

in three divisions, and each of these is broken by hills, valleys and rivers, so that the country can only become a few small detached settlements at best. Let me read you an extract from the report of Mr. Marcus Smith, your Assistant-Chief-Engineer, made in 1879, and brought down the other day; he says:

"From the River Pembina westward across the Rocky Mountains, and by a chain of valleys to Fort Hope the distance is 605 miles, of this only 92 miles traverse a country fit for settlement, being the central plateau, or bunch-grass belt between the Rocky and Cascade Mountains.

"A breadth of seventy miles on each side of the line would include Lac La Hache and the settlements of the Lilloet District on the west, those of Lakes Okanagan and Shuswam on the east, and embrace an area of about 12,000 square miles, on which it is estimated there are about 200 farms taken up, and the white population is about 1,000. About one-tenth of the arable land is under cultivation, but the grazing land is nearly occupied and supports 20,000 to 25,000 head of cattle, a considerable number of horses and sheep.

"If the whole of the arable land of this area were put under cultivation the total produce would probably not exceed that of an average county in Ontario. On the balance of the 605 miles the country would not support a white population of more than a few hundreds. The cost of constructing this division of the line would be heavy, probably not less than \$50,000,000."

MR. DECOSMOS: What is the exact size of an average county in Ontario?

MR. BLAKE: I do not know the exact size, but as the hon. gentleman interrupts me, I will read the hon. gentleman's own statement made in debate on the subject of this line. It gives some valuable information. The hon. gentleman says this—I read from the *Official Debates* for 1877:

"The First Minister had referred to the valuable land on Fraser River. As a fact, however, there were not perhaps over 400 square miles, or 256,000 acres of valuable arable land along the whole river, from Yale to the mouth of the Fraser. In farms and population there, they did not exceed the farming population in his own district, and were far behind that which existed in the district of his hon. friend from Vancouver (Mr. Bunster); but what was there from Yale to the mouth of Burrard Inlet to support a railway? There was nothing in the district to support a railway, so far as at present known; and when they reached the Yale canyon there were sixty odd miles of canyon to get through, which was nothing but a vast ditch, cut by the water coursing through for ages; there was nothing there, unless mineral wealth was found in the mountains, which were walled up on each side. Next,

they had to go forty miles beyond before they found anything but some high grazing land, and away down in the bottom, along the Thompson, some patches of land that could only be cultivated by irrigation. After forty miles more, at the end of Kamloops Lake, they found a high, rolling, grazing country and a few farmers. The population of that country has not increased 50 per cent. within the last ten years. When they reached Kamloops they found a delightful point, from which open lands, but narrow, stretched along the north fork of the Thompson for twenty miles beyond; it was comparatively worthless and, unless mineral wealth were found from Tête Jaune Cache to that spot, it could not be considered as sufficient to invite the Government to construct a railway in that direction. If the Government was determined to bring a railway by Tête Jaune Cache and Kamloops to Burrard Inlet, he alleged, not only from a Dominion point of view, financially speaking, with respect to the cost and receipts of the railway, but in the interests of commerce, in the interests of the industry of their Province, that the line of railway could not be made a success by the best administration of the country. The sole and whole reason was that they could not make a way traffic. It was simply following a ditch or ditches through the country, and was not calculated to make a way traffic or aid in the gaining a large share of the trans-Pacific traffic."

MR. DECOSMOS: What I ask is, what is the size of an average-size county in Ontario?

MR. BLAKE: As I have said before I am not able to state the exact size of an average county in Ontario.

MR. BUNSTER: Who made that statement the hon. gentleman has just read?

MR. BLAKE: It was the hon. member for Victoria. Well, Sir, we are to have this road for 125 miles lying in this ditch that the hon. member speaks of, with no means of placing there a population sufficient to create a traffic. The hon. the Minister of Railways talks of placing there within four or five years, a population of 100,000. Why, it could not be done, and if it was done they would starve.

SIR CHARLES TUPPER: It was the *Globe* that said such a population could be put there.

MR. BLAKE: And does the hon. gentleman agree with that?

SIR CHARLES TUPPER: Yes.

MR. BLAKE: I tell the hon. gentleman that he could not do it. If such a population went there within the time he names they would stay there as bones, not as living men.

MR. MCINNES: I would say here—