

make that line permanent for some years—a line with gradients of 237 feet to the mile and with very severe curvature—is, as he declares, that there are several boulder slides along the main located line, and there is one avalanche or snowslide moving from a glacier high up in Mount Stephen, that the engineers have been observing the movement of these boulder slides and this snowslide for a considerable time past, but that they have not been able to decide what would be the proper route in order to avoid the dangers and difficulties arising from them, and that several years, I think, is the phrase, but at any rate a very considerable time of observation will be necessary in order to establish the proper permanent route across the Kicking Horse Pass; and therefore, says Mr. Van Horne, I ask your approval of our opening the road and working it for some years to come with the temporary line we have built to facilitate construction. He proceeds to point out, rather in contrast to the glowing terms which we hear as to the great traffic that is to go over the road from China and Japan, and to China and Japan, that the severe grades to which I have referred, the grade of 237 to the mile, the severe combined grades and curves, are of less consequence there because the traffic will be comparatively light for some years to come, and will not compare at all with the traffic in the prairie country. So I find a complete proof, from the application of the president of the company and the assent of the Government to that application thus formally made, agreeing in the force and strength of his reasoning, and determining that for some years the temporary line is to be used, in order that they may see what the permanent location should be; that there are difficulties in the Kicking Horse Pass which do not exist in the Yellow Head. Then I come to the question of the Selkirk, close to the Illecillewaet Creek, which descends from a point close to the crossing of the Selkirk, going westwards towards the Pacific Ocean, and I find that, in answer to a question put by me early in the Session, the Minister of Railways declared that they had no reports upon the subject of snowslides in that region at all, but that the engineers had been ordered to observe. Later on, in answer to a question put by me, on information I had received from the west, he declared that the company had made an application to change the location they had already made at that point, and to make a new location, because the location which they had adopted was an impracticable location. Why? In consequence of the snowslides there. And the other day I applied to know whether the new location had been laid before the Government for approval, and the hon. gentleman said it had not yet been laid before the Government for approval. But in his former statement he had said the proposal was to adopt a location which would lengthen the line some 3½ miles. The Government, then, has not yet got a practicable location across the Selkirk Range, the company has not yet got a practicable location across the Selkirk Range, because unquestionably, if the company was in a position to submit the profiles and plans and the requisite information for that practicable location, having long ago informed the hon. gentleman that they could not use the location which they had adopted and which he had approved, and would be obliged to resort to a new one and having given some general information upon it, they would have submitted the new location and the evidence. But the hon. gentleman has not yet submitted any evidence upon the subject of the snowslides. Now, this is a most material and important question. You find, at the two great crossings which are involved in the change of route, if there be not three, if the Gold Hills be not considered a third, the question of boulder slides and snowslides or avalanches assuming great and disagreeable prominence, and you find us actually to-day without information in the hands of the Government or in the hands of the House that there is a really safe, practi-

able location across these mountains. The hon. gentleman has received, or at any rate has brought before the House, no evidence as to what the condition of things has been in reference to the snowslides on the route of the Canadian Pacific Railway in the Selkirk; but I have found some information which has been accessible to the public, and I read it to the House in order that we may understand if it is not possible to obtain some authentic official information upon a question so critical and important as this is; and I beg the House to observe that by the course which has been taken, in determining the location through the North-West before these important, crucial questions of the crossings of the Selkirk and the Rockies had been decided, by sufficient length of time in exploration, by sufficient length of time in observing the climatic difficulties, we were plunged into that particular route and pledged to that particular crossing. I say that was an act of great imprudence for which the Government is responsible. Long ago difficulties had been stated by the aboriginal inhabitants to exist in that part of the country. Of this very place, in 1865, Mr. Moberly, an engineer, said:

"I tried to induce the Indians to accompany me all the way across the Selkirk Range."

In another passage:

"All my efforts were unavailing, as they affirmed that, if we went in, we should be caught in the snow and never get out of the mountains."

In another passage:

"We soon found ourselves 500 feet below the summit. The adjoining mountains are steep, and tracks of avalanches are frequent."

The *Calgary Herald* of the 19th February last contains this statement:

"Corporal McDonald left the second crossing of the Columbia on February 8th, and rode for 30 miles east up the west slope of the Selkirk Range. Having gone thus far, he found himself 14 or 15 miles from the summit, and unable to proceed further unless on foot, and that with difficulty. The reason Corporal McDonald was unable to ride that stretch of mountain road was that from where he had dismounted, straight up to the summit, the pass was one mass of avalanches, and snowslides, and fallen glaciers. The snowslides were solid packs of ice, and were sometimes 50 feet in thickness. Mair's men, under the direction of Foreman Garner, were hard at work cleaning the Tote road, which had been a chief sufferer by the slides. On February 8th, the day McDonald left the second crossing, a slide had occurred six miles west of the summit, at McKenzie's camp, and a man named Robert Miller had been killed by it. Miller was the cook of the camp. On the same day another slide occurred four miles on the west of the summit, at Ross McDermott's camp. In this slide three men were buried alive, and have not since been seen. One of these men was known to be Dulac, a Frenchman. When the slide occurred the Frenchman and two others were known to have been overwhelmed by it, and none of the three were subsequently seen alive. A third slide occurred at the summit of the range where Hill's store was. There were a number of men in the store at the time. Luckily only the skirts of the avalanche swept the store, the consequence being that only the west corner was buried and the men succeeded in escaping through the windows east of the Selkirk. It took McDonald a day and a half to reach the summit of the Selkirk. Arrived there he got a horse from the detachment stationed there and rode to Beaver Creek, a distance of 28 miles or 30 miles. The eastern slope of the Selkirk was free from the slides, and was a more favorite resort for the workmen on the road than the western slope. In fact, the men at work on the west slope were quitting work on account of the danger. They evidently had the same opinion as Mr. Moberly's Indian: 'That if they went in they would be caught in the snow and never get out of the mountains, in fact the road from the summit of the Selkirk west beyond the second crossing in the Gold Range, was having a hard time of it. In the Gold Range the road had been overflowed by a slide and Wright's teams were all blocked out.'

Then I find in the *Moosomin Courier*, of March 12th, 1885, this statement:

"Mr. Bowen found the chief topic of conversation at the Creek was the abnormal amount of snowslides obstructing work. The workmen on the road seem panic-stricken, and many of them are refusing to work on account of the danger, others are striking for higher wages, the demand being for \$3.50 per day. The slides seem to occur chiefly on the west slope of the Selkirk and on the east slope of the Gold Range. Some, however, have taken place on the east slope of the Selkirk, in one of which Holt, the contractor, had \$65,000 worth of supplies swept away about a fortnight ago. Monday it was recovered, however, the loss

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