

INTERIM REPORTS.

FIRST REPORT.

The Select Standing Committee on Agriculture and Colonization present their First Report, as follows:—

The Committee recommend that the House grant them authority to employ a shorthand writer to take down such evidence as they may deem proper.

JAMES M. DOUGLAS,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,
March 24, 1904.

REPORT OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE APPOINTED BY RESOLUTION, NO. 3, PAGE 709.

To the Chairman and Members of the Select Standing Committee on Agriculture and Colonization:—

We, the Sub-Committee, appointed to take into consideration the evidence recently given by James M. Macoun, before the Agricultural Committee, beg to report as follows:—

1. In our opinion, the evidence of Mr. Macoun had better be printed as reported, with such remarks by Honourable members as appear therein. Any elimination in our judgment, might mutilate the same so as to mar the sense.

2. After carefully considering the evidence given by Mr. Macoun, before the Committee, we are of the opinion that he was not possessed of sufficient information to make a report upon the Peace River country, and that he was not warranted by the facts within his knowledge in making the report he did, and in arriving at the sweepingly unfavourable conclusions he has. Mr. Macoun spent less than three months in the Peace River country, travelling the greater part of that time on foot. The area covered by his report amounts to considerably over twenty million acres, and it is unreasonable to suppose that any man could, within that time, acquire sufficient knowledge to enable him to make the report and give the evidence which Mr. Macoun did.

3. We find that Mr. Macoun is in direct conflict, in most important particulars, with such eminent authorities as the late Dr. Dawson, the Rev. Dr. Gordon, Professor Macoun (father of the witness) and others. Dr. Dawson says of the Grande Prairie:—

‘The soil of the Grande Prairie is almost everywhere exceedingly fertile, and it is covered for miles together by a deep rich loam which it would be impossible to surpass in excellence.’

Mr. Macoun, in his report, says of this same district, in speaking of its soil:—

‘This loam, as I saw it, varies from four to six inches in depth; it may be deeper in places, but if so, such soil has not been seen by any one whom I have met in the country.’

In his evidence, Mr. Macoun limits the depth of the soil to four or five inches, with an impervious clay sub-soil. Dr. Dawson, in his report, tells us that in the Peace River District there are at least fifteen million acres of good wheat lands, and that the country is well adapted to agriculture. This Mr. Macoun undertakes to dispute. We