

to the north of Lake Superior, which was believed to offer insurmountable difficulties to the construction and operation of the Canadian Pacific Railway, and I confess to having been one of the doubters; and it is a remarkable commentary on our own foreboding that it is the only transcontinental line which has not been blocked by snow. It shows how mistaken we were; and these rugged regions of rock and stone are found to abound in rich mines of silver, copper, nickel and iron. I dislike exaggeration, or even the appearance of it, but is it possible to exaggerate the value of this great heritage which is ours?

HON. MR. DICKEY—Before the leader of the House answers this enquiry I desire to say that I have listened with pleasure and interest to the statement which has just been made by my hon. friend on this important subject. I would not now trouble the House, even for a few minutes, were it not that this discussion revives an interesting reminiscence, on my part, of a curious fact in natural history which came to my notice on the first of my three visits to the North-West Territories, about eight years ago, which relates to a subject which has formed part of the discussion on this occasion. Many hon. gentlemen from the Eastern Provinces are scarcely aware—I certainly was not until I visited the North-West—of the great difference in the nutritive qualities of the prairie grasses of the North-West and the grasses of our rich alluvial marshes in the Eastern Provinces. It is a curious fact that in chemical constituents I believe there is scarcely any difference between the prairie soil, which is simply an alluvial deposit, and the soil of the great marshes that are carried backward and forward by the tides in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. The difference in the grasses grown on the two soils is this: in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick when the hay is cut from the marshes it has to be "cured," as it is called; and if it were not cured in that way, once it has been exposed to the frost and snow of the winter it contains no more nutriment than so many shavings cut from a stick of wood. But in the great North-West I found to my surprise all those grasses, though frozen and covered with snow during the winter, came out in the spring with all their nutritive quali-

ties perfectly preserved. This is the reason why cattle and horses are enabled to live and fatten upon the prairie grasses even in the coldest winter, and they can do so until the spring has come again. I recollect taking the trouble to bring a bundle of this grass with me, after it had been frozen, to Nova Scotia, and showing it to a friend there as one of the remarkable things from the North-West, and I asked him to test it. On doing so he was perfectly surprised, being accustomed to our native grasses, which we, in our innocence, thought the finest in the world, and which under similar treatment have been a comparatively hard and indigestible fodder, to find that it was perfectly full of nutriment and had the taste of fresh grass. I hope my hon. friend's remarks may find their way abroad to other countries, and that they will have a beneficial effect on the immigration to this country. I thought it might possibly add to their usefulness if I made this statement, because the fact which I have stated will have an important bearing on the future of that great country, for it is a well known fact that these prairie grasses continue from one end of the year to the other to be in a nutritious condition.

With regard to the subject of artesian wells, which my hon. friend has touched upon, I think there is also a great possibility there for the improvement of the country, for the obvious reason that on the east of this great plateau of low ground, eight hundred miles wide, you have the height of land, as it is called, at the termination of the Laurentian range; and on the west you have these enormous ridges, the back-bone of the continent—the Rockies and the Selkirks—forming immense natural reservoirs of water; and I have no doubt that the effect of artesian borings in that part of the great country between Winnipeg and Calgary will yet be found to develop springs which have their source in those immense reservoirs, which of themselves are nearly as large as the whole of England. Under these circumstances, I think that my hon. friend has performed an important duty in calling the attention of the House, and of the Government, to this matter, and the Government would do a great work for that country if they adopt his suggestion and see whether, for irrigation or domestic purposes, it is not quite within