

THE OPPOSITION PRESS

—ON—

MANITOBA AND THE NORTH-WEST.

HON. MR. PLUMB—Before the motion is adopted I have to ask the permission of the House to make some remarks on a subject which I promised to bring up before the close of the session. Hon. gentlemen will remember that when I addressed the House upon the representation of the North-West in Parliament, I took occasion towards the close of my remarks to refer to what I deemed a concerted attempt to injure the prospects of the North-West by an unfair and unwarrantable statement of the hardships which the settlers were undergoing there, on account, as it was alleged, of the climate of the country, the tyranny of the Government, and the grinding monopoly of the Canadian Pacific Railway Company. I said that there had been in the Opposition Press throughout the country evidences that they were in sympathy with such an attempt. My statement was questioned by my hon. friend the senior member for Halifax, who ventured to contradict it almost directly. I promised him that in due time I would bring forward proofs of my charge. I am now prepared to do so, and I must apologise to him for delaying my reply so long. I did not wish to detain the House on any day when there was much business before it, nor do I wish now unduly to protract its sitting. I have no doubt my hon. friend will be gratified to know that I have not forgotten my promise, and that I intend to produce as far as time will permit, proofs of my allegations. The official report of the Debate, which took place on the 25th February, contains the following:—

“HON. MR. POWER—Will the hon. gentleman be kind enough to tell the House by whom Dakota was held up as such a paradise?”

“HON. MR. PLUMB—By the Opposition press.

“HON. MR. POWER—Nothing of the sort.

“HON. MR. PLUMB—If the hon. gentleman likes I can show him fifty different quotations.

“HON. MR. POWER—One will do.

“HON. MR. PLUMB—I could show him fifty; I will produce enough of them in good time, but the hon. gentleman will not take upon himself the responsibility of denying what I say, he will not take the risk of it—I know that perfectly well. If the hon. gentleman has read the newspapers he must know as well as I do that such is the case; it is a patent fact, known to every man who reads the Ontario Opposition papers, that, day after day there are statements in them which are calculated to draw attention to Dakota as having superior advantages for the settler as compared with the North-West. I am therefore astonished that the hon. gentleman should challenge my statement.

“HON. MR. POWER—If the hon. gentleman will produce one of his proofs it will do.

“HON. MR. PLUMB—Does the hon. gentleman dispute it?

“HON. MR. POWER—I doubt it.

“HON. MR. PLUMB—Do you deny it? The hon. gentleman does not—

“HON. MR. POWER—The hon. gentleman knows it would hardly be Parliamentary for me, after he has made a direct statement, to say that statement was untrue, but I say that I very strongly doubt the statement made by the hon. gentleman. I have read the papers pretty carefully, yet I have not seen the statements of which he has spoken.

“HON. MR. PLUMB—I will produce ample evidence, should occasion arise, to show the hon. gentleman that my assertion is a perfectly correct one.

Now, I did not assert that Dakota was held up as a paradise; on the contrary the contention of which I complain has been that notwithstanding its inferiority of soil and climate, it offers far greater advantages to the settler than the North-West.

Perhaps it might be well in premising what I have to say, to make a brief statement of the position in which the party to which I have the honor to belong stands in regard to the North-West. It is well known that the acquisition of that territory was made by the Government of the Right Hon. Sir John Macdonald, and in receiving British Columbia into Confederation an agreement was made to build the