

man to cause a series of borings to be made at various points, so as to give us some practical idea of the various formations. That matter has been discussed once or twice in the House. I think something was done in that direction.

Mr. DEWDNEY. So far as I have heard, there is no intention to do it this year. I may state that there are two borers in the territory, one is owned by the Galt Company, and the other by the Canadian Pacific Railway Company. They have been boring the last year for their own information. On enquiry I find that the plant required for the work is very expensive, and we have no money for it.

Sir RICHARD CARTWRIGHT. What would the cost be?

Mr. DEWDNEY. Somewhere about ten or twelve thousand dollars. To-day a good diamond drill would cost that sum. I made enquiry especially to find out the cost from Mr. Galt and also from the company, and they said it would cost ten or twelve thousand dollars to get a machine. I understand the importance of the work, and would very much like to see it undertaken. I think it would be well worth the expense, and if the House feel inclined to vote the money I should be glad to expend it in that way.

Sir RICHARD CARTWRIGHT. I think where we own the soil it is well worth while to have borings made to a reasonable depth. My information as to the cost of a diamond drill differs materially from that of the hon. gentleman. I understand it could be obtained for a much smaller sum, sufficient to enable borings to be made to a reasonable depth, say six or eight hundred feet. That would not be very expensive, as we know that in that country a great deal of the soil is alluvial. I am sure we would learn a great deal more by these borings than we are learning by these exploring expeditions. There is another point to which I would call the attention of the First Minister, who was formerly Minister of the Interior. I understand, and the Minister of Interior has indicated, that the attention of the Government has been properly called to it, that there is supposed to be most extraordinarily rich oil fields in certain portions of that territory. I have heard the area estimated as high as 80,000 or 100,000 square miles, which I take to be an exaggeration, but I have no doubt that there is considerable reason to believe that a very extensive territory there is underlaid with oil, somewhat similar I presume to the oil deposits known for centuries near the Caspian. I do not think it would be proper to retain all that territory absolutely in sovereignty, but I have a very strong impression that we would do well to retain a very large tract of that territory absolutely in the Crown. Just now, it is true, we cannot make it useful for commercial purposes, but it is not impossible that for a territory like that we might at no remote period be able to derive a very considerable revenue if we continued to keep possession of the more profitable oil district or a portion of it. I have more than once suggested to the First Minister, when he was Minister of Interior, the expediency of the Government of Canada, in its capacity as general trustee for the public, retaining possession of, at all events, a portion of the more valuable coal fields and probably of the more valuable mines, and I think this quite virgin coal oil field that is reported to be discovered would afford a very good opportunity of trying the experiment. Of course it is a departure from our previous policy, but it is a departure worth making and an experiment worth trying. I should like to know what the First Minister or the Minister of Interior thinks on that point.

Mr. DAVIN. I am very glad this subject has been brought up by the hon. gentleman. The subject of borers
Sir RICHARD CARTWRIGHT.

has been before the attention of persons interested in the North-West, and I brought the matter at an early period, in fact when I came down, before the attention of the Minister. The question of expense was the question that seemed to be difficult at that time. I am very glad that from the Opposition, and especially from the hon. gentleman who watches the expenditure on the part of the Government, the suggestion has come that there should be boring done in the North-West. With respect to what the hon. gentleman has said as to the course the Government should take, I entirely disapprove of it. It is the course that has been found a perfect nuisance in the North-West, that is that if the Dominion thinks it has valuable territory a system of exploiting it should be adopted that would result most beneficially to itself. The result has been already disastrous. It involves an entire mistake of the principles of political economy, an entire mistake of the relations between the Government and the public, because it supposes the relations between the Government and the public are the same as those between some large trader and the public, whereas the Government and the public interest are so mixed up that if a private individual makes a fortune out of a coal mine or out of an oil discovery you enrich the country in the best and directest way. It is a principle that an hon. gentleman, who held a high and honored place in the Government of Canada entertained strongly, and in 1883 I did everything I could to dissuade him from what I considered then to be a greengrocer policy, and I am surprised to hear this suggestion by an hon. gentleman so erudite as the hon. member for South Oxford (Sir Richard Cartwright) who conducts the financial criticisms on the Reform side of the House.

Sir RICHARD CARTWRIGHT. Sound political economists entertain very different opinions on this subject. There is no one likely, in the future, to produce more mischief to this country than that of allowing private individuals to monopolise natural gifts which ought to belong to the whole country. I do not believe that valuable public properties should be handed over for perfectly insignificant considerations to gentlemen who happen to be favorites of the powers that be. Such cases have resulted in great disaster to this and other countries, and, unless I greatly mistake public opinion, a great deal of public property diverted in this way, will be taken back again before many years are over.

Mr. DAVIN. I quite agree as to the impropriety of handing over to any individual or number of individuals for political considerations the public domain. What I contend for is, that a Government makes an economic mistake when it thinks that it will not give a certain piece of property at the present time because at some future time it may be more valuable to it; in that way it will really retard the development of the country and in that way injure the country. The two things are wholly distinct, the position adroitly taken up in reply to me by the hon. gentleman and the position I took.

Mr. WATSON. I entirely agree with the hon. member for South Oxford (Sir Richard Cartwright), and also the Minister of Interior who has stated his belief that it would be a good thing to have a drill or borer make certain tests throughout Manitoba and the North-West. I believe, as a great many are led to believe, that there are many valuable deposits of oil through Manitoba and the North-West. Near Lake Dauphin they have for the past two years been boring with the result of strong indications of securing oil; but the company's engineers have found working very expensive. They have had a long haul for their machinery and have labored under many difficulties; and the Government could not do better than spend a certain sum in purchasing drills and machines and organising gangs at two or three different