

Mr. MILLS. Does the hon. gentleman mean that the Government has adopted the principle of selling only in alternate blocks those lands that are fit only for pasture?

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. Oh, no. I say that all the land fit for agricultural purposes must be in alternate blocks.

Sir RICHARD J. CARTWRIGHT. I am glad to hear that explanation, because I thought myself at the time that it was a most astonishing thing for lands fit for settlement to be granted in that way. I would like to know whether any sort of surveys have been made which would enable such tracts of land to be set off. As far as my recollection goes you can hardly set those off without having some rough survey as in the corresponding districts in the United States. In this matter great care ought to be taken not to part with lands which may subsequently prove fit for settlement under the present supposition that they may not be of much value for agricultural purposes.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. Every care will be taken in that respect. A meridian line has been run from Edmonton to the boundary this last year, and it has been found that in the vicinity of Bow River there is most magnificent land for agricultural purposes, which will be reserved for agricultural settlement, according to the ordinary regulations, until they are altered by consent of Parliament. The Government quite understand that the land at the foot of the Rocky Mountains, at the bottom of the slope, is made up of the accumulated debris of centuries, and I anticipate a very considerable immigration from the extreme Western United States into that country, on account of its ascertained richness and its adaptability to agricultural purposes.

Mr. MILLS. Has there been any geological surveys this season, of Bow River, where gold fields have been reported?

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. No; I think not.

Motion agreed to.

PATRICK ULTICAN.

Mr. HADDOW moved for copies of all correspondence, track masters' reports, and all other papers relating to the claims of Mr. Patrick Ultican, of Belledune, Restigouche, for damages to his farm, occasioned by overflow of water and other causes in connection with the Intercolonial Railway.

Motion agreed to.

SAULT STE. MARIE RAILWAY.

Mr. DAWSON, in moving for a return of all surveys made by Mr. Brunel or others, during the past summer, of the country between Lake Nipissing and Sault Ste. Marie, with the view to finding the best ground for a railway between those points, said: This survey has been made in conformity to a provision made by the Government last Session in reply to the question:

"Does the Government intend to take any effective measures during this Session, for ensuring, either by the granting of a subsidy or otherwise, the immediate construction of a railway to connect the south-east end of Lake Nipissing with the Sault Ste. Marie?"

It was stated by a member of the Government that:

"It is the intention of the Government, during the present Session, to examine the route carefully westward from Lake Nipissing, and to aid, by subsidy or otherwise, next Session, the construction of a railway to connect the Canada Central Railway terminus, at Lake Nipissing, with Lake Superior, on a line, and with the conditions to be fixed by the Government, and the route to be settled in such a manner as substantially to aid in the eventual construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway, on the northern shore of Lake Superior."

I am glad to see that the Government has not forgotten its pledge. The survey is an important one, and, in the present position of matters in relation to the Pacific Railway, it is desirable that the report of the Engineer should be laid

Mr. BLAKE.

before the House with the least possible delay. I observe that the hon. member for West Durham (Mr. Blake), has made a motion which, I suppose, applies to the papers which I now ask for; and if this is the case, I need not put the department to the trouble of making two returns in the same matter, and will, therefore, allow this motion to drop.

Motion withdrawn.

SEIZURES UNDER THE CUSTOMS ACT.

Mr. CASEY, in moving for a statement of all seizures of goods made by the Customs authorities since the introduction of the present Tariff, stating cause of seizure in each case, and also in which cases the goods were sold or still held; in which they were released and on what grounds; in which application was made for appraisement; in which Bills were filed in the Court of Exchequer for restitution of goods; in which application was made for leave to enter suit for restitution; and the result of such applications for appraisement or leave to enter suit in each case, said: So far as the filing of bills in the Court of Exchequer is concerned, I am aware that I do not, by the terms of the motion, cover all the ground that I should; but my object is to get the details of all such cases of seizure. I know that proceedings with regard to these seizures, might be taken in other courts, whose records it may not be in the power of this House to obtain; but before I sit down I will ask permission to amend my motion in such a way as to include all the information which I desire. I beg to call the attention of this House to the extraordinary powers with which the officers of the Customs, and the department itself, are endowed by the existing law. The collectors of customs and the appraisers and Board of Appraisers, taken individually or collectively, seem to have practically in their hands power to determine the prices on which the duty shall be paid upon any invoice entered at any Custom house. An invoice, it appears, may be authenticated by affidavit or in any other way; but notwithstanding that authentication, it is within the power of the collector and the appraisers, as I read the law, to say that the prices so authenticated shall not be the prices that are to be paid, and that the prices which they consider the fair market price of the particular goods in the market where they were bought shall be the true prices upon which the duty shall be calculated. Still further, in case a dispute shall arise between the collector and the importer, as to what is the fair market value of the goods, all the odds are in favor of the collector—his decision is final unless an appeal is made against it in a certain prescribed manner; that is to say, *prima facie*, he is correct in his estimate, and the onus of proof lies upon the importer. The first proceeding the importer may take is to apply to have his goods appraised, whereupon the collector may summon to his assistance "any two discreet and well-informed merchants"—I think that is the language of the Statute—in the same line of business as the importer, and residing in the place where the entry is made; and these, with the collector as referee, form a Board of Appraisers. The importer has no voice in the appointment of these appraisers; he is not allowed to appear before them personally or by counsel—at least has no right in law so to appear and plead his case, or show one. The proceedings of the Board are held to be final unless suit is entered against the Government for restitution of the goods, or the return of duty paid in excess. As I am advised by legal gentlemen, no suit can be entered against the Government in connection with these cases unless by consent of the Attorney-General; that is, the Government themselves have the right to decide whether they shall be sued or not. This, it appears to me, is an extraordinary power to be possessed by the Government, though, of course, it is not peculiar to this class of cases, but applies to all cases in which suit may