

"is not abandoned. It is deflected, as the hon. gentleman said, a little to the north in order to obtain a better route. It touches at present west of the Lac des Mille Lacs, or rather the Kaministiquia River at a navigable point, a little beyond which the latter falls into the Lake. From that point there is almost continuous navigation with a few short portages on the way to Rat Portage, the crossing place of the Pacific Railway on Winnipeg River, with only one great obstacle, which could not be overcome in any other way than by constructing a lock at Fort Francis. There are, as I stated roughly last night, two hundred and twenty-eight miles under contract between Lake Superior and Red River, of which one hundred and sixteen miles lie at the east end or westward from Fort William: at about seventy miles from thence we reach a point east of Lac des Mille Lacs, thereby coming into the best navigable system at a place much further west than would have been obtainable if the first contemplated line had been followed out. Those who choose to look at the map will observe that the first line which we hoped to take, went almost in a straight line from Kaministiquia to a place called Sturgeon Falls, this being at the head of a long arm of Rainy Lake stretching north-eastward. That route was found to be not exactly impracticable, but expensive. The line, as the hon. gentleman says, was carried further to the northward, but two-thirds of that, country, perhaps consists of water, and in the vicinity of Rainy Lake, the country to the north, in particular, is intersected by deep, wide channels, which reach either the exact vicinity of the railway or very near it, between Rat Portage, the crossing of the Winnipeg River, and the end of the eastern contract, a distance of one hundred and eight miles—what we may call the Central District of that region. No matter with what speed the road may be prosecuted, that part cannot be completed within four or five years; and, in the meantime, if this lock is finished, as I am informed it will be during the coming season, we will be able to send our steamers to Rat Portage, and to the eastern end of Rainy Lake during the season after next, and from that point to Lac des Mille Lacs is a comparatively short distance, so that in a few years we will be able to avail ourselves of these most magnificent water stretches connecting the two points which the railway would touch east and west."

All that took place in the debate on that occasion showed that it was the understanding of the House that, by the construction of the locks at Fort Francis, and a very little additional expense there would be unbroken water communication from Port Savanne at the north east end of Lac des Mille Lacs through to Rat Portage. In the same debate Mr. Casey said:—

"He understood the hon. Minister of Public Works to say, that the route would be used to furnish rails from Port Savanne to the other end of the road."

*Hon. Mr. Murpherson.*

The rails is one of the most serious elements in this question. There is no doubt in my mind that the Minister of Public Works believed at one time, that he could utilize these water stretches for the transport of rails and heavy freight required for the building of the railway. He could not have been then aware of the full consequences of the adoption of the northern location or route; he could not have been aware that it would cut him off absolutely and completely from using the water stretches. Another evidence of this fact, to my mind is, that had he not believed that he could have connected from the western end of the Lake Superior section with the western section at Rat Portage through the water stretches, he would not have commenced to build the latter section as it will be of no use until the all rail road is opened through, from Rat Portage to Lake Superior. If that be the case, surely, the Minister of Public Works would not have commenced the building of the 136 miles of the railway, included in the extension of the Pembina Branch from Winnipeg to Selkirk and the main line from Selkirk to Rat Portage, as the rails required for those 136 miles will have to be sent by way of Duluth, and the Red River, at a freight of fifteen dollars per ton. Those 136 miles of railway, with the sidings, will require 100 tons of rails per mile, so that the freight of the rails alone from Duluth will be \$210,000, and this will have to be paid long before the rails will be of any service to the country. The additional cost will probably be \$225,000 or \$250,000. What the Government should have done, was to have carried on the grading simultaneously but have done all the track laying from the east, carrying the rails with them as they proceeded. In this way they would have saved this enormous freightage on materials from Duluth to the Red River, for the western section, that will be unused until the connection with the eastern section is completed. To show more conclusively, if it were possible to do so, that the Government supposed they could use the water stretches for transporting heavy materials, I will quote from the *Scoble Debates* a speech of the hon. the Secretary of State, in this House on the 22nd of Feb., 1877, on a motion of mine in relation to the Fort Francis Lock.