the territories being set apart under the name of the Territory of Keewatin. By a treaty made with the Crees and other Indians, in August and September, 1876, the whole of the territory east of the Rocky Mountains, except some 35,000 square miles, inhabited by Blackfoot Indians, was ceded to the Dominion. The ceded territory contains about 120,000 square miles. The terms of the treaty were similar to that made the year before, except with respect to a provision inserted promising aid to Indians in case of famine or pestilence, &c. The number of Indians within the territory is estimated at 5,000. There are among them a few Assiniboines and Sauteaux and one band of Chippewayans. The treaty was signed by all the chiefs but one. There are still about 4,000 Black-foot Indians occupying territory east of the Rocky Mountains and south of Jasper House to be treated with. These are reported anxious for the conclusion of a treaty, and very friendly in their disposition. Their number had been lessened by one half during the last 10 or 15 years, and they had become greatly demoralized; but since the advent of the mounted police force their condition has marvellously improved, and they have steadily refused all overtures from the U. S. Indians to take up arms against the whites.