

"On the slope of the mountain I saw balsam poplar six feet in diameter, while in some cases the spruce reached a thickness of nearly four feet. This forest is more ancient looking than any other that came under my observation in the North-West.

"I conclude that the land here is well suited for cultivation.

"Mr. Frank Moberly, a Civil Engineer, Canadian Pacific Railway survey, who ran the lines on part of the Mackenzie route, says:

"From Swan River, the country along north of Duck and Riding Mountains was found on examination to be nearly level, thickly wooded with spruce, poplar and some maple. A few small lakes and marshes were also found. Soil, sandy loam, and admirably fitted for farming."

"Mr. J. W. Spencer, of the Geological Survey, speaking of the country around Duck Bay, in the northern part of Lake Winnipegosis, says:—

"As we went north of Duck Bay the richness and luxuriance of the vegetation increased. The banks became higher and the forest trees of larger size. As we proceeded up the lake the country constantly improved. The shore marshes became less and less, and finally disappeared. The timber increased in size, and at Pine River spruce of large size were abundant. Very fine forests were noticed at Duck Bay, but oak had disappeared and the balsam fir has taken its place."

These are a few samples of what can be drawn from the reports of the explorers of that country, and they are worth infinitely more than the wild guesses of these gentlemen, who have never been there, and have never taken the means of ascertaining from reliable reports what the country is like, or whether it is fit for settlement. Apparently they do not wish to think it is fit for settlement, because they have made up their minds to oppose this Bill. Some of those who have spoken against this measure speak as if they were open to reason on the subject; others speak as if they had made up their minds beyond all peradventure, as the member for North Wellington (Mr. McMullen) says he has. He declares that all sensible men have made up their minds against the Bill, and, therefore, everybody who thinks otherwise has not an atom of sense in his composition. Well, it is a very enviable state of mind to be in—to believe that all sensible men must think as you do. I confess, although there is a tendency in that direction in human nature, I have never been able myself to arrive at that sublime pitch of self-appreciation, and I must say that I envy the hon. member for North Wellington the calm serenity with which he sits in his chair and feels that all the sensible men in the House must speak his sentiments and agree with his opinions. I am sure I should gladly forfeit several years of my parliamentary existence to be able to attain to that sublime condition of mind. I shall not, therefore, say that all sensible men believe as I do on this matter, but I believe that those who will go into the matter with unprejudiced minds, looking at the facts on both sides, will not be so positive as some of them appear to be now in opposing this measure. Now, that is all I wish to say upon the matter at present. After so many challenges have been directed from gentlemen opposing this measure, challenges to say anything in reply to their assertions, I did not think that I should let the Bill go out of Committee without pointing out what I intended to prove at a later stage of the measure.

Mr. DAVIES (P.E.I.) The hon. Minister is kind enough to put the contract in my hands that I asked for. I find it is pretty much as he stated himself, that the line which has been contracted to be built is one entirely within the control of the

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company itself, and the location of that line is not in any way subject to the approval or direction of the Government for the time being. One section of the contract that I think the Committee should consider at the present time is the fourth, from which it appears that, so far as the contract itself goes, the House is not in a position to know whether the line runs east or west of Lake Manitoba. A subsequent clause in the contract provides that if the company is determined that the line shall cross the Narrows and go west of Lake Winnipegosis a certain consideration shall be paid to the contractors. That is a matter to which I merely wish to draw the attention of the Committee, that the location of that line is one entirely in the control of the company, and the House has no guarantee whatever that the line will be built either east or west of Lake Manitoba, or that it will cross the Narrows at all, and we are voting this entirely in the dark. Of course, I speak with great diffidence in the matter, because I have not heard from the Minister or any gentleman supporting the Bill a statement as to the character of the country on the east side of this lake. But supposing it is built east of the lake, I have not heard anybody undertake to say that there is any positive information assuring the House that the country east of Lake Winnipegosis is such a one as will justify this House in voting such a large sum of money to open it up with a colonization road. It seems to me that all the conversation that has taken place in the last hour with reference to the navigability of the Hudson's Bay is entirely wide of the mark. It is now admitted, it is now stated explicitly by the Minister, that there is no intention on the part of the Government to subsidize a road having in view at all the opening up of a line of communication with Hudson's Bay. This road for which we are asked to vote this money is purely and simply a colonization road, and the objections which seem to me to be very strong with reference to the proposition now before the House are, that the locality which that road is going to open up is an unknown locality, and the Government themselves do not know where it is going to run, and they are subsidizing a road which may run either east or west of this lake, which may cross the Narrows or may not cross the Narrows; and so we are to vote that money in the dark.

Mr. MILLS (Bothwell). I wish to say one word with regard to the location of the road east of the lake. If the road went across the Narrows and was located west of the lake it would go into a district in which, I believe, there are already a number of settlers; if it is located east of the lake and extended beyond the point where it is now constructed northward to the Saskatchewan River it runs through a country that is not yet surveyed, that the Government have not seen proper to open for settlement. I am now speaking of the locality between the two lakes. It would run through a district where, if it is fit for settlement, the settlers would be within easy access of navigable waters, and where, without a railway, they would not be seriously incommoded. I think that where our means are limited, and our territory is well nigh unlimited, it is a matter entitled to the serious consideration of the House whether you propose to build a road in a narrow strip of land, not more than 20 miles in width in many places, situated