

MR. MILLS: No.

SIR JOHN A. MACDONALD: It declares distinctly that it is not the true line.

MR. MILLS: The Act of the Ontario Government claims more; and the Government of Canada maintained that it was less.

SIR JOHN A. MACDONALD: Exactly; the hon. gentleman will not argue that in a Statute the Legislature of Ontario would assert a claim which they do not believe to be a just one. The Act states that they would claim a larger line and a much larger proportion of country.

MR. MILLS: They say that they have done so.

SIR JOHN A. MACDONALD: You must remember, Mr. Speaker, that the two questions are quite distinct. The first is what is the true line between the countries, and the next, what is the expedient line between the countries? To meet cases such as this, an Act of the Imperial Government was passed stating that no Province of the Dominion, or the Dominion, could enter into an arrangement by which any Province may be enlarged or diminished. It was under this Imperial Act that the Ontario Government agreed to diminish their boundaries; therefore, this is altogether a conventional line, and the great mistake in that matter is in the Act assuming a power and leaving it to any three Arbitrators to decide what was the best line between the Dominion and the Province of Canada. The Constitution gave them no such power. It is an unconstitutional assumption; and, in making this reference, they mistake the consequence of an unconstitutional course.

MR. BLAKE: I beg the hon. gentleman's pardon; if I rightly remember, the Commission did not empower the Arbitrators to define what was the best line. It empowered them to ascertain what was the best line.

SIR JOHN A. MACDONALD: No; to determine the line, not to ascertain the line. Moreover, we know that the Arbitrators did not decide it as being the true line. We know that beyond doubt; the hon. member for Bothwell will admit that.

MR. MILLS: No.

SIR JOHN A. MACDONALD: Then I will bring you three elaborate articles

written in the *Monetary Review* by Sir Francis Hincks, giving the whole ground for a decision, and in which it is distinctly stated that they reached the best line they could under the circumstances. The tribunal to which the matter was referred was a bad tribunal, because it was not a tribunal of experts in the construction of Statutes. No one has a greater respect for the general and political ability of Sir Francis Hincks than myself; no one has a greater respect for the high standing and diplomatic weight of Sir Edward Thornton; but neither of them is a lawyer competent to decide upon the consideration of these Statutes. This is a fair and proper subject for discussion in Parliament, met, as we are, to protect the rights of Canada and the rights of the Dominion; and I am quite sure that the hon. member for Bothwell, although formerly a paid agent of the Ontario Government will, as a member of Parliament, feel and assert his independence, and disregard the fact that the Government of Ontario were formerly his clients. I am confident that he will think only of what is just in the matter, as affecting the various Provinces of the Dominion. While the Government of Ontario claim that it is a conventional line, the Government actually decided, without the provision being left to Parliament, that these three men might give away territory equal to any great European Kingdom by a vote of a majority; and, although the hon. gentlemen opposite, when on this side of the House, were bound to protect the interests of Canada, that Government never thought of securing a right of way for the Canadian Pacific Railway from Thunder Bay to Red River. They ought, previous to this arrangement, to have made a bargain, for 20,000,000 acres of land on each side of that road is one of the conditions under which the conventional bargain should have been made. They should have made some arrangement by which the country which was to be opened up at the expense of the older Provinces of the Dominion, should have contributed at all events by land, if not by money, in the construction of the road. They have not only neglected to do that but they did not even procure a right of way, and we have an application