

He did not think he could give any further information upon this occasion, but fuller explanations would be given when they brought down the Pacific Railway Bill, which he hoped to be able to do on Thursday. (*Hear, hear.*)

Hon. Mr. HOLTON thought that before passing this vote it would be better to have the plan of the Government for building the road. They were asked now to vote this money upon a work which was practically a Government work, and he thought, therefore, the sense of the House should be taken upon the policy of the government in relation to this whole work before the vote was taken for this particular service.

Hon. Mr. MACKENZIE said he quite admitted the force of the hon. gentleman's remarks, but he would find when the Government Bill was brought down that it would propound a policy which he could quite approve of. He might anticipate his remarks upon the general subject so far as to say that Parliament would have to sanction the contracts to be made. (*Hear, hear.*) The construction of the branch for which this vote was asked would, however, if begun at all, be pretty well advanced before Parliament would be likely to meet again; and therefore the contract could not be submitted. The plan, he repeated, which he would propose at an early date, would be such as he had no doubt would meet with the approval of his hon. friend, but he did not care particularly whether the vote in question was taken at this time or not.

Right Hon. Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD said he did not think the Government were open to blame for asking for this vote at all. If, however, they were going to consider it as a portion of the Pacific Railway scheme, he thought it would be better to allow it to stand over.

Hon. Mr. HOLTON said the old Pacific Railway policy was that the railway should be constructed by a company. This having broken down, the Government should bring down their policy before asking for this grant.

Hon. Mr. MACKENZIE said Mr. Fleming's report would not be ready this week, after which Government would bring down their policy.

The item passed.

* * *

CANADIAN PACIFIC SURVEY

On the item of \$500,000 for the Pacific Railway survey,

Hon. Mr. MACKENZIE said it was, of course, known that the heaviest part of the survey was in British Columbia, and the district between Fort Garry and Nipissing. They had suspended the operations between Nipigon Lake and Lake Nipissing, on the ground that it was a portion of the work which would not be required to be constructed so soon.

There had been a large party at work between Nipigon and the Lake of the Woods all winter, the object being to ascertain how Lake Superior could be reached most directly. If the route from the south end of Nipigon presented a favourable aspect for the railway,

it would be the most direct route to Lake Nipissing. At the present moment they had not the precise information, but it was not unlikely that the road would tend northward to the mouth of Kaministiquia River, to the north end of the Lake of the Woods. That line was reported to be favourable, presenting no grade higher than 52 feet, and that grade in the right direction—that is, westward. They expected a favourable route to Lake Nipigon, but at present they were without that precise information which would enable them to determine upon the exact line.

The surveys in British Columbia had been practically suspended during the winter and four parties were now sent out to complete the work. When Mr. Fleming's report was before the House, it would be seen that the difficulty in crossing the Cascade Mountains was greater than that to be experienced in crossing the Rocky Mountains, and that at several points between the Rocky Mountains and the waters of the Pacific a greater altitude was reached than in passing through the mountains. Several items of information had yet to be obtained before the Government could determine the precise point to be reached on the coast or the route adopted for crossing the Rocky Mountains.

So far as was known at present, the route by the Yellowhead Pass was likely to prove the most valuable, because it occupied a more central position in the territory and would make all portions of the country more accessible than any other route.

On the other hand, there was a more favourable country to be traversed perhaps by making the route bend in a north-westerly direction from the Peace River, intersecting the Smoky River, and passing through the Rocky Mountains at Pine River summit, without reaching an elevation of more than 1,800 feet. It was proposed to have an exploring party there this season to ascertain whether that presented any more favourable feature than the southern or Yellowhead Pass. In that event, the line would cross the north bend of the Fraser River and reach the coast at Bute Inlet or some other point in British Columbia.

The great difficulty, as he had stated, was in getting across the Cascade Range, which at the most favourable point rose no less than 115 feet to the mile, and that, too, for a continuous stretch of 15 miles without any level reaches at all. That was, indeed, a very formidable portion of the work. Bute Inlet was at present likely to be the most favourable terminal point. There had been reports that the Pacific could be reached by some easier route to the north of Bute Inlet, but in order that no mistakes should be made in the ultimate location of the railway, an exploring party had been sent in that direction to see the character of the country.

Surveying parties in British Columbia would cause the principal portion of the expense this year. These parties were sent there, and Mr. Marcus Smith would be the Chief Engineer. Up to the present time a little over half a million dollars had been spent west of the Rocky Mountain in exploring the country.

Nothing like instrumental surveying had yet been done, although for a considerable distance the general route of the line was ascertained. However, careful instrumental surveys would be