

tage before the different nations of the civilized world. We must take advantage of the Sessions of Parliament to make a close enquiry into all matters pertaining to the welfare of the country, in order that we may determine in what way its interests can be best served, and no stone should be left unturned, if anything good can be expected in turning it, to promote the development of the Dominion. It is impressed with that sense of duty that I come before you to-day, and venture to trespass upon the patience of the House while I ask the concurrence of hon. gentlemen in the resolutions which I have submitted, to declare that the time has arrived for the organization of that vast north-western portion of the Dominion, known as the Great Mackenzie Basin, and to call special attention to the necessity which exists for the Government to adopt some scheme for the better protection of its people, its valuable mines, its fisheries and its hunting grounds. Sir Alexander Mackenzie, just 100 years ago, was the first explorer of the numerous rivers and lakes of that wilderness, which had never before borne on its waters any larger vessel than the canoe of the savage: and, as will be found in the report of his voyages, the country was, at that time, a wilderness of mountains, valleys and streams; small bands of wandering Indians were the only people to be met there, the dreary waste, wide-spreading forests and lakes and rivers succeeding each other over vast areas of territory. What has been done during the last century for that country? Even its name was unknown to the great majority of the people of Canada, and it was a surprise to many when this House, two years ago, undertook to call the attention of the people of Canada to that important portion of our domain. A committee was appointed two Sessions ago, of which the present Lieutenant Governor of Manitoba was chairman, and we all remember the energy he displayed, and the labor he went through to obtain the information on which to base the interesting report of the committee on the extent and resources of that unknown part of our territory, which was laid before Parliament. I shall quote largely from that report to make out my case, and to convince hon. gentlemen to adopt my views, and lead them to appreciate, as I do, what has hitherto been an almost unknown region.

The Senate has taken the first step in the good work, and it is our duty to direct the attention of the Government to the resources of that vast country, and to urge upon them to take advantage of the vast resources it offers, and develop them in such a way as to conduce to the profit and prosperity of the Dominion. It is a great country, important in the extent of its lands, its waters, its mines, its furs, and its fisheries. From the most reliable information that has been obtained, there appears to be a possible area of 656,000 square miles of country suitable for the growth of potatoes; 407,000 square miles suitable for barley; 316,000 square miles suitable for wheat, and all of that land, with the exception of some small areas, is a productive land, waiting for development, with a river navigation 275,000 miles in extent, of which 139,000 is suitable for stern-wheel steamers, the remaining 136,000 miles being deep enough for light draft sea-going steamers. Everything in that country is grand and promising. It may be said that there are difficulties in the way of settlement. I would call the attention of hon. gentlemen to the fact, that similar difficulties existed in the early settlement of old Canada. We remember the words that were pronounced at the Court of France, when the question of the expense of settling the northern part of the American continent was under consideration, and the statesmen of those days were trying to convince Louis the XIV, who was at the time king of France, of the advantage of opening up this country. Someone remarked that it was not desirable to expend so much money for some arpents of snow. The same remarks might be applied to-day to the Great Mackenzie Basin, by persons who have not considered the subject. No doubt, many people in the older Provinces now think it is not worth while expending much money for some arpents of snow in the Great Mackenzie Basin, but I am satisfied that before many years that those "arpents of snow" will become a wealthy and powerful part of this Dominion. If the king of France, who 130 years ago thought it was not necessary to expend so much money for some arpents of snow, could now visit the Dominion, and see what has been done in this country, beyond doubt he would not entertain the same opinion that he and his Court seemed to have at that time of