

going on with theirs, it was thought by the Government it would be useless to expend thousands of dollars on the Pembina branch until there was a chance of connection being made with the American system of railways at the frontier.

Hon. Mr. MACPHERSON—It would have afforded railway communication for seventy miles—from Winnipeg to Pembina.

Hon. Mr. PELLETIER—Still the traffic would have been entirely controlled by the Transportation Company, and everyone knows, that until the branch on the American side is built, the Pembina branch will be utterly useless. It was only last summer we had the promise that one American company will build that road, and we can assure the House now that the money will be provided for that purpose. I hope that I am not saying too much when I say, that in the month of August next we can go to Winnipeg by the Pembina branch. The Government is blamed by the hon. gentleman from Saugeen District for locating and constructing the road north of Manitoba. We cannot be blamed for that, and I am sure that every hon. member who will look at the position of the Government, coolly and without partizan feeling, will see that the Ministry have done all that they could do. We had perfect confidence that the engineers appointed by the late Government were men of large experience in such matters, and had no interest in doing anything that was not for the benefit of the country. We took the very same engineers, Mr. Fleming and Mr. Smith, who were employed by the late Government, and continued them in charge of the work. If hon. gentlemen will take the trouble to look into the report of those engineers, they will see that the only practical route for the building of the road is north of Lake Manitoba. Many gentlemen have asserted it is not a practical route. While in Manitoba last fall, I met gentlemen who told me the same thing, but they were persons who may have an interest in the route south of Lake Manitoba being adopted. We have, however, to follow the survey made by the engineers until better evidence is given. It is impossible for Ministers to explore a route themselves, but we have done all we can to have the best route selected. There may be differences of

*Hon. Mr. Pelletier.*

opinion between engineers who have a better knowledge of the country, but until some proof is given as to who is right, the Government have no knowledge of the fact. I am of the opinion that the presentation of the Address is not the proper time to discuss many of the subjects that have cropped up in this debate. The hon. member from Woodstock has blamed the Government for not having done something to alleviate the commercial depression. I am sure not only the people in Canada and the United States, but the people of the whole world will be very thankful to any hon. gentleman who will suggest some means by which the crisis can be suppressed. The depression is not confined to this continent, but it is felt generally throughout the world. We are not, at least, the only Government to be blamed for doing nothing to relieve their country from the depression. We are told that the adoption of a system of protection would certainly remedy the evil; I believe the best answer to that is to look to the other side of the line, and see what effect protection has had on our friends there. The hon. gentleman from Sunbury asserted yesterday, that protection was not the cause of the depression in the United States. I have read a great many articles, however, by men who are supposed to understand this question thoroughly, in which the policy of the Government is blamed for the depression existing in that country. I am sure if any one can suggest a remedy to the Government the country would be very much indebted to him, but we are only told it is the duty of the Government to suggest something or to adopt a policy. We have also been told that the present Government have increased largely the departmental expenditures. Now is not the proper time to discuss this question, and the Public Accounts, when they are brought down, will be the best answer to this accusation. Of course there is an increase in the expenditure authorized by statute and for public works, but this was not under the control of the Government. The expenditures under the control of the Government since 1873 have not only not increased, but they have actually decreased, as will be shown by the Public Accounts, when they are laid before the House.