



ROYAL GAZETTE.

[SUPPLEMENT.]

FREDERICTON, NEW BRUNSWICK, SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 1842.

We draw attention to the extracts from two Reports of Doctor GESNER on the Tobique and Restigouche Rivers, which he was deputed to explore, with a view to ascertain the capabilities of the lands for settlement.

To His Excellency Sir WILLIAM MACBEAN GEORGE COLEBROOKE, K. H., Lieutenant Governor and Commander in Chief of the Province of New Brunswick, &c. &c. &c.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY,

I beg leave to lay before Your Excellency a brief report on the exploration of the Tobique River. A more particular account of which will be contained in the report on the settlement lands.

The Tobique River is the largest tributary of the St. John, excepting the Restook, to which it is very nearly equal. Its mouth is twenty miles below the Grand Falls, and two miles below the confluence of the Restook with the main stream.

The main Tobique extends to the northeast, and about a hundred miles from its mouth by the courses of the River, it is divided or forked into four branches. One of these branches enters from the southeast, and is supplied with water by three lakes, the largest of which is twelve miles in length. These lakes are situated at the chief sources of the main northwest Miramichi. The Indian portage between the St. John and Miramichi waters is only one mile in length. The other branches of the Tobique extend northward and meet the heads of the Nepisiquit and Upsalquitch, whose waters descend in an opposite direction to the Bay Chaleur.

The Tobique, Miramichi, Nepisiquit and Upsalquitch Rivers, all take their rise in one district, and at the bases of the highest mountains in the Province.

Extending across the State of Maine in a northeast direction, there is a chain of high lands, occasionally elevated into mountains of considerable altitude. This branch is a part of the Alleghany chain, and embraces Cataadan and other mountains in the State of Maine. After entering New Brunswick, this branch sends up Mars Hill, Moose Mountain, and Bear Mountain, on the St. John, between Woodstock and the Grand Falls. The same range extends in a northeast direction to the heads of the before mentioned rivers, where some of the mountains exceed two thousand feet in height. This mountainous district gradually subsides as it approaches the Bay Chaleur, and the north coast of the Province is remarkably level.

Another Alpine Ridge extends through the middle of the District of Gaspé, and separates the waters that flow into the St. Lawrence from those that fall into the Bay Chaleur and River St. John.

The Tobique, Nepisiquit, and Upsalquitch, all take their rise in the broken and mountainous termination of the New Brunswick range; and after descending from fall to fall, they sweep through the vallies and receive the tributaries of the lower grounds, until they are lost in the larger streams into which they open.

As the Tobique River and its tributaries are uninhabited, a sufficient stock of provisions was procured, and three Indians, with as many light bark canoes were hired for the expedition. Accompanied by my son, and Mr. James Millidge, the ascent of the river was commenced. We started from Fredericton on the 27th of June, and reached the mouth of the Tobique with the canoes, instruments and baggage, on the 3d of July.

At the entrance of the river there is a considerable tract of terraced intervalle, which with several thousand acres of excellent upland belongs to the Melicete Indians. There is here an Indian Village containing two hundred souls, and as this place is a depot for Timber, upwards of three hundred men were employed in preparing rafts of Timber to descend the main stream.

As these Indians scarcely cultivate their lands, and their grant occupies a most important situation, it would be advantageous if some exchange could be made, whereby they would possess equal if not greater privileges.

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I am confident that if these valuable lands could be obtained by the other inhabitants of the country, they would be immediately settled, and a flourishing Town would soon be built upon the grounds now unprofitably occupied by the Aborigines.

During the season of rafting Timber, many of the Indians are employed; but their chief occupation is hunting and fishing. We observed among them a quantity of Fur, taken by Abrose Bear and his brother, valued at £150, among it were eighty Beaver skins, and about thirty pounds of Castor.

About a mile above the Indian Village there is a dangerous Rapid called the Narrows. At this place the River to the distance of a mile passes through a gorge only one hundred and fifty feet wide, and between cliffs from fifty to one hundred feet in height.

It is evident that at some former period there has been a great fall at this place, and there are evidences that the barrier to the water has been broken, and the River above gradually lowered. The water rushes through the gorge with great violence, and the projecting masses of rock produce dangerous Rapids. During the freshets of Spring and Autumn, this channel is too narrow to give vent to the River; and the water from being thus partially dammed up, overflows the shores above to the distance of two miles. At such periods boats and canoes cannot pass; and such was the violence of the Rapids in July, that we were compelled to draw our canoes up with tow-lines.

The navigation of the River at this place, might be rendered safe and easy, by the erection of dams and locks; there is here an excellent site for Mills which might be set up, without much injury to the salmon fishery.

From the mouth of the River to the Red Rapids, a distance of twelve miles, there is some good intervalle, the lands are high and the soil is productive. Several squatters have settled on the banks of the stream.

The Tobique Mill Company built a dam across the River, and erected extensive Saw Mills in 1837, but before these Mills were put in operation, a part of the dam was carried away. The Mills have since been taken down with the intention of moving them to the Narrows below. £27,000 were expended by the Company at this place. Three millions of logs that had been cut, have also been lost in this speculation. The establishment is now a deserted Village.

If a dam should be built across this stream, a free passage for salmon and other kinds of fish should be secured, as there is scarcely a better river fishery in the Province.

Our third encampment was at Plaster Island about twenty five miles from the Saint John, and two miles above the mouth of stream called by the lumbermen Wapske or Wapskehegan. Between the Island and the Red Rapids, the Otelloch, Otella, three brooks, and other smaller rivulets enter the Tobique. The main River here is extremely beautiful, being decorated by numerous small Islands and belts of intervalle, covered with elms, balsamic poplars, and other trees characteristic of a most fertile soil.

The Wapskehegan is a large Stream coming in from the eastward. At its sources it approaches very nearly a branch of the Miramichi, and it runs through a fine tract of intervalle and excellent upland.

A mile below the Red Rapids, the calcareous slates of the St. John are overlaid by a bright red sandstone, a rock that always indicates a good soil. This sandstone occupies a large tract in this quarter, and extends up the River to the base of Blue Mountain, twenty miles farther northward.

At Plaster Island, on the banks of the Wapskehegan, and so far as we could discover in a district of several thousand acres, there is an abundance of excellent gypsum. At the Island on the left bank of the Tobique, the gypsum occurs interstratified with the red sandstone in a cliff 135 feet high. It is of the fibrous and compact varieties, and some of the strata are of a bright red color.

This gypsum may be transported from the Wapskehegan down a branch of the southwest Miramichi, and supply the country in that

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