

whatever they were, had now fallen to Canada by purchase, and the question at issue was how much of the vast territories which these claims covered belonged to the Dominion, and how much to Ontario. Strong as were the claims of Canada, from the first, to the territories in the direction of Hudson's Bay, through a long period of occupation and by virtue of treaties, they were still stronger as regarded the regions of the North-west. The elaborate reports before the House gave many interesting details of the explorations of the early voyageurs, showing how they had first penetrated to Lake Superior; how they had crossed over to the Mississippi, and traced the windings of that great river from its source to the Gulf of Mexico; and how they had travelled to the colder regions of the North-west, gradually extending their trading posts to Lake Winnipeg and the farthest tributaries of the Saskatchewan, until at the date of the conquest they were in possession of the country westward to the Rocky Mountains. We had an account, too, of the explorations of Canadians after the conquest, although, in this regard, the reports were not so full as he believed they might with advantage have been made. While the traders of the Company of Merchant Adventurers of England were still on the confines of Hudson's Bay, these later discoverers had reached the Arctic Sea and the shores of the Pacific Ocean. It was, in fact, on the rights arising from the discoveries of Canadians who had crossed the Rocky Mountains subsequent to the conquest that Great Britain was able to make good her claim to British Columbia; and he could not well see why, if the claims of Ontario were good to the Rocky Mountains, they were not equally good to the regions further to the west. If the claims of Ontario were to be based on prior discovery and occupation alone, they would cover by far the greater portion of British North America. They would reach to the Pacific Ocean and the Arctic Sea. But there were many other considerations to be taken into account. Open as the Hudson Bay Company's charter might be to question, as to the territories which it covered, we could not ignore the fact that their extremest claims had been more or less recognized by the Imperial Government from the end of the past up to the middle of the present century. The case of Ontario had been very strongly and ably stated, and on the other hand there had been nothing concealed which could make against her claims. On reference to the reports it would be seen that there were Acts of Parliament and Royal proclamations defining boundaries with more or less of precision, all of which had to be considered. Then we had the decision of judges as to the western limits of Upper Canada in the De Runhard case, and we could not ignore the fact that a colony had been built up in Assiniboia which was recognised by the Imperial authorities, at least to a certain extent. Most awkward of all, there was the question of the Indian territory to be dealt with. These Indian territories were treated by the Imperial Government, and by an Act of the Imperial Parliament, as being entirely distinct and apart from Canada. But where were those Indian territories? It was at one time supposed that they covered, and it was no doubt intended that they should cover, the country about Red River and Lake Winnipeg, and it would not be difficult to show that it was meant that they should come as far east as Lake Superior. But the Hudson's Bay Company had tried to shove them off to the Arctic water-shed. Another matter which had not been touched upon in the reports was the rights of Quebec, and that Province had certainly a claim to the "countries above," as the North-west territories were termed in the capitulation of Montreal. The case of the Dominion Government had been set forth in a report by Mr. Ramsay, and this report was at least a fair subject of criticism. He (Mr. Dawson) was of opinion that, if the Dominion had nothing stronger to advance, its claims would not seriously interfere with those of Ontario. Mr. Ramsay gave it as his opinion that the water-shed or height of land was the bound-

dary between Canada and the territories which he assumed to be covered by the charter of the Hudson's Bay Company, but he failed to establish this position by documents or tenable argument. In section 19 of his report, alluding to the negotiations which took place subsequent to the Treaty of Utrecht, he said that "Commissaries were appointed to define the limits, who never arrived at any decision; but that both countries seem to have acquiesced in the idea that the water-shed or height of land was the real boundary." In his note (B.) in the appendix to his report, he gave his authority for this assumption; but the documents which he himself quoted proved the very reverse of what he advanced, for they showed that the extreme southern limit claimed by the Hudson's Bay Company up to 1750 was a line running from the latitude of 58.30 north, on the Atlantic coast, to Lake Mistassini, thence south-westerly to the 49th parallel, and then along that parallel westward; and he had omitted to mention that in the document in which they made this claim, the Hudson's Bay Company had made no reference to any height of land whatever. On the contrary, in their memorial to the Lords of Trade and Plantations, which was the document Mr. Ramsay quoted from, they claimed that their territories to the north extended from Hudson's Bay northwards to the utmost limits of the lands towards the North Pole, and westward to the Great South Sea or Pacific Ocean. So that, far from proposing any height of land, they were neither to be bounded by the Arctic watershed on the north, nor by the Rocky Mountains on the west. Perhaps the most interesting period in the history of the occupation of Hudson's Bay was that intervening between the Treaty of Neutrality, 1686, and the Treaty of Utrecht, 1711. During this period of twenty-five years the rights of the French had been acknowledged by the Treaty of Ryswick, and by the restoration of their forts; and within the same time the charter of the Hudson's Bay Company had been seemingly cancelled by an Act of Parliament renewing it for only seven years. Yet the whole of this history was very summarily treated by Mr. Ramsay, because it made against his position. In a memorandum annexed to his report, in which he affected to be very kind and considerate to Ontario, but which was really meant to support his height of land line, Mr. Ramsay, in an inferential sort of way, suggested another argument which he evidently felt was too silly to be advanced otherwise. It seemed that in 1850 the Government of Canada had sent an officer "to negotiate with the Indians for the adjustment of their claims to the lands in the vicinity of Lakes Huron and Superior." This officer, in a paper drawn up by him in the wilderness, made the mistake of referring to the height of land as separating the territory covered by the charter of the Hudson's Bay Company from the lands he was negotiating with the Indians about—a piece of information which he, no doubt, obtained from the Company's traders, who were then the only white people in the district. And, on a blunder of no more importance than this, Mr. Ramsay endeavoured to found an argument in a matter of such gravity as the boundaries of Ontario. He concluded his report by giving it as his opinion that Ontario was bounded to the north by the height of land, and to the west by the due north line prolonged from the junction of the Ohio and Mississippi, or, in other words, by the meridian of 89 deg. 9 min. 27 sec. Taken altogether, it would be difficult to say whether this report was more remarkable for the wildness of its assumptions or the feebleness of its argument. Assertion proved nothing, and a mere opinion, in a matter of such importance, without sound arguments to sustain it, was of little value. Mr. Ramsay said, in the way of argument, that "both countries seemed to have acquiesced in the idea that the watershed or height of land was the real boundary," when he could only show that the parallel of 49 deg.—not adopted, but only suggested—was the nearest approach to it ever contemplated, and that not by both countries, but only by the Hudson's Bay Company or their supporters; and that parallel was far from coinciding with the water-