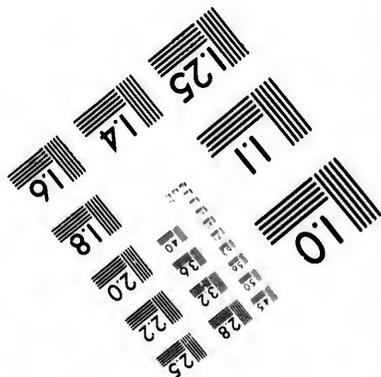
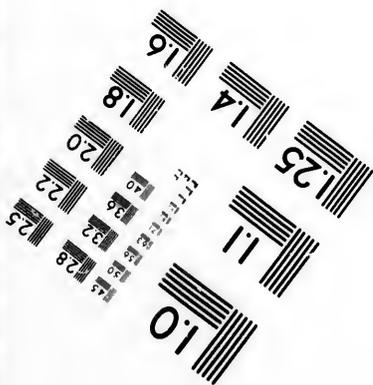
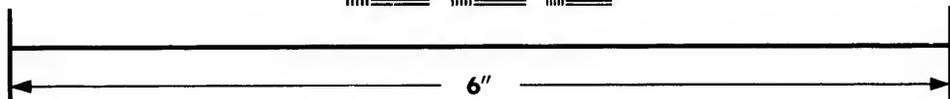
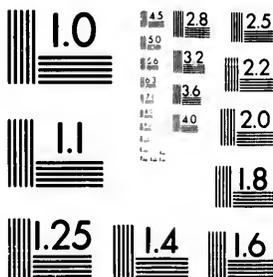


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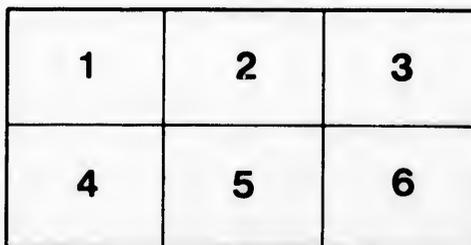
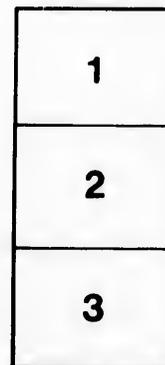
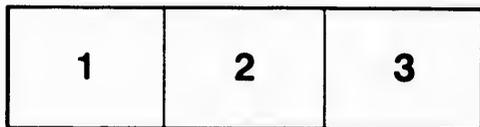
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SPEECH

OF

MR. DECOSMOS

ON

MR. HUNTER'S SURVEY OF THE PINE RIVER PASS.

—:O:—

HANSARD REPORT

McCorrected.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Wednesday, 13th March, 1878.

MR. HUNTER'S SURVEY OF THE PINE RIVER PASS.

MOTION FOR REPORTS.

MR. THOMPSON (Cariboo) moved for a copy of all reports of Mr. Joseph Hunter, C.E., in regard to the survey made by him in 1877 of the pass known as the Pine River Pass in the Rocky Mountains. He said his object in making this motion was to obtain some information as to the results of the survey made by Mr. Hunter last year. Mr. Marcus Smith's report, which was embodied in that of the Minister of Public Works, contained a sort of partial explanation as to what had been done. He would like the report asked for to be submitted to the House before any discussion thereupon took place, but he would read the following from the report made by Mr. Smith. Referring to a survey from Fort McLeod, eastward, to the valley of the River Misinchinea, an affluent of the Parsnip, he said :

" On descending the river, a stream was discovered falling into it from the north, about thirty-five miles above its confluence with the Parsnip. Following this up four miles, it was found to issue from a small lake named Azuzeta. This proved to be near the summit of the Pine River Pass, its altitude being estimated at 2,430 feet above the level of the sea. A little beyond this, the head waters of the Pine River were struck, and the river followed down eastward to the Forks, a point reached by Mr. Selwyn with a canoe from the Peace River in 1875. The exploration was continued 30 miles eastward of the Forks on to the Beaver Plains, which lie between the Rocky Mountains and Peace River. Thus the question of the feasibility of the Pine River Pass is at last solved. The full Report has not yet been received, but the distance between Fort McLeod on the west

side of the Mountains, and the Forks of Pine River on the east side, is roughly estimated at 90 miles. The gradients are stated to be generally easy, with the exception of about four miles near the summit of the Pass where they will probably be about 60 feet to the mile, and the works in the construction of a railway would be moderately light, except for a length of about eight miles near the summit of the Pass, and a short length at the Forks of Pine River, where they would be heavy. The land in the Pine River valley for 50 miles above the Forks is described as of excellent quality, and well suited for agriculture and grazing purposes. It should be observed that this fertile strip of land, lying nearly in the heart of the Rocky Mountains, is an extension of the Beaver Plains which connect with the great fertile belt stretching from Manitoba to and beyond the Peace River. Should the engineering character of a line by this route prove, on closer survey, as favourable as reported, the results from this exploration will be amongst the most important that have been obtained since the commencement of the surveys. Some of the serious difficulties in crossing the Rocky Mountains will have disappeared, and this formidable chain, once held to be insurmountable, and even now felt to be a grave obstacle to railway enterprise, can then be passed with very favourable gradients, and with works not exceeding in magnitude those generally required on other portions of the line. In addition to the manifest advantages offered by this route, there is further the important consideration that in place of a bleak sterile country, wherein settlement is an impossibility for hundreds of miles, the line would traverse an area of remarkable fertility, with but a few short intervals of country unfit for settlement. This route also passes between the vast mineral districts of Omineca and Cariboo. The extraordinary results of recent mining operations in the latter give promise, when their resources are more fully developed—as they can only be with the assistance of direct railway communication—of rivalling, if not surpassing, the far-famed gold and silver regions of the neighbouring States, which lie in the same mountain zone. The distance from Livingstone on the located line, over the Yellow-head Pass to the confluence of the Chilacoh and Stewart rivers, near Fort

George, is 1,029 miles. The distance between the same points, *via* the Pine River Pass, measures on the map so nearly the same as the above that a survey alone can determine the precise difference between the two routes."

No doubt the intentions of the Ministry on the subject would be known before the end of the Session; but, in the meantime, he thought Mr. Hunter's reports should be laid on the table, so that hon. gentlemen might be put in possession of whatever information they would afford previous to the railway route being debated.

MR. DECOSMOS said that, before this resolution was accepted, he should like to draw the attention of the House to the importance of these surveys as a means of encouraging settlement and as preparing the best route for the trans-continental railway. They had, he believed, in the possession of this House, a number of reports from various sources. They had the engineers' reports, geological reports, botanists' reports, tourists' reports, and last, though not least, the report of the Minister of the Interior. In these special reports, they found abundance of information, almost full and complete, indicating what route should be taken with respect to the Canadian Pacific Railway. So far as the engineers reports were concerned, they had left several lines of route to choose from, one by way of Yellowhead Pass to Bute Inlet, the other branching south-west by Fort George to Bute Inlet, and the third by way of the Pine River and then to a point near to what used to be called Fort George, and then to Burrard Inlet, or nearly to Fort Simpson on the Pacific. The Northern route, so far as could be judged from the description of the country given by the engineers, and more especially the report of Mr. Selwyn in his geological survey of Canada, and the excellent account of Mr. Macoun, one of his staff of botanists, was by far the best. There could be no doubt whatever, by taking the Northern route, by Pine River Pass, and across British Columbia, they would have one continuous line of railway, where settlements could be made, where they could find a rich

agricultural country, where they could have a country full of mineral wealth, and a country that would provide traffic for the railway, and where they would have a direct line for the merchandise to pass through the Dominion from its western to its eastern shores. He was aware that it was, to some extent, labour for the House to listen to matters of this character, but he might claim the indulgence of the House to draw attention to the report made by Mr. Selwyn, of the Geological Survey, a gentleman, although connected with the Government, yet occupying such an eminent position in the scientific world that, whatever he said was accepted as being unbiassed and wholly uninfluenced by any sectional feeling, political or otherwise. On page 30 of his book, "The Geology of Canada, 1875-6," Mr. Selwyn stated that he started from the line of the Fraser, in British Columbia, to a point called Quesnel, and from there by Westroad River to Sinkyut Lake, following the old overland telegraph line. He said:

"The ground is generally level, or only slightly undulating. There are numbers of small lakes abounding with fish, and although the soil is almost always light, and sometimes on the ridges too sandy or gravelly to be fit for cultivation, there are, nevertheless, considerable tracts of good agricultural land on open or light timbered flats and slopes along the borders of the lakes and along the streams and rivers; among which may be mentioned: Westroad River, Chilacoch River, Nechacco River and Stewart River; also Naltesby, Eulatazela and Sinkyut Lakes. At the crossing place on the Nechacco, and between it and Stony Creek, there are extensive acres of the richest land, covered with luxuriant herbage, and similar fine land occurs along the valley to Fraser's Lake."

Here, then, they had a description that gave them an idea of the country at or near Fort George. On page 43, moving still further westward in the Rocky Mountain region, they found Mr. Selwyn saying:

"Notwithstanding this, I do not think there is any serious impediment in any part of the Pass to the construction of either a waggon road or a railway, especially along the right bank."

So much for the construction of the railway in that direction. In passing further up the Pine River Pass, he remarked (at page 48):

"Charlette cultivates a small garden, and vegetables of all kind grow splendidly. He has potatoes, carrots, parsnips, onions, turnips,

French beans, beets and barley. These were all planted between the 15th and 24th May. The potatoes, turnips and onions are already a fair size and fit for use. Wheat has not yet reached this part of Peace River, but would doubtless give an excellent crop."

The date when this was written was July 18th. So much for Pine River Pass and its capacity for cultivation. Again, at page 50, he said—and this was a continuation of the same description:

"The trail though rough in occasional spots, carried us over a very fine country, where the excellent soil and large tracts of fine land facing the south, would offer great facilities for farming. There was, however, a scarcity of wood, but the southern banks and the numerous islands being covered with dense forests, afford unlimited quantities of that material for both fuel and manufacturing purposes."

This was the Peace River country, in the direction of and near the mouth of Middle River. Now, Mr. Selwyn made a tour in order to enter this Pass, and here was what he said of it:

"Mr. King and I rode out to a small lake known as Little Lake (see map), about seven miles to the north-west, on the table land. This lake is one of the resources of Pine River North, which joins the Peace about thirteen miles further down, at the site of the old Fort of St. John. After rising 724 feet we come upon a fine level or slightly undulating country, covered with the richest herbage of astonishing luxuriance; I have seen nothing in the Saskatchewan region that at all equals it."

He would call the attention of the hon. the Minister of the Interior to this fact: that, if we could find a road for our railway by Pine River Pass that would enable us to carry our settlements through the fertile tracts of Manitoba into Pine River Pass itself, he could not see how a doubt could arise in anyone's mind as to the route that railway should take. Here was another remark of Mr. Selwyn:

"Similar fine country extends for many miles up and down the river. Professors Macoun and Anderson walked to the nearest point of Pine River North, and passed the whole distance, seven to eight miles, through similar country."

He did not know what more any people could want in a tract of country. He would now draw the attention of the House to the report of the Minister of the Interior, and, in doing so, would specially refer to the Southern route, known as "No. 2"; and in this report of the Minister of the Interior, they

had, on page 68 of the Appendix, a description of one of the Indian Reserves of the country, along the Fraser into the interior. He said:

"The Lower Fraser Valley, extending, say over a hundred miles up to Yale, is not a gorge, but is somewhat opened so as to entitle it to be called a true valley of deposition. The flat land about its mouth rests generally on soft, tertiary formations, but particularly along its low seaward margin, is composed of very modern delta deposits. The greater part of the Lower Fraser Valley is covered with immense deposits, chiefly of Douglas pine. From Yale up to Lytton, which is about 57 miles, the Fraser Valley is a gorge between high, weather-worn mountains, covered with poor timber. Somewhere in the neighbourhood of Lytton, you get through the Cascade Mountains into the arid, interior basin. The *Penus Ponterosa*, growing scattered over the surface, without underbrush, and looking pretty with its red bark and dark, green foliage, takes the place of the Douglas firs, and you see also the prickly pear, or cactus. The Thompson Valley is more a gorge than a true valley for many miles about its junction with the Fraser at Lytton, but the mountains have a softer outline than on the Fraser, and are lower, and for the most part grassy. By-and-bye, after about 100 miles travel, you get to Kamloops, which is at the junction of the north and south branches of the Thompson. Leaving Kamloops, and ascending the South Thompson, and going along the Shuswap Lakes, you leave the Thompson or Shuswap River (otherwise at this place called Spellumchen) and pass through a short trough, in which is a gently elevated, almost imperceptible height of land, and reach the O'Kanagan Lake, which, unlike the Shuswap Lakes, discharges itself to the southward, by the O'Kanagan River, past Osoyoos on the Canadian frontier, into the Columbia River, on American territory. The e is thus, from Lytton to the frontier, a prolonged cut of about 250 miles, which may be called, at different places, a gorge, a trough, or a valley."

He need not quote further from that report in order to draw the attention of the House to a statement made by an officer of this Government. He would, however, quote from the report of Mr. Macoun, with regard to the Lower Fraser. Mr. Macoun said:—

"The valley of the Lower Fraser, for agricultural purposes, may be said to end at Sumas, but there are numbers of small locations where farming could be done on a limited scale as far up as Fort Hope. Beyond this point, the valley becomes confined between the mountains, and these press so upon the river that, before reaching Yale, the traveller realizes what a canyon is, and the mind is tortured with the thought of what might happen if anything went wrong with the boat or its machinery."

Professor Macoun further added, on page 121:

"Lytton is a poor miserable place, only having three gardens in the whole village."

On page 133, when speaking of the proposed Northern route *via* Fort George and Pike Pass, he said:

"The 16th was occupied in getting our baggage across the Nechacco, a broad and rapid stream.

"For nearly seven miles, the trail led through a succession of aspen copses and wide prairies. In the latter, very tall grass and weeds of the usual species, and in the former, the largest aspen leaves I ever saw. Numbers of the trees were over two feet in diameter. The prairie and forest were quite level, and the soil of the best quality—an alluvium with black loam for a subsoil."

They had here another evidence of the rich character of the country which the railway would traverse if it took the Pine River Pass route. On page 134, he said:

"The valley of the Nechacco has an exceedingly rich soil on both sides where the trail crosses, and possibly this extends for many miles above and below. The valley of Stewart's River is not wide where we crossed it, but it is very rich, and there is no doubt whatever, in my mind, but that, after the two rivers unite, the valley all the way to Fort George is rich and fertile and well suited for settlement. From the crossing of Stewart's River to Fort St. James, the country was almost impassable, owing to the constant rains, but the soil is rich, and grass and weeds were very luxuriant. The country around Lakes Tain-Kat, Tachick and Noel-ki, is very fertile, and from the occurrence of so much prairie, together with the similarity of the flora to that at Edmonton, I consider the climate of the two regions to be much alike. The former, though further north, is less elevated, and this, together with the well-known northern trend of the isothermal lines in North-West America, more than compensate for the difference in latitude. The dry, summer climate, which is indicated by the flora, proves the rainfall to be inconsiderable, and, therefore, the prospects are good for the successful cultivation of grain. Much of the forest country is undoubtedly wet, but it is swamp, and when the lumber is removed, by whatever means, and the swampy lands drained, the soil will become warmer and dryer, and the country be less subject to summer frosts. For many years, barley has been raised at Fort St. James, and certainly the soil in that neighbourhood is not to be compared with that in the Valley of the Nechacco. When a geological examination of the country has been made, a better opinion can be formed of the amount of arable land, as it may be set down as an invariable rule that, wherever limestone is the prevailing rock, there the soil will be suited for agriculture, if the altitude is not too great."

On another page, 142, he said:

"Standing on either Stewart's Lake Mountain or McLeod's Lake Mountain, the observer looks down on a land of rivers, lakes, marshes and swamps, with occasional tracts of dry arable land, indicated by the light green of the aspen. These tracts

are generally by the river margins, and are composed of alluvial soil and quite rich. Black spruce in the wet peaty swamps, is replaced on the drier grounds by white spruce, while an intermixture of the latter and aspen always indicates a moderately dry soil. Sandy or gravelly soils are always known by the thick growth of black pine, called in my former report Banksian pine. These tracts are generally level, and, although boggy on the surface, are never marshy. Douglas fir is always at home on the hill side, and although it does not like to have the ground saturated about its roots, it seems to delight in a humid atmosphere. In tracing it all the way from the coast, I found that it cared little for cold, but shrank away from a dry atmosphere. These five species of trees may be said to constitute the bulk of the forest for the whole distance of 270 miles by our trail from Quesnel to McLeod's Lake. There can be no doubt that, when the forest is cleared, by whatever cause, the soil will become drier and the climate will be considerably ameliorated. Owing to the latitude, the sun's rays fall obliquely on the forest, and, as a natural result, there is little evaporation. As Germany was to the Roman, so is much of our North-West to us—a land of marsh and swamp and rigorous winter. Germany has been cleared of her forest, and is now one of the finest and most progressive of European countries. May not the clearing of our North-Western forests produce a similar result in the distant future of British America?"

Professor Macoun made the following remarks with respect to Vermilion, on Peace River:

"Having decided to rest one day at Vermilion, I employed it in making a botanical survey of the neighbourhood. I first examined the field and gardens, and found, with the utmost astonishment that, although two degrees further north than Dunragan or St. John, the barley and vegetables were much further advanced. Barley was standing in shocks in the field, having been cut on 6th August, while scattered ears of wheat, which I found around the fences, were fully ripe (August 12th). Wheat is seldom cultivated in the North-West, owing to the fact that barley is more useful, as the former is only used when boiled with meat, while the latter is fed to horses in the winter. The barley was sown on the 8th May and reaped on the 6th August, having been in the ground just sixty days. The heads averaged from four to six inches in length, and were full of large grains of a beautiful colour. In fact, both wheat and barley were the plumpest I ever saw, and must weigh as much as that brought from Fort Chipewyan. They stood very thick in the ground, and were uncommonly stout, and must have yielded very heavily. Turnips and early rose potatoes were quite large, and both gave indications of a heavy crop."

Having drawn the attention of the House to those facts, he would still further draw their attention to the importance of pressing upon the attention of the Government that no mistake whatever should be made in locating the railway, for, just as

sure as the sun shone, that railway, constructed at a vast expenditure, if it took the route by the North Branch of the Thompson, then down the main branch, and thence through the Cascade range to Yale, would be a thorough failure so far as contributing to the settlement of British Columbia or the settlement of the country to any distance east of the British Columbia boundary was concerned. By taking the Northern route, not merely would their pastoral, agricultural and mining wealth be increased, but they would be in a condition to compete with any line on the American side of the international boundary for the trade of the Pacific and the trans-continental trade. He trusted the Government would see its way clear to bring down the papers and maps called for by his hon. friend, so that the House, and particularly the Independent members of this House, might have at their disposal the best means to form a conclusion as to the true route to be adopted for the Pacific Railroad.

MR. MACKENZIE: There is no report in the possession of the Government other than what is embraced in substance in the report of Mr. Smith, embodied in the Public Works Report now before the House, and which states substantially all that Mr. Hunter has stated. Mr. Hunter has to make a detailed report, which he has not yet been able to complete, and he also proposes to prepare a map. It will be observed that his survey was scarcely a complete one; it was not to any extent an instrumental so much as an exploratory survey. He made an instrumental survey of a portion of the more difficult parts of the Pass, respecting which, it is stated, he found the grades would be somewhat difficult for a few miles; some sixty feet to the mile, I believe. It is impossible, therefore, to base any actual decision upon the information which Mr. Hunter has communicated. We know very nearly as much before receiving Mr. Hunter's information as since, as Mr. Selwyn traversed this part of the country and gave a similar report; that is, that it would be possible to obtain a route for a railroad

by that river or so-called pass. All the information which the hon. member for Victoria has referred to, has been before the public and, of course, is known to the members of the Government as well as to other parties, and will, no doubt, exercise its proper influence on the Government in coming to a final determination as to the route which the railroad would take. But there is one point which neither of the two hon. gentlemen has mentioned and which constitutes a serious difficulty in the further consideration of the adoption of this route. In order to obtain an accurate knowledge of the route, which would have to be taken from very near Livingstone all the way up to Fort George, a distance of 1,100 or 1,200 miles, it would be necessary to spend two years in further surveys of the country before the Government could be able to form an exact estimate of the difficulties to be overcome, and the expense to be borne in carrying the route in that direction. I have pointed out on previous occasions the political difficulties which are connected with locating the route. Were the Dominion Parliament and the Government at liberty to deal with the selection of the route purely on its merits as a work of engineering and a work for the promotion of the settlement of the country, we would be placed in a much more favourable position for considering many of the suggestions which naturally arise in the course of an exploration of half a continent. But the hon. members from British Columbia and the British Columbia Government never ceased their importunities about the immediate commencement of the road, and the Dominion Government felt that it was necessary to commence the road as soon as it was possible to obtain the location in British Columbia itself. Acting, therefore, upon political considerations, unless there is an understanding arrived at with that Province for their assent to further delay in the prosecution of those surveys, it would become absolutely necessary to adopt the pass which is already known to be feasible, where the line has been fully located, and the matter in controversy, then, would be limited to the route to

be taken from Tête Jaune Cache, westward, either to Bute Inlet, Dean Inlet or Burrard Inlet. This is the position of the matter. Mr. Hunter made, no doubt, some valuable accessions to our knowledge of that country, but none that would have a material effect, particularly, owing to the political considerations to which I have referred. He is at present preparing a map which will show the general character of the country by either of the two lines, namely, that which has been located from Livingstone,—the point of divergence, if the Southern route (already located) was adopted—to Jasper House Pass; and the one which would traverse the country crossing the North Saskatchewan about Fort a la Corne, and taking, as nearly as possible, a direct route by Slave Lake, about the centre of the country traversed by the Smoky River, between the Peace River and the mountains, thence in as straight a line as possible on the slope of the Rocky Mountains to the Pine River Pass. The hon. member for Cariboo (Mr. Thompson) who has moved for these papers, has stated that the distance is about the same, quoting Mr. Smith's report. Apparently, the distance is the same, but actually, it is not. The distance upon the map is, as nearly as possible, the same by both routes, but the distance depends a great deal upon the amount of curvature which would have to be undertaken in crossing some of the formidable valleys which would be reached in the neighbourhood of Peace River, and any rough country which might be reached. I pointed out, a few evenings ago, that crossing one of the small rivers on the route proposed, south of Lake Manitoba in the North-West Territories, necessitated lengthening the line by nine miles, thus adding very materially to the curvature which would have to be overcome. So far as the engineers are able to ascertain, the distance by Pine River Pass to Fort George, the objective point common to both routes, is longer by about fifty miles. The curvature, however, upon the already located route, brings the distance, as nearly as possible, to the same mileage as the Northern route. But, if the percentage of curvature on the Pine River

Pass route should be the same as that on the Jasper House Pass route then the mileage would be increased by the difference which is apparent upon the measurement of the map, namely, fifty miles. These are, generally speaking, the facts which have to be considered in this connection. As soon as Mr. Hunter has his extended report prepared and the map ready, no time will be lost in submitting them to this House, as a matter of course. It is of little use bringing up his hurried and temporary report, as it is really all embraced in the information which Mr. Smith has collected in his general report, which is now before the House.

MR. ROSCOE said that if the Bute Inlet route was selected, the work of construction might proceed from that point to Fort George, while exploratory surveys might be made through the Pine River Pass, to determiné whether the road should be brought by that route or not.

MR. MACKENZIE: There is no doubt of that. If the Bute Inlet route on its own merits, taking the whole line, was considered the best, it might possibly be arranged, in that case, that the construction of the part west of Fort George might be proceeded with, and that part east of Fort George might be proceeded with as far as the surveys were concerned.

SIR JOHN A. MACDONALD: Fort George is a common point?

MR. MACKENZIE: Fort George is a common point both to the Pine River route and Bute Inlet route as now located; the precise point might not be precisely at Fort George, but within a short distance of it. There is a watershed to be overcome between Fraser River, immediately east of Fort George, and what may be called the summit waters of Peace River; or to speak more precisely, the summit waters of Parsnip River, the great southern branch of Peace River, which joins the other branch before piercing the mountain range through which Peace river flows. We do not know very accurately, indeed, it is very imperfectly known, what difficulties might have to be overcome in obtaining a crossing over the summit at that point. The summit

level is really far west of the Rocky Mountains proper so far as the road is concerned, as it passes through the Rocky Mountains, and is somewhat lower than the waters which flow east through the range of hills. Then, we have but comparatively little knowledge of the serious difficulties which might have to be overcome in crossing the deep valleys east of the Rocky Mountains which cross the track of a possible railway. I think—I speak from memory—that Major Butler, in his book (not an accurate engineering work, to be sure, but a book of some interest as giving a tolerably correct description of the country) states that the depth of the Smoky River valley is nearly 1,000 feet below the general range of the level of the prairie region through which it passes. The valleys, however, are of enormous depth and undoubtedly constitute serious engineering difficulties, and might add, not only very materially to the expense, but also, for all time to come, to the serious difficulty of having high grades as well as a large amount of curvature. These are all matters which, of course, the Government is bound to consider before coming to a decision as to the route which shall be followed through British Columbia proper; and I can only say that nothing causes myself more anxiety at the moment than to be able to come to a right decision—one which we trust will not be regretted in after years when the road will be in operation, and when the weight of any blunder which might be made now will be seriously felt on the trade and commerce of the country.

Mr. BUNSTER said the discussion had thrown some light on the intention of the Government, and they were now promised two years more delay in the building of the Canadian Pacific Railway for the purpose of securing further surveys. It was evident that the time provided in the terms of Union for the construction of the road would be exceeded by several years. The House had been informed by the hon. the Premier that the British Columbia Government was pressing the Dominion Government to carry out the

agreement entered into by that Province. That fact need not be wondered at inasmuch as the people of British Columbia held the opinion that the contract had not been carried out by Canada as agreed upon. Mention had been made of political considerations, but such considerations should have nothing to do with the carrying out of the terms of the treaty with British Columbia and Canada, an engagement which had been solemnly entered into with that Province. It was not very creditable for any Government to make any such allusion as that political considerations should interfere with the performance of a just contract, one that British Columbia would never have entered into if it had foreseen the manner in which it would have been treated, and that, by its loyalty to Great Britain and confidence in Canada, it had been deprived of a railroad which the Americans were anxious to build through British Columbia to Alaska. The credit of the Pacific Province had, moreover, been affected by the action of the Dominion. Not only the British Columbia Government, but the members from that Province and the people whom they represented, felt sensitive in regard to the railroad question. In anticipation of the work of constructing the railway being carried forward in good faith, the Province expended large sums of money, and sent its own agent to Europe to induce immigration there, for they well knew that the Province possessed land well fitted to receive emigrants to cultivate the soil. The House had been told by the hon. the Premier that as soon as Mr. Hunter's report was prepared, it would be brought down; but there was nothing definite about that statement, and they did not know whether it would be within one, two, or three years. Such was not the proper manner to treat hon. members who came to Parliament from long distances at the risk of their lives. The commencement of the work might be delayed until after the general election, and, on that ground, the people of British Columbia had cause for alarm. While he believed there were considerable political considerations affecting the railroad question, he still

had faith in the people of Canada to believe they would have sufficient political honour to carry out their promises to British Columbia, and they would know whether such was the case when they went to the polls. If the British Columbia Government had not sufficient faith left to believe that the Dominion Government would yet carry out the terms of Union, it would petition the Imperial Government to sever the connection between the Province and Canada, and it would return to the old flag, not to the United States. British Columbia flourished under the old flag; the Imperial navy frequented its harbours, surveyed its coasts, and took a lively interest in the development of the resources of the country; but since the Province had joined Confederation, they would have declined in prosperity, except for its rich natural resources. Their confidence in the pledge of the Dominion Government to build the railroad had declined; their emigrants had been leaving their shores because the public lands were locked up, and, under those circumstances it was natural that men, who, like himself, had spent the best part of their lives in the Province, should feel aggrieved at the injustice done it. He hoped the Government would see proper to commence the construction of the Pacific Railway at once, and not longer allow the steel rails sent to British Columbia to remain there unladen, and deteriorating. Let the Government commence at Bute Inlet and build eastward. He did not desire to influence the Government in regard to the selection of a route, but he wished the work to be entered upon, so that the people who came to their shores, being desirous to return to the old flag, might do it with a little more confidence than at present. They received many immigrants from Australia as well as the old country, and many of those men who had invested money in lands in the hope that the national enterprise would be carried out had lost their savings through the work not being carried out as agreed upon. That was a gross injustice, and if the case were placed in proper hands, he thought the Government might be sued for breach of contract for the loss sustained by those parties.

Mr. THOMPSON (Cariboo) said the discussion had taken a wider scope than he expected when he brought forward the motion for those returns. The hon. the Premier had informed the House that Mr. Hunter's report was not yet sufficiently prepared to be submitted. He (Mr. Thompson) hoped, however, that, as Mr. Hunter was in the city, the report would be brought down to the House with as little delay as possible; indeed, it would be satisfactory to the First Minister himself, to have that report when he announced the railway policy of the Government. As had been stated by the junior member for Victoria, if the Bute Inlet route should be adopted, there would be no difficulty in proceeding with the work between that point and Fort George, whether any further explorations were made of the Pine River Pass or not. He hoped the hon. the First Minister would furnish the House with the information as soon as possible.

Mr. DECOSMOS said he believed Mr. Hunter's report was written in Victoria, British Columbia, and came from Victoria to San Francisco by the same mail as he (Mr. DeCosmos) did. He had that information on the authority of one of the engineers.

Mr. MACKENZIE said he did not know who it was in the engineers department who gave the hon. gentleman the information. He could only tell the hon. gentleman that the report was not made yet; only an informal letter had been sent by Mr. Hunter, giving briefly the results.

Mr. DECOSMOS said he did not refer to the officers in the Department at Ottawa, but to the Pacific Railway office in Victoria.

Mr. MACKENZIE said the statement was not correct as to the report being forwarded. There was nothing yet to bring down except Mr. Hunter's first letter, which he hoped the hon. gentleman would not desire. The motion might, therefore, pass with the understanding that the papers would be brought down as soon as the report was prepared.

Motion agreed to.

