head in early spring, and to Frog Point (now Belmont), later in the season. In low stages of water, and in the winter time, the Hudson’s Bay Company maintained a stage line on the Dakota side, and trading posts at points ten or twelve miles apart, thus keeping up communication between St. Paul and Winnipeg the year around.

FISHER’S LANDING FIRST COMMERCIAL POINT.

The projected and partly built St. Paul & Pacific Railroad was, during the years following, patched up so as to carry traffic between Fisher and Glyndon where it connected with the Northern Pacific, which was in operation between Duluth and Moorhead. Fisher’s Landing was head of navigation on Red Lake River, and there connected with the steamboats running up Red River from Winnipeg. Thus a traffic was established, via Crookston, between St. Paul and Winnipeg, which afforded the settlers relief to a considerable degree. Although in winter they were barred out of this communication with the outside world, it did not cause such disappointment as at first, as it was all understood before hand, and all were prepared for this condition.

These conditions prevailed until 1880, and during that time Fisher’s Landing was the leading business point in the county. In the early seventies the influx of settlers was rather slow, on account of the ravages of the grasshoppers and the unsettled condition of railroad building. It will be remembered that this was the period following the financial panic of 1873 and the failure of Jay Cooke & Company, who were the chief promoters of the Northern Pacific and other railroads of this country at the time.

FIRST SETTLERS WERE PRE-EMPTORS OR SQUATTERS.

Up to 1876 the settlement of the county extended very little more than has already been mentioned. That is to say, it was settled along the streams; the Red River, the Sand Hill River, and the Red Lake River as far up as a few miles above Crookston; the prairie was unoccupied and in its wild stage. The lands were not surveyed until 1874, so that up to that time the settlers were merely squatters. It then became known where they were “at,” and from that time there were Government regulations to follow.

The Railroad Company had a grant of every odd section for twenty miles from the Red River east, extending from Marsh River to the Canadian Line, and this was in dispute in some way so that it could not be sold, but the company recognized the first applicant to purchase, by acknowledging his application on a postal card, stating that the application had been received and placed on file and would receive first consideration when placed on the market, which would be when a decision on the validity of the grant had been reached. While this was all right, these conditions made events uncertain, and did not tend to boost things. In a few years, however, this uncertainty came to an end as the railroad company secured a favorable decision and put their lands on the market at very reasonable terms, and they went like “hot cakes.” It was not long until the prairies were settled, as well as the timbered stretches along the streams. Up to this time the country was mainly a grazing country, but now it began to take on a different aspect. The St. Paul & Pacific Railroad had come into the hands of men familiar with the Red River Valley, of whom N. W. Kittson and J. J. Hill were leading spirits, and the master hand of the now famous financier was soon in evidence. The St. Paul & Pacific Railroad became the St. Paul, Minneapolis & Manitoba Railroad, and in 1880 was completed to Grand Forks.

THE PERIOD OF REAL DEVELOPMENT.

The years 1878 and 1879 were the real beginning of the development of the Red River Valley. During this period the railroad lands were placed on the market at the rate of $5.00 per acre, but rebated at the rate of $2.50 per acre for breaking three-fourths of it, and an additional rebate of fifty cents per acre for cropping it, so that a quarter section of land cost only $440, and no residence was required. It was fully as good terms as on Government land; an additional charge, however, was placed on land with timber on it.