

Province of Quebec, wheat of the very best quality has been grown; and there is at present a grist mill in the vicinity of that lake which is used for the grinding of wheat grown by the settlers. It is also a well known fact that at the head of Lake Temiscamingue there are great clay flats covered with splendid oak timber. I might go on reading extracts at great length to show the fertility of the soil in the section of country referred to; but I will content myself with reading one statement made by a gentleman who is now a member of this House; I refer to the hon. member for Selkirk (Mr. Sutherland). In 1878 he appeared before the Committee on Immigration and Colonization, and in the course of an examination as to the character of the country lying between the head of Lake Superior and Rat Portage, he was asked the following question:—

“By Mr. McNab—I wish to ask the character of the land along Rainy River, and whether it is likely to be settled? Is that outlay of money likely to be of benefit to the country, assuming our all-rail route is completed?”

The outlay of money here referred to was for the construction of a system of tramways proposed to connect the waters of Lake Superior with those of the Lake of the Woods. The answer was as follows:—

“I contend that if the railway is not built for four or five years—and I don't think it is possible to build it in less time than four years—if this route is not opened up, there is no chance of settling the fertile belt here on Rainy River, as there would be no opportunity of settlers seeing the country, and they would not go. There are seventeen townships surveyed there, with about 23,000 acres in each township. I have talked the matter over with Col. Dennis, and from the field notes of the surveyors he estimates that there are at least 150,000 or 200,000 acres of excellent land there. There are about 400,000 acres altogether. I am satisfied he is under the mark, and I have seen a good part of the territory along Rainy River, and have heard a good deal about it from others.”

In view of all the statements which have been made as to the fertility of a large portion of that country lying between the eastern terminus of the Canadian Pacific Railway, at Callander and Winnipeg, and in view of the great mineral and timber resources in that large extent of territory, I think that my hon. friend from South Perth (Mr. Trow) must admit that the Government were wise in deciding to push through the road north of Lake Superior as rapidly as possible; and I think it is an advantage to this House and to the country that the hon. member for Algoma has submitted this motion, which I have very much pleasure in seconding.

Mr. COCKBURN. I have been very much interested in the discussion which has taken place on this subject. Some of my remarks have been anticipated by the hon. member for North Renfrew (Mr. Haggart). I cannot speak from personal experience, in such glowing terms as the hon. member for Algoma has done, of that portion of country north of Lake Huron and Lake Superior; but I have some personal knowledge of a portion of the country, within 200 or 300 miles of where we now stand, and I know from personal observation that considerable belts of land fit for settlement do exist in the northern part of Ontario, and I suppose the same thing is true of Quebec, though I cannot speak of that from personal knowledge. The great North-West has received so much attention during the last few years that the settlement of the newer portions of the older Provinces is entirely neglected. I cannot claim that the soil in our free grant districts will compare in fertility with the soil of the North-West; but there are other advantages in favour of these free grant districts. The hon. member for North Renfrew (Mr. White) has already described the country around Lake Temiscamingue better than I can; and hon. gentlemen from Ontario have recently received from the Provincial Commissioner of Crown Lands reports of the country around Lake Nipissing. I hold in my hand a report lately issued, which shows that, though some of the lands surveyed are almost valueless,

others are very good indeed. Mr. Niven, a surveyor, who was sent out by the Ontario Government to explore that district, reports regarding one section, as follows:—

“Township No. 17 north of Lake Nipissing is nearly all good hardwood land, and is by far the best township in the entire area explored. I never saw finer hardwood bush than many parts of it—a few basswood here and there, ironwood in many places, and a grove of beech on the east boundary, a few miles north of Trout Lake.”

Mr. Niven also speaks of the township of Widdifield, in which I have been myself. It is in the very next division from here. Mr. Niven says of it:

“Township of Widdifield is immediately on the north shore of Lake Nipissing and traversed by the Canadian Pacific Railway. About two-thirds of the entire township is fit for settlement.”

With a railway running through that township, and a round-house there to accommodate sixteen engines, I should think it would offer very good inducements to people who cannot go to the North-West, because there they would find fuel and fencing, as well as the land, for nothing. I cannot say that this is a land flowing with milk and honey, but there are belts of good land, with the advantage of being within easy access, and the expense of reaching there being small, I therefore think it is very important that this discussion should have taken place to-day, in order to call the attention of intending settlers to this part of the country. The Canadian Pacific Railway has already been built along the entire length of Lake Nipissing, and with the construction of the proposed railway from Lake Nipissing to Lake Temiscamingue, there is no doubt that a very rich country will be opened up. It is a matter of very great satisfaction to find, on closer examination, that the northern portions of the Province of Ontario are proving to be so valuable.

Mr. SPROULE. I think the hon. member for Algoma ought to be congratulated on taking this opportunity of bringing such an important subject before this House and the country. When we remember the statements made from time to time in reference to that country and the impressions created upon the public mind, I think we must acknowledge that a great deal of information regarding it that would be profitable to the public is yet hidden from our observation. If we consider the extent of country, a distance of nearly 1,000 miles long in one direction and from 200 to 500 miles wide in another, and if we remember that in Ontario, were there is not perhaps one-third as large a territory settled, we have to-day a contented population of 2,000,000, I think we must admit the importance of this question. Again, if we compare the geographical position of the country with other parts of the world, with reference to its latitude and longitude and its altitude from the sea, we find that it compares favourably with other parts of the world that are thickly populated to-day, that sustain a contented and happy people ranging from three to forty people to every square mile. If we think again of its rivers, the length and the number of which are, comparatively speaking, equal to those found in any other part of British North America, if we remember the clearness and pureness of the waters that flow down its fields, we cannot fail to properly estimate its importance. If we look at its mineral resources, we find the deposits there are similar to those found in other parts of the country that have been partially explored and are yielding, as a return for those explorations, some of the greatest sources of wealth to be found in the Dominion, we may, from that direction, too, estimate its importance. If we look at its soils, we find they also compare very favourably with the soils in the richest parts of Ontario, which have been cultivated for years. If we look at its timber, the want of which is being felt very largely at present, both in this part of the country and the North-West—if we look along its navigable streams, extending hundreds of miles, useful for navigation and transportation, and see the large forests of valuable