

proved Dawson route was all that was required for many years: that by it a large class of emigrants, sons of our farmers in the older provinces, could have gone into the North-West and taken their teams with them. Very great progress had been made with the route, and it was very passable, but it has fallen into disrepair during the last three years, and if the very demon of destruction had been sent there to ruin the route and destroy the stations, it could not have been more effectually done. I would not have objected to the scheme first proposed by the Prime Minister—a railway from Lake Superior to Sturgeon Falls—and use some 180 miles of water communication; but that is not what has been done. I will not refer to the Fort Francis Lock to-day except incidentally. An all-rail route has been selected for the Pacific Railway from the Kaministiquia to the Red River through a hopelessly irreclamable howling wilderness, where there is no population and where there can never be any, or any traffic. That is the country through which a railway 420 miles in length is being built by the Dominion. Have we the means to construct it? Not content with doing that, the Government have located the line for 150 or 200 miles west of the Red River through the very worst part of the country which, from all the information I could get, is altogether undesirable, if not entirely unfit for settlement. If the instructions of the engineer of the Pacific railway when he went out to locate that line from Lake Superior to the narrows of Lake Manitoba had been to run it where it would be impossible for the people in the settled part of the country to make use of it, he could not have carried out the instructions more fully than has been done. The road has been carried away from the settled portions of Manitoba, and from the country fit for settlement. What will be the effect of that location if it is carried out? It will tend to divert the whole trade of the North-West away from this country which has to pay for the railway, to the United States. The railway as at present located, passes at the narrows of Lake Manitoba, that is, North of Lake Manitoba and South of Lake Winnipegosis, where it can never be of any benefit to the people of Manitoba. If this country has the means to build the railway—I think it has not—

*Hon. Mr. Macpherson.*

the line should have been located as far south as possible so as to cut off all the trade we could from the United States and secure it to our own railway and to our own markets. As it is now, all the trade of that country will be diverted from Canada to the United States, and the railways that we now hear projected and to be subsidized with land, railways running from near the boundary to the Pacific Railway, will be so many feeders for the American lines instead of our Pacific Railway. The trade of that country is small now, and will be small for years to come. Emigration is checked, and even though it were not, the new population would consume the surplus of the country for years, as was the case in the Western States and in every new country. For many years there will be a comparatively small surplus, wholly inadequate to support the all rail line which is being constructed. It will be remembered this House last Session recommended that a survey south of Lake Manitoba should be made. I believe a survey has been made, but I am not aware what the report is, but if the present line is adhered to—and hearing of the projected lateral lines I am inclined to think it will be—I believe it will be a great misfortune to the country. The two ends of the section of the railway between Lake Superior and the Red River are being built, 114 miles running west from Lake Superior and 114 miles running east from Selkirk on the Red River, leaving a gap of about 190 miles not yet placed under contract, and not located, so far as I know. I saw in the press a few days ago, an article congratulating the country on the opening of about 30 miles of the railway from Red River. Why, that piece of road was opened simply to enable the contractor of Section 15 to send in his supplies. There will be no traffic on that piece of road. There are no people in there, not even Indians. There will not be a bushel of potatoes carried over that road until it is opened to Rat Portage, except what is taken in as supplies for the laborers on Section 15. There will be no traffic on the Lake Superior end either, until it and the western section meet, and when they do meet, and the line is completed, it will traverse but a hopeless barren wilderness. I repeat here, that, until