

adopting their scheme on the advice of the Chief Engineer, was to obtain the most favorable port on Lake Superior. Now, whether Nipegon Bay or Thunder Bay was the most favorable was no doubt a matter of opinion; but there could be no question of this fact that the mouth of the Koninistiguia River was the only place where we would be enabled to use the navigation of Lake Shebandowan, Rainy Lake, and Lake of the Woods. If we proceeded to build from Lake Nipegon we would have 426 miles of road to build before we could use a single yard of it for through traffic—the entire road must be constructed. By adopting the other line we could use 45 miles at the Lake Superior end and 100 miles at the other end, that was from Rat Portage west to Red River, and have during the summer a navigable route all the rest of the distance by slightly improving the portages and building a lock at Fort St. Francis. The object which the Government and the House had in view last year when this project was tolerably well explained, was to get into that western country as soon as possible, and further to construct lengths of railway that would enable us to attain that object in the first place. He had, therefore, no reason to believe he would differ from him in opinion now, but would approve the policy the Government had adopted. The Government had no intention of building the road for Nipissing or Nipegon, or Thunder Bay, as the case might be, for some years to come. That would depend entirely upon what might be developed in the future. He did not think it was necessary for him to say more on that point, unless some members might choose to ask him some question. The hon. member for Cumberland had alluded to his position being supported by the hon. member for South Bruce. He asked that hon. member to state if such was the fact.

Hon. Mr. BLAKE said he did not hear the observation of the hon. member for Cumberland.

Hon. Mr. TUPPER said his statement was sustained by the speech of the hon. member for South Bruce, in which he stated that the policy of making a connec-

tion at Thunder Bay was a change of policy from that indicated by the hon. Premier last year.

Hon. Mr. BLAKE said he did not mean to make that statement, nor did he think he did make it.

Hon. Mr. MACKENZIE said he was satisfied that the hon. member for South Bruce would never back up the hon. member for Cumberland in his views. So far as constructing a line of railway from east to west, he said now, as he said last year, that the route from Nipegon was the shortest from east to west. If we were to diverge from the head of Black Bay, across the ridge that separates it from Thunder Bay, and pass along to Fort William, the line would be from 30 to 40 miles longer than if it should pass direct from Nipissing, past Nipegon and straight on to the crossing of the Winnipeg River at Rat Portage. He never denied that, and he did not deny it now. But he said, if we had commenced at Lake Nipegon we would have to build 426 miles before we could use one mile, while by beginning at Fort William and building 145 miles we would bring the territory within three or four days travel of the waters of Lake Superior. He believed hon. gentlemen opposite contemplated, when their project was brought down, not going to Nipegon at all. He proposed to carry the line north of that point, and construct a branch 120 miles long to Thunder Bay. When the hon. member for Cumberland charged him, as he had charged him, with making the expenditure on the road from Koninistiguia River to Lake Shebandowan as one altogether outside of the Pacific Railway scheme, he said that for which he had no reason or justification. With respect to the branch line from French River east for a distance of 85 miles, it was expressly provided for by the Act of last session, and the Government were simply carrying out the law of the land in relation to that matter. With respect to the comments made by the hon. member for Cumberland, and of the Opposition Press as to the tenders for the construction of the line to the mouth of French River, he had only to say that tenders were advertised for in the usual way, during a period of from six to eight weeks. The tenders were opened by the officers of the depart-

*Hon. Mr. Mackenzie.*