

Commission on Chinese and Japanese Immigration, second part.

REPORT.

Summary report of the Geological Survey for the calendar year 1901.—Hon. Mr. Sifton.

PRIVATE BILLS.

CANADIAN NORTHERN RAILWAY.

House in committee on Bill (No. 53) respecting the Canadian Northern Railway Company.—Mr. Davis.

On section 4,

Mr. McCREARY. Mr. Chairman, before this clause passes, as we have now the Minister of Railways and Canals (Hon. Mr. Blair) in his seat, and as that gentleman was not present during the consideration of private Bills on Friday night, I would like to state one or two objections I have to this Bill. In the first place, I object to the Bill on general principles. The Bill authorizes the construction of 5,000 or 6,000 miles of railway, and this power, to be given in any one charter, is altogether too great. I object also to the Bill because it authorizes the construction of certain branch lines, but the descriptions of these lines are so indefinite that we do not know where the roads are going to run. But, my most serious objection to the Bill is the fact that by its terms it entirely controls the only two available passes through the Rocky Mountains. These are the Pine River and the Yellow Head passes. There was an engineer who went through the Pine River Pass about twenty-five years ago, and a gentleman named Mr. Hunter also went through about twenty years ago. Neither one of these gentlemen reported on the feasibility of this pass for a railway. There is no information on that point as far as I can learn. I submit, Mr. Chairman, that the hon. Minister of Railways and Canals should take steps to see, if any other trans-continental road should endeavour to get through the mountains as there are no other passes available, that they should have running powers over the line in one of these two passes. I notice that the Board of Trade held a meeting in Winnipeg a few days ago to discuss a resolution sent to it by the Halifax Board of Trade dealing with the Intercolonial Railway. I may say that the Winnipeg Board of Trade represents practically all the large and influential corporations loaning moneys on the prairies. That board took the ground that a commission should be appointed to look into the question as to whether the Intercolonial Railway could be made a factor in the transportation of that country, and if it could that it might be feasible on the part of the government to extend that system to the Pacific coast to serve as a feeder for the road. That proposition was very

fully discussed by several gentlemen who are deeply interested in that country, and the partner of the hon. member for West Toronto (Mr. Osler), Mr. Nanton, seconded the resolution. I am not going to say whether this is feasible or not, but, if it is feasible and if it should transpire that it should be necessary in the future for the government to extend the road to the Pacific coast, they should adopt the policy of reserving these passes with that end in view. But, there is another factor in connection with this charter to which I wish to draw attention. As you are aware, Mr. Chairman, a bargain was entered into between the Manitoba government and the Northern Pacific Railway, which bargain was passed also by this government. That arrangement was something like this: The Manitoba government leased from the Northern Pacific Railway Company for a period of years the company's lines in the province of Manitoba, having a mileage of 350 miles for which they were to pay an annual rental of \$210,000. The Manitoba government released those lines to the Canadian Northern Railway Company, and a bargain was made that on certain bonds issued by the Canadian Northern line the government were to guarantee interest to the extent of \$20,000 a mile on 300 miles, and on certain other bonds covering 1,000 miles of road, the Manitoba government were to guarantee interest at the rate of \$10,000 per mile. That is 1,300 miles in all on which interest is guaranteed. Out of the receipts of the railway company they were to pay, first, the running expenses of the road, secondly, the \$210,000 rental to the Northern Pacific, and thirdly, they were to pay interest on these bonds, amounting to about \$14,000,000, but in default the Manitoba government had to pay any arrears of interest accrued. Should there be a surplus at the end of two years that might be applied to a reduction of freight rates. This was the consideration for which the Manitoba government became the endorser of the bonds of the company so that the farmers of the western part of Manitoba should get a material reduction in freight rates. The reduction was to be 2 cents a bushel on wheat on the first year's operation. If the road proved a paying concern, there was to be a further reduction in the rates. This Bill goes on to say that they should have power to bond the road for \$25,000 per mile, not only on any lines to be constructed, but also on the lines now constructed, and the question arises: Is that \$15,000 extra per mile to be in addition to the 1,300 miles for which the Manitoba government are responsible as endorser? If it is, it seems that in addition to guaranteeing the interest on what is provided for in the agreement now that government will have to become responsible for the interest on \$15,000 per mile extra and there will be no opportunity of gaining any further reduction in freight rates.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER.