

and where an opportunity offers, tell us that, important as this may be, we have not the means—we are not in a financial position that will permit us to construct the link which is necessary to connect the two sections now under contract—and yet for political purposes, to influence the elections, they give a million and a half to the Georgian Bay Branch. We are expending six millions on two separate pieces of road that will form part of the connection with the great North-West, and whilst declaring our inability to connect them and make them of any value (and without connection there is no man, Hugh Sutherland of Fort Francis perhaps excepted, that would venture to say that they will be of the least possible value) the Government, to secure a few votes, give a million and a half in round numbers to a work which may at some time have its importance, but which by no possibility can compare with that of putting in the “Missing link” to Manitoba. I am at a loss for words sufficiently strong to condemn such an outrage upon the people of Manitoba and the North-West—such an outrage upon the people of the whole Dominion. Reference has been made by those who have preceded me in this debate to the payments for the Kaministiquia terminus, and, from the sums proposed to be expended from Thunder Bay westward, there will probably be additional payments to land jobbers. There is no man who has given to this question the least possible attention that can have any other opinion than that the lands for which we have paid \$67,000 and have more yet to pay, were, apart from the railway, comparatively worthless, having no commercial value whatever. The hon. Senator (Mr. Penny), who just addressed us admits this.

Hon. Mr. PENNY—Yes, I admit it.

Hon. Mr. McLELAN—Well I am glad the hon. gentleman admits this, but for the benefit of those who have not studied the case, permit me to group a part of the evidence. It is fresh in the recollection of gentlemen around me that the Chief Engineer, accompanied by the reverend gentleman who is now at the head of the Kingston University, made the trip along the proposed route of the Pacific Railway, and that Dr. Grant published an account

of that trip: “Ocean to Ocean.” On page 31 of that book he speaks of the journey from Thunder Bay and along the Kaministiquia and says of it:—

“Not half a dozen settlers are on the road for the first 26 miles, and for the next 20 not half that number. How many cotters, small farmers and plough-boys in Britain would rejoice to know that they could get a hundred acres of such land for one dollar an acre, money down; or at twenty cents per acre after five years settlement on it. This was the information about the price of the land that the settlers gave us.”

The district even adjoining Thunder Bay may be said to be almost destitute of population, and we have, in addition, the testimony of the Premier, that the road runs into a wilderness, where the foot of white man had never been until his engineers surveyed the line. In this state it is preposterous to suppose for a moment that the land has any value other than ordinary wilderness. The men who were sent out by the Government to value the land, admit in their evidence before the Committee, that the value placed upon the lots was the value given to them by bringing the railway there. On page 2 of the evidence, Mr. Wilson is asked, “Would you have given the same value for those lands if there had been no railway there, or any likely to be constructed?” “No, certainly not.” Again, “What would have been the value of those lands before it was publicly known that the railway was located there?” “Not very much.” Mr. Reid, the second valuator, on page 32 of the evidence says, in answer to the enquiry what he would give for the lots without the prospect of a railway, “Personally, I am not a speculator, and I would not have given anything for them.” It will also be remembered that last year when only \$51,000 had been paid, Mr. Fleming, in giving his evidence before a Committee, expressed his amazement at the sum then paid. It is claimed by the defenders of the Government in this transaction, that the low price for those lots was at some period long past, but the evidence of the notorious P. J. Brown, the “advisor of the valuers”—the “Agent of the Government,” the man appointed by Mr. Mackenzie, and the partner in the firm of Oliver, Davidson & Co., who were under various names interested in nearly all

Hon. Mr. McLelan.