

of it if all the details should be given to the public. It is very well known—and my hon. friend from Victoria particularly knows—the serious embarrassment that was thrown in the way of Canadians and of all foreigners who had purchased their goods in Canada, who sought to cross that fringe of country. It was practically taking away from Canada her trade, if persons were compelled to pay the duty to the United States after having purchased the goods in Canada although they were simply transporting their outfit across a few miles of territory. That was the condition, and so a short time before parliament met matters had reached that delicate point when we felt that if we were going to secure any portion of the trade of that country in the year 1898, it was absolutely necessary that no longer should there be any delay in the construction of some line of railway which would enable persons to go in through British territory. There was no other route possible available, except the Stikine. The Edmonton route has been spoken of. To build a line by that route, even to the waters that are reached by the route over which the contract has been given, would have involved probably a year and a half, or two years. We believe a very large number of people are going into that country this year. Unless there is some better avenue by which food can be transferred to Dawson, it will be simply impossible for one-tenth of the number who propose going there to get in.

Hon. Mr. BOULTON—Would it not be better to keep them out?

Hon. Mr. SCOTT—My hon. friend may be quite right, but we would get the benefit of any increase of population in that country. There is no doubt that a considerable number of those who go in, will buy their supplies in Canada. They will afford traffic to our railways. Already the merchants at Montreal, Toronto, Victoria and other points, as we see by the press, are reaping enormous benefits from fitting out expeditions for that country. Merchants are making special arrangements to put up kits for the trip and we feel the benefit of it. That has been done for a large number of people from England and other European points, and the woollen mills in Canada are working night and day turning out goods a large proportion of which are destined for the Yukon country. It meant simply a sacrifice of all those

interests unless some better way was secured for obtaining access to that country than existed at that time. Speaking of the Edmonton route, to which some hon. member referred a day or two ago, I may say on 4th September last, with a view of ascertaining whether that Edmonton route was a feasible route—I wish the hon. gentleman from Shell River (Mr. Boulton) to listen to this particularly—an expedition started from Edmonton, consisting of a body of mounted police, with engineers, to take observations and report on the character of the country. On the 10th December, three months after, they had only travelled about 600 miles. I asked Mr. White to-day where he last heard of them, and he said the last he heard of them, was at Fort Graham. They had all the support they needed. They had their horses and dogs all the paraphernalia necessary for an outfit in order to go through that country with despatch, yet they got no further than Fort Graham on the 10th December. We know very well that persons who left on the Pacific coast in October have gone as far as Skagway and Dyea, and many of them are in camp between Skagway and Dyea, or else between those places and some of the waters in the interior, and unable to get on. We know, as a matter of fact, that it has cost sixty cents to a dollar a pound to transport the food supplies and stores north of the Lynn Canal, and many persons after they had paid that high rate to get across that Pass found they could not get any further and remained there. There are thousands of people who are now between the Lynn Canal and the inland waters in the Canadian territory, unable to get on. Surely no person could be better equipped than Major Walsh, with all the power of the government behind him in order to assist him to get into that country rapidly, because it was of the highest importance he should get in rapidly, but it was impossible, the physical obstacles were so serious. Judging by the existing condition of things in the older provinces of Canada, no one can comprehend what the obstacles are, and in the face of those difficulties and of the necessity in the interests of the people of this country that food supply should go in there this year,—because if 50,000 people go up there this year and 25,000 remain, how are those 25,000 to be fed next winter—will it not be discreditable to this country, with the knowledge that the