

resolutions; but in view of the statements which have been made to-day by the hon. Minister of Railways, and the other hon. members who have spoken on this subject, I am entirely convinced that the Government only came to the conclusion to aid these roads after having made all necessary investigations, and only when they came to a correct conclusion that these roads were calculated to develop the resources of Eastern Canada. But there are some of these enterprises with which I am more particularly familiar. For instance the Lake St. John Railway, the Montreal and Occidental Railway, and the Gatineau Railway. As to the Lake St. John Railway I understand that our friends from the Quebec district attach the greatest importance to it, and in my opinion they are perfectly right, for the Lake St. John Railway is destined to become the backbone of the city of Quebec, and the inhabitants of other parts of the country. We will always be happy to see the old capital flourish, and take a forward step in the path of progress and prosperity. I am happy to know that the valley of Lake St. John is able to sustain a population of from 200,000 to 250,000 souls; that the soil produces wheat in point of quality and quantity as good as in the North-West. As to the Montreal and Occidental Railway, I visited last year a stretch of country more than eighty miles in extent of this road, of which fifty miles are subsidized by these resolutions, and I can say that this visit for me was a revelation. That part which extends in rear of the Laurentian ranges was until this last five years an unknown country, a *terra incognita*, as the hon. member from the county of Ottawa remarked. But, Sir, during the last five or six years we have been able to locate 10,000 souls, and as the hon. Minister of Railways remarked, the Province of Quebec and the whole country owe a debt of gratitude to that great patriot, to that great apostle of colonization, who is called the Abbé Labelle who for so many years has concentrated his energy to explore the resources of our country and direct colonists to the north. With reference to the Gatineau Railway, I have studied the country through which it passes, and I can entirely corroborate everything which has been said by the hon. Minister of Railways and the hon. member from Ottawa county. The valley of the Gatineau is one of the most important sections of the valley of the Ottawa. It is an immense valley, having a rich soil, great forests and mines of all kinds. At the present time we are all aware of the extensive commerce of phosphates which is being carried on there. Well, Mr. Speaker, these two railways, to the construction of which we are going to subsidize for a distance of fifty miles in a few years, and I trust before long, will reach the Lake of the Desert, and later on will continue step by step and will reach the Hudson's Bay to give a new outlet for commerce for this important branch of Canada. I heard the hon. member for West Middlesex (Mr. Ross) say that the subsidies given to the railways mentioned in the resolutions were not protected by sufficient guarantees. If my hon. friend will take the trouble to read the proviso which accompanies these resolutions, he would have seen that the Government has taken the necessary measures to see that the expenditure of the moneys which are now asked shall only be expended during the construction of the work. This is the part which refers to these guarantees. All the aforesaid subsidies shall only be paid out of the consolidated revenue of Canada by instalments, according as each ten mile section is completed. Thus it is necessary that ten miles of the road be completed before any proportionate subsidy be given—proportionate to the value of the section thus completed, comparatively, to the total of the work, the value of which will be established by the report of the said hon. Minister. I heard with regret the hon. member from Middlesex oppose the construction of these enterprises, because, according to him, they are of a local character. It is easy to convince myself that the greater part of these

Mr. Tassé.

enterprises are far from being of a local character. So far our own policy, since we assumed the construction of the Pacific Railway, has been not only to construct this great railway, but also to subsidize the branches and connections of this road. The Gatineau railroad will connect with the Pacific Railway. The railway about to be constructed, starting from St. Jérôme into the interior, and which later on will be connected with the Gatineau Railway, is also an important branch of the Pacific; and I can say the same of the Lake St. John Railway. But, Mr. Speaker, I think that another reason is at the bottom of the opposition of the hon. member. I observed with regret that my hon. friend appeared to allow himself to be guided by sectional prejudices in lieu of the objections which he raised against the measure which is now submitted. For whilst my hon. friend raised objections against the construction of roads east of Toronto, he raised none against voting a much greater subsidy, a subsidy of \$6,000 a mile, which is in reality a subsidy of \$12,000 a mile, as we voted the same amount last year, making a total of \$1,300,000 for the railway from Gravenhurst to Callander. I am far from being opposed to the grant of this subsidy to this railroad, whose object is to place Western Ontario in connection with the great Pacific route; but, on the other hand, I think it is right that the hon. member and the other members who call themselves *par excellence* the Liberal party—and which it is only in name, for I want no better illustration than that of the hon. member for West Middlesex, who, on the one hand, approves of the subsidy between Callander and Gravenhurst, and, on the other, blames the Government for subsidizing roads East of Toronto—I think that it is well that these hon. members should understand that these roads do not interest the Province of Quebec alone, but all that section, Eastern Ontario and the city of Ottawa, of which I have the honor to be one of the representatives in this honorable House, are also considerably interested in the construction of the Gatineau road. Consequently it is not a question of subsidizing a railway which will merely benefit the Province of Quebec, but a road which concerns several Provinces, and I can say the same of nearly all the other roads. I should also dispose of another pretext of my hon. friend, the hon. member from Middlesex; he says if we adopt this policy it will be a suicidal one. Every time that the Conservative party has submitted an important measure to aggrandize Canada, we always have heard our opponents cry aloud and contend that we were leading the country to ruin and bankruptcy. When the construction of the Grand Trunk was proposed we saw these gentlemen declare war, contending that the Grand Trunk would always be a source of embarrassment and financial disaster. The same objection was made against the Victoria Bridge. In 1872 when the first measures were taken for the construction of the Pacific we saw these gentlemen contending that it would be for Canada a source of ruin, and to-night I am not surprised to see the hon. member from West Middlesex, faithful to the traditions of his party, protest with all his might against the generous and enlightened policy of the Government. If we consider the question from a revenue stand-point, no one is so much interested as the Federal Government in subsidizing the railroads which it is intended to construct, because railways are the best factors for the prosperity of the country. The railway is the most important lever which can be applied to develop the resources of the people of any country. Take, for instance, what has been done in the regions north of St. Jérôme. In the last five or six years the Curé Labelle alone has been able to settle there 10,000 souls! If each person pays \$5 of indirect taxes, 10,000 persons will pay \$50,000 of taxes annually, or a half million in ten years; and if these people have a railway, what a development will take place. It is certain that no one is more interested than the Federal Government in sub-