

May 7, 1872

There was one point of great interest to Ontario—and it must be remembered that at present and for some time to come, the great share of the burden incurred by reason of the great undertaking would fall on the people of Ontario,—and therefore he thought they ought to have a better assurance that the railway would fall into their system of railways. The map showed a line drawn some 100 miles north of Lake Nipissing he supposed to enable comparisons in point of distance with other railways, but that would be scarcely pleasing as an indication of the Government scheme. He was, therefore, glad to hear the Minister of Militia (Hon. Sir George-É. Cartier) say that the point would be very near Lake Nipissing, as near as in an engineering sense the line could be drawn.

That would relieve the minds of many in Ontario, for the railway should be built where it would be most beneficial, and then if afterwards it should be found that a railway was wanted further to the north it could be built. That was a pretty long stretch of country, and the House after adopting these resolutions might find an obstacle interposed which could not be overcome, and which would require the adoption of a more southern line than was marked on the map. Perhaps the Minister of Public Works (Hon. Mr. Langevin) could tell the House whether further reports submitted by the engineers gave any more information on that point to show that the country was practicable. It presented itself upon his mind as a serious obstacle in dealing with this question. (*Hear, hear.*)

Now with respect to the Ontario land question he understood from the remarks of the hon. gentleman, Hon. Sir George-É. Cartier, though he did not perhaps catch the precise words, that in the interviews which the Government had had with members of the late Government of Ontario an arrangement had been come to, although it had not taken the form of a precise agreement, that the Government of Ontario would contribute liberally of the unoccupied lands at its disposal towards the construction of the road. He understood that the late Government of Ontario had assented to that, although a specific agreement had not been entered into. He would like to know whether any communication had taken place upon that point because the House knew that a change of Government had since intervened in that Province, and it was a matter of interest to learn whether the new administration had a new policy in that respect.

Hon. Sir GEORGE-É. CARTIER said he could answer the hon. member. The proposition made by the Ontario Government to the Dominion Government had been to place every alternate block of land in that Province along the proposed route at the disposal of the Dominion Government, in order to aid the construction of this railway, just the same as the Government of British Columbia had agreed to give alternate blocks. No communication or conference had taken place between the Dominion Government and the present Government of Ontario on the subject. It was expected, however, by the Dominion Government that there would be no objection upon the part of the present Government of Ontario—which the House knew favoured the building of railways—to carry out what had been determined upon by their predecessors in office. (*Hear,*

hear.) The late Government, he might add, had stated that they would retain for themselves the alternate block.

Hon. Mr. McDOUGALL (Lanark North) was very glad to hear that that was the position in which the question had been left by the late Government, and must say that he had no doubt himself, from the example they had given of the manner in which promises had been carried out in these matters by the succeeding Government, that a similar course would be followed in regard to a question which was of so much consequence to the people of Ontario. (*Hear, hear.*)

There was another matter in respect to which he thought the public should be taken into the confidence of the Government and the House, and be fully informed as to the progress that had been made. He observed by the line laid down in the map intended to mark what was known as the “height of land,” that a large part of the projected railway would run upon a line beyond that height of land. Now as the height of land was supposed to constitute the boundary between the Province of Ontario and Rupert’s Land, if the railway ran upon the other side of it there would be no difficulty in regard to the alternate blocks, because all the land through which it would be constructed was under the jurisdiction of the Dominion Government.

He hoped, therefore, that some progress had been made in the question of determining the boundary between Ontario and Rupert’s Land, as, if that matter was settled, it might be found to simplify any negotiation that had been carried on with the Ontario Government. (*Hear, hear.*)

With respect to other points of the line, he was very sorry to see by the report on the survey that difficulty had occurred in British Columbia, although he supposed that that was to have been anticipated from what was known of the character of that country. He did not doubt, however, that a solution of that difficulty would ultimately be found, and that in the end it would be possible to reach the Pacific waters by a practicable line.

With regard to the financial plan the Government had adopted, he must confess that the offer of aid to the extent of \$30,000,000 in money, and a grant of 50,000,000 acres of land—if so much could be found on the line—would be a sufficient basis for any honest and capable men to operate upon in order to raise the money necessary to complete the railway. (*Hear, hear.*) Upon that point he had no doubt whatever: if he were a railway man with that bonus in his hands, he did not think he would find the slightest difficulty in procuring whatever additional capital might be necessary to prosecute the work to a successful completion. This fact would cause satisfaction to the people of the country, who in many cases had been alarmed at the prospect which threatened, or which certain parties had said threatened, of their being called upon to pay one hundred millions for the building of the road.

If it could be shown that with \$30,000,000 in money, and 50,000,000 acres of land, which would be of little value to us unless