

AN BRIDGE.

ment in the House of Commons.

to Get at the Bottom of the Matter.

ommons on the 18th of July.

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B. C. RAILWAYS

Discussed in the House of Commons in Committee of Supply.

Mr. Mara, M.P., Makes Some Important and Interesting Explanations.

In committee of supply of the House of Commons on the 19th inst., Mr. Mara, M.P., gave numerous explanations regarding railways in this province for which grants were being asked.

In regard to the railway from the junction of Elk and Kootenay rivers to Coal Creek, 22 miles (\$3,900 per mile), he said "one coal lands which it will open are owned by some Montreal people, I believe Messrs. Hanson, Broca, Mr. Greenhalgh and Mr. Ganit. In Victoria there are Mr. Pemberton and Col. Baker, and a number of others. The coal lands are held together by British subjects. As the Minister of Railways has said, the mines there are believed to be not only valuable but the largest seams or veins of coal discovered on the continent. The hon. gentleman asks what good this will do the taxpayers of this province, he said "that it will do a large market for the products of the Northwest. It will also afford a large market to the manufacturers and others in the Eastern provinces. In British Columbia at the present time a large inter-provincial trade is being done. The products of the Dominion, and I think that the manufacturers and wholesale merchants of Montreal will tell the hon. gentleman that they have no better customers than those in British Columbia. If you inquire at the banks you will find in no province of the Dominion is paper taken up with greater regularity on the 4th of every month than in the province of British Columbia."

In reply to Mr. Charlton he said "We have bituminous, anthracite and canal coal. There appears to be an extraordinary quantity of coal deposits in those mountains. Any hon. member who has read Professor Selwyn's report of two or three years ago, will have seen that. There is one vein—I am almost afraid to give the width of it—of over forty feet."

Referring to the line from Abbotsford station on the Mission branch of the Canadian Pacific Railway 21 miles, (\$3,200 per mile) Mr. Mara said "I would reply to the hon. member for South Okanagan (Mr. Richmond) that the Canadian Pacific Railway have never initiated nor advocated either this line or the last one. The promoters are British Columbians; they have presented their claims to the Dominion Government, that government has agreed to guarantee the interest on the bonds, and made strong representations to the Dominion Government to aid this particular line. This line will tap a rich agricultural district, a district that suffers severely by the late floods—I do not give that as an excuse for granting this subsidy—and it is one of the richest agricultural portions of the whole country. The settlers are some distance from the river, and during two or three months they are unable to get their produce to market, so far as marketing their farm produce is concerned. The settlement will number from 2,000 to 3,000 souls. They produce large crops, which are shipped to the coast, but only by the railway can they have all year round communication with the coast."

Mr. McMullen—"During how many months of the year is the river closed?"

Mr. Mara—"During some years six weeks and other years three months. This statement applies to steamboat navigation; but the river, so far as canoe navigation is concerned, is closed only from one month to six weeks."

Mr. McMullen—"Then this bill directly in competition with the sailing craft on the Fraser, which river is not closed more than two months a year?"

Mr. Mara—"I did not say that. I said that the railway would run some distance from the river. As that part of the country has been overflooded to such an extent, hon. gentlemen can imagine the difficulty of building a road so that the farmers may be able to haul their produce."

Mr. McMullen—"The distance cannot be far from the river, because the territory is not very wide there—it is only twenty miles distant from New Westminster to Vancouver."

Mr. Mara—"The hon. gentleman is altogether wrong in his geography. The road will run in an easterly direction."

Mr. McMullen—"Where?"

Mr. Mara—"In the valley of the Chilliwack, and between the river and the international boundary."

On the 20th inst. Nicola Valley Railway Company's twenty-eighth meeting, the railway, from the western end of the section of their road subsidized by the act 55 56 Victoria, chapter 5, towards Nicola lake, a subsidy not exceeding \$3,200 per mile, not exceeding in the aggregate \$66,000.

Sir Richard Cartwright asked, "Is this another road running through one of the best districts?"

Mr. Mara—"It is not on the Fraser, but in the interior, and it is what is called the bunch grass country, and it is from Spence's Bridge, a point on the Canadian Pacific railway, to Nicola Valley. This also is a proposal advocated by the government of British Columbia. That province has agreed to guarantee the bonds, at a rate of 4 per cent. The original act was for \$24,000 a mile, but the act was amended last year. This subsidy will not go to the promoters of the road, but it is to be paid into the treasury of British Columbia. The provincial government has already entered into an agreement with the Canadian Pacific railway to operate the line for twenty-five years, paying over 40 per cent of the gross earnings, and form a sinking fund out of which the provincial government hope to recoup themselves. When the Canadian Pacific Railway Company is willing to enter into an agreement to lease or carry twenty-five years, the hon. gentleman is right to say that some business will be done, and the British Columbia government is willing to enter into such an agreement whereby 40 per cent of the gross earnings will be set aside to recoup them, we may also conclude that the government has confidence in the railway."

On the grant of \$5,200 per mile for 38 miles of the Nakusp & Sloon Railway from Nakusp to a point at or near the Forks of Carpenter creek, in answer to Mr. McMullen,

Mr. Mara said: "It is a line connecting the mineral sections of Kootenay with the watersheds connected with the Canadian Pacific Railway. In the fall of 1891 rich argoniferous gypsum, which is believed to be the richest mineral body on the North American continent, was discovered in that section. Although this was only discovered in 1891, over \$1,000,000 have been expended in opening up and developing the claims, and many of these claims are now ready to

ship ore, and will ship as soon as this line of railway is completed. This is another line of railway that is bonused and guaranteed by the Province of British Columbia."

Sir Richard Cartwright—"I notice that the hon. gentleman has made a road for the general advantage of the Dominion."

Mr. Mara—"On that point I may state that there is no line that has been bonused by the Dominion government that is more for the general advantage of Canada than this one. It will obtain for Canada a large and valuable trade that would have been lost to us if this line of railway were not constructed. The line is situated midway between the Arrow lakes and the Kootenay lakes; and it was a question whether Canada or the state of Washington would get the trade of that country. Realizing its importance, the Provincial government have added this more than other lines on condition that it should be completed within twelve months."

FOREST FIRES.

MILWAUKEE, Wis., July 31.—Governor Peck and party returned this morning from Phillips. Forest fires are raging throughout the north and central part of the state and the towns of Fifield, Prentiss, Medford and Chelsea, besides many small settlements and farming communities are in danger. When the Governor passed through Chelsea aid was demanded for the families burned out. Fears for the safety of the town of Wisconsin were expressed by the government.

WEST SUPERIOR, Wis., July 31.—Rev. J. S. Nason, who went to Phillips in charge of the supply train from here returned from Superior today. He said that the reports of twenty lives lost in far short of the truth, as the total loss of life will be at least forty. Eleven bodies were recovered up to noon. Some bodies are charred beyond recognition, but many were recovered from the lake and are easily identified. Those who escaped had only the clothing on their backs, their hair was singed and the faces scorched on many fugitives. "The wonder is that so many escaped," said Mr. Nason, "in attempting to escape from the wind-swept flames, seven teen took refuge in a boat house out in the lake built on piles. The flames began to burn the sidewalk and as that was the only means to escape to land it was cut off. The occupants were obliged to stay in the boat house while the structure burned over their heads. Only two of the party escaped. Other fatalities were caused by persons burning to death after being overcome by smoke or falling from boats into the river. It is impossible to know accurately the loss of life as the bodies of some who suffered in the lumber yards are entirely consumed. A call for help has been issued. Governor Peck, ex-Governor Fifield of Ashland and Major W. H. Uppham, Republican candidate for governor, are among the citizens in charge of the relief train."

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CAPITAL NOTES.

Seizure of Necker Island and the Pacific Ocean Cable Scheme.

Release of an American Steamer—Chignecto Marine Railway Wants An Extension.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.)

OTTAWA, July 30.—With reference to today's dispatch from Melbourne dealing with the subject of the seizure of Necker Island by the Hawaiian republic, Mr. Sandford Fleming was asked for information to-night, but emphatically declined to be interviewed. The Hawaiian government had no idea of the fact that Necker Island was unoccupied territory until Hon. Robert Reid, a member of the Victorian government, who visited Canada last May, informed President Dole that it would be to the interest of Hawaii to add the proposed cable scheme to the fullest extent, otherwise they might be given the go-by, as it was in contemplation of the Hawaiian republic. Realizing its importance, the Provincial government have added this more than other lines on condition that it should be completed within twelve months."

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