

A LECTURE:

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Delivered at St. John, and (by request) subsequently delivered at Campbellton and Dalhousie, Restigouche. Published in compliance with the Resolution of the Campbellton meeting. Subject:

Restigouche and its Vicinity.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Across Bathurst big river (the Nepisiquit) a bridge was completed year before last, which is decidedly, with but one exception, the finest wooden bridge in the Province. It completes a connection of bridges that enables a person (notwithstanding the large rivers that run across the route) to travel, after he leaves the St. John, opposite Fredericton, all the way North to the Canadian boundary, without having to cross a solitary ferry. The roads and bridges, in fact, in every part of New Brunswick, present a most favorable contrast to those of the sister Provinces.

Leaving Bathurst you cross a romantic little stream called the "Tete-a-gouche," (in English, Fairy river,) which has its rise in a lake about 25 miles from the mouth of the river. Near this is Somerset Vale, the beautiful residence of the late Mr. Munro, formerly a representative for the County of Gloucester, in the House of Assembly. This tastefully laid out and decorated property attracts the attention of all passers by, and certainly is properly designated when described as a sylvan retreat. On the Tete-a-gouche, large quantities of a fine description of slate and freestone are found; manganese also in considerable quantities. A specimen of this last I took with me to St. John, which is said to be of a very rich description. The specimen I took with me is to be found, I presume, in the Museum connected with the St. John Institute. A copper mine has also been discovered near the Tete-a-gouche.

A few miles from Bathurst, all along the shore, through Petit Roché and Belledune, to the neighbourhood of the Restigouche, the country is very thickly settled—in Petit Roché, with French, who live by the mixed means of fishing, farming, lumbering on a small scale, making shingles, and burning lime; limestone being there of good quality and in great abundance. The French there are a poor, harmless set of persons, who possess very little thought and less energy, and who live in that state of negative happiness, where ignorance is said to be bliss. The road from Bathurst to Dalhousie, a distance of 52 miles, is decidedly, and without any comparison, the best road in the Province. After you have left the Tete-a-gouche and are fairly clear of Bathurst, and until you reach the immediate vicinity of Dalhousie, the road for the whole distance is almost perfectly level, and almost entirely, even in the wettest weather clear of mud; and yet, though it may seem strange, you can scarcely find on the road for miles in succession in the whole of that distance, a stone of any considerable size. There are mile posts placed along the road, and the first time I travelled in that direction, we went so easily and rapidly that I could not conceive that the distance between the posts was over three quarters of a mile; but, if I had not long ago become convinced of the erroneousness of that opinion, a drive that I had in the spring of 1855 would have brought me to a knowledge of the truth. The winter roads were about breaking up, and were in so bad a state, that the horse I drove (a hardy Canadian) succeeded, we starting at seven in the morning, in accomplishing 26 miles by twelve o'clock the following night, of which distance your humble servant had the pleasure of wading through the deep, soft snow, for 22 miles. It was pleasant—very!

An idea is pretty generally entertained in St. John and vicinity, that the County of Restigouche, like the County of Gloucester and the opposite side of the Bay-de-Chaleur, is principally inhabited by the Acadian French. This is a most erroneous opinion. There are, in fact, in Restigouche, scarcely any of those persons to be found. In the vicinity of Eel River, near Dalhousie, there is a very small settlement of them; but with this exception, there is scarcely a Frenchman to be found settled in Restigouche, from one end of the County to the other; and those that are there are much superior to those persons, on whose misery a well known gentleman has so often descanted in the hearing of the good people of St. John. There are many indications in various parts of Restigouche of the country having formerly been occupied pretty generally by the Acadians; but it appears that the effect of the war, which terminated in the year 1760, between the British and the French, resulting in the total defeat of the latter, was the annihilation of their settlements, the destruction of their batteries, and the expulsion of the *hablans* from nearly the whole of that locality.

Restigouche has been the scene of several naval engagements, one of which has the importance connected with it of having proved the termination, having been the closing scene of the war already referred to.

After Quebec was taken by the lamented Wolfe, in 1759, an expedition was fitted out by the French, to proceed up the St. Lawrence

in the spring of the following year, to the relief of Montreal. Arriving at the Gulf of St. Lawrence, they ascertained that the British fleet, having had the start of them, had gone up the river. The French accordingly put into the Bay Chaleur for purposes of safety. They were not long there, however, before Capt. Byron, on board the "Fame," accompanied by some four or five other vessels of the British navy, started in pursuit of the French, whom they found in Restigouche, under the protection of batteries, that had been erected at different points along the river. The batteries, however, it appears, were but indifferently served, and Byron soon succeeded in silencing them. After this, an engagement took place between the vessels, which for a time was well contested, but the commander of the French squadron having been killed, and one of their magazines having exploded, the French fleet was defeated, and the whole force, consisting of some half-dozen frigates, and a score of schooners and privateers, were either captured or destroyed. An old Indian squaw, who died at Restigouche some two or three years ago, at the age of 105 years, had a distinct recollection of the engagement. She recollected having seen one of the vessels on fire, and this gave rise to the opinion at Restigouche (which however is incorrect) that the French, to prevent their vessels falling into the hands of the victors, set them on fire, and thus destroyed them. This was not the case, the vessels having been destroyed by the British.

At low water of spring tides, there are still some three or four of these vessels to be seen. From one of them which lies off the Mission Point, nearly opposite Campbellton, a number of cannon balls, shells, &c. have been taken, and the fleur-de-lis still legible on many of the balls, plainly shows them to be of French origin. Several of the cannon used by the French at their batteries, have been discovered from time to time, two of which (long 18 pounders I believe) are now to be seen at Athol House, in an excellent state of preservation. Those two I have been informed, were brought by the French from Lunenburg, Nova Scotia, where they had then a stronghold.

During the revolutionary war, American privateers were about Restigouche and the Bay Chaleur in great numbers, where they did a large amount of damage, destroying property right and left. On going down the Bay, however, they did not succeed so well. They were fallen in with by two small British vessels, the "Wolf" and the "Diligence," and near Percé an engagement took place, when Brother Jonathan was worsted, and after having had two of his vessels sunk, was glad to make off with the remainder with all convenient speed.

The following incident in connection with privateering, is given in Restigouche, and may be relied upon as substantially correct.

It appears that Mr. Ferguson, one of the early settlers at Restigouche, and the late proprietor of that property, known to every one who has visited that quarter, as the "Athol House Property," was on his way to Halifax with a valuable cargo of salmon and furs, when he was intercepted by an American privateer, and his vessel and cargo were captured. Some time after this when he had got back again to Restigouche, he loaded another schooner and started off again. As his fate would have it, he fell in once more with his former captors, and they immediately boarded and took possession of his vessel. Not liking the idea of having a schooner and cargo number two taken from him, the danger of so unpleasant a result brightened up his ideas, and accordingly by some mesmeric, or other influence (perhaps "a gentle turn of the wrist and a few hard words") he completely metamorphosed his foe into a friend, who went back to his own vessel to explain to his crew how very hard it was that they should capture the property of the same person twice in succession, which argument appears to have been potent, for Mr. Ferguson, his vessel and cargo were let off. The secret will be at once divined by the brethren of the "mystic tie," when they learn that Mr. Ferguson had ascertained that the American captain was, like himself, a Freemason.

The present inhabitants of Restigouche, far from being the ignorant and unenlightened people that they have been represented to be, and which representation the cognomen "dark north," appears to have made more generally a matter of credit in St. John, are, as far as I am capable of judging, as a general thing, about the most intelligent, and independent (as residents of a whole county) of any in the Province. Take for instance the counties of Restigouche and St. John, and place them in comparison as *whole counties*, and the advantage in the comparison, as far as general intelligence is concerned, will be found (as a whole county I say) to be vastly in favor of Restigouche.

I do not mean to say that there is any small portion of its inhabitants with unusual intellectual powers, but generally they possess intelligence such as is to be expected when you take into consideration the country from which they came. To a very great extent, Restigouche is settled by a manly, independent class of Scotchmen, who, coming into this Province and finding a part of it in a wilderness state, without either roads or settlements, have by their labor subdued a considerable portion of

the wilderness, and have brought it to such a state, that the returns it yields, as I will show you when I come to speak of the agricultural capabilities of the county, are not to be surpassed in America. Many of the people (a large number of whom are from the Island of Arran) settled in the Parishes of Colborne and Durham, in the lower part of the County, and there is now scarcely a man of them, but what, beside owning his farm, stock, &c., has more or less money on hand, or is receiving interest for it from some of the traders, to whom he has loaned it. Contrast this with the mortgaged farms, and the indebted dependant state of the farmers in a large portion of the remainder of the Province, and your ideas of Restigouche will become more favourable than they have hitherto been.

From the first report of the Restigouche Agricultural Society, for the year 1841, (kindly sent me by Dugald Stewart, Esq., Deputy Treasurer at Dalhousie) I take in reference to that early period, in the history of those settlers, the following extract. After referring to the superior nature of the soil, and its adaptability to furnish crops as well for export, as for domestic consumption, the report says, "For further encouragement, your committee beg leave to recommend a review of the Parish of Durham, from its commencement. But a few years since, a wilderness, without any communication with other settlements, but by water, and entirely an agricultural section of the County, it must be encouraging to others similarly situated to see its extensive improved farms, with the comfortable appearance of its inhabitants, and the thriving condition of its flocks, where, but a few years since those inhabitants settled down in the forest, with but small means, and have now arrived at the state of comfortable independence that we have described."

Beside the Scotch settlers in Restigouche, there is an admixture of a good description of Irish, who have well cultivated farms, and are surrounded by many advantages to make them independent, comfortable, and contented. Beside these, there are scattered through the County, a pretty large number of persons from P. E. Island, and from different parts of Nova Scotia, who go, with those others I have named, to make up the population, as a general thing of the County of Restigouche. From the fact of the criminal calendar of Restigouche being so generally a blank, a very correct opinion can be formed of the orderly, peaceable, and exemplary manner of the people. This, with the frank and manly hospitality, so common throughout the whole of the County, and the general intelligence and independence that I have described, make up the leading and marked characteristics of the warm hearted, noble minded, whole-souled people of Restigouche. Apropos of hospitality I may remark that if any person from this quarter, (St. John) from what I have said, and have yet to say, should be induced to visit the country I am this evening describing, of this you may be assured, if you are not met with a warm, kind, and manly greeting, the fault will be your own, and this further I will add that the fact of your being from St. John will be sufficient for me to place what time I can command at your service, and if a benedict when you arrive, a seat at my table shall be at your disposal.

Dalhousie, the shire town of Restigouche, is situated (as you will observe by reference to a map of New Brunswick) at about the extreme North point of this Province, being in 48° 5' N. latitude, and 66° 22' W. longitude, being in nearly the same longitude as St. John, and about 3 degrees North of it, and forming one side of the entrance to what is now known as the Restigouche River. The river at this point is about three miles wide, which width it retains until you reach Campbellton, about sixteen miles up river. Dalhousie is generally known as one of the best harbors in the Province of New Brunswick, but as I purpose making some remarks by-and-by in reference to the general depth of the water at the different Northern ports, I will till then defer anything on that point that I may have to say.

The town of Dalhousie, is built on a level tract of land near the water, rising abruptly in the rear until it attains a considerable height. It is now the principal shipping port of Restigouche, having taken the precedence of Campbellton at which place vessels were formerly in the habit of loading. Nature has adapted Dalhousie in a peculiar manner as a port for shipping lumber. In front of the town and connected with it, a peninsula runs out into a semi-circular form, answering admirably as a break-water, and giving shelter and boomage for as large an amount of lumber as it is necessary to ship from the Port. At Dalhousie a number of mercantile houses have establishments, the principal of which at that place, Messrs. A. Ritchie & Co., have recently erected a steam-mill. Beside the necessary amount of dwelling-houses, stores, &c., Dalhousie boasts of a Presbyterian Church, an Episcopal Church in course of erection, a Mechanics' Institute and Town Hall, Court House, &c.

In a legislative point of view it has more than its share, as the two Members of the House of Assembly which the County sends and the only member of the Legislative Coun-

cil who resides in Restigouche have all their residences in Dalhousie. This is a difficulty however, that unless I am very much mistaken a very little time will serve to remedy. (Since the above was written, I may remark that the anticipated change has taken place.) At the Escuminac river, which flows into the Restigouche, nearly opposite Dalhousie, there is a seignory, the proprietors of which reside in Dalhousie, who receive from the settlers upon the seignory (called "Consistaires") an annual rental to which they are liable. The old laws relating to the seigniorial tenure in Canada, are the relics of old French legislation, which should have been abolished upon the conquest of Canada, but unfortunately were retained, and have been a source of much difficulty and misunderstanding ever since.

Campbellton, sixteen miles above Dalhousie, formerly the port at which shipments of lumber from Restigouche were made, is now seldom visited by a square rigged vessel, except merely for the purpose of landing goods imported from England. A difficulty in the navigation, to which I intend making reference ere I conclude this evening's lecture, is put down as the principal cause. Campbellton is, however, and must continue to be, the head quarters for all lumbering operations carried on, on the banks of the upper Restigouche, and its numerous tributaries; which fact will always of necessity, in Restigouche, make it a place of considerable importance. At Campbellton, Messrs. A. Ritchie & Co., have a ship building establishment, at which they generally build about three ships a year. The "Middleton," the pioneer ship of the Liverpool and St. John blackball line of Packets, was built by them, having been one of the first that they built. It is at Campbellton that a large proportion of the supplies imported to Restigouche for lumbering purposes, from Quebec, Halifax, &c., is landed. Thence those supplies are removed by scows before the close of the navigation, and by teams portaging in the winter, up to the various localities at which they are intended to be used.

"Athol-House" farm, one of the finest farms in Restigouche, and the property to which I have previously incidentally referred, is situated about three miles above Campbellton. Mr. Perley, in a preface to that same report of which I was speaking, erroneously states that Athol-House is the head of ship-navigation on the Restigouche, and in the body of his work, explains his meaning by saying that to that place it is one "magnificent haven, adapted for ships of the largest class." This is altogether wrong, and if it has had any effect at all, it has been to mislead. Campbellton is properly to be considered the head of Restigouche ship-navigation, as ships never attempt going any farther up. A few have gone up a little farther some years ago, but recently the same thing has not happened. Ships never have gone as far as Athol-House. Schooners, or small vessels, in some cases, have done so, but anything that by any stretch of the most vivid imagination can be called a ship, (not to say a ship of the largest class) has not yet reached that quarter, and I presume never will reach it, Mr. Perley and his report to the contrary notwithstanding. (For a correct description under this head, the reader is referred to the remarks relating thereto, near the end of this lecture.)

As I shall not again refer to Athol-House, I will give you, while I think of it, the particulars of not a bad story (for a true one) that I have heard related there. The late Mr. Ferguson was one of the earliest settlers in Restigouche, Adam Ferguson, Esq., one of the present proprietors of Athol-House, was Mr. Ferguson's eldest son. They had a Negro servant, who, having been born in Restigouche, and having never been out of it, his knowledge was almost wholly confined to that locality. On one occasion Athol-House was visited by a travelling clergyman, who, while he was there, undertook to catechise master Sambo. The first question the clergyman asked cuffs was, "who was the first man?" Sambo looked up and cogitated. Mr. Ferguson was about the oldest man in the country, and the oldest either in or out of it, that Sambo knew anything about; so, after the necessary amount of deliberation to the question, "who was the first man," he replied, "Mr. Ferguson." "Oh! no, no, no," was the rejoinder from the Rev. catechist, "it was Adam." "Yah! yah! yah!" laughed the darkie, "go way! you don't mean to tell me Adam's older than his father. Yah! yah! yah! go long!" The clergyman gave it up. That was the same negro who, upon being asked, on another occasion, where his fore-fathers came from, replied with great indignation, "never had no four fathers, never had only one father!"

As you may have conceived, from the incidental notice that I have given it, the agricultural resources of Restigouche are very great. The yield of potatoes in that quarter is greater from a given quantity planted than in any other place that I have heard of. From a very close enquiry that I made in 1856, (one of the most favorable years I must mention though that they have ever had there) I ascertained that a return of thirty, thirty five, and forty barrels from one of seed was obtained. In one case a farmer showed me some pota-