

(Mr. Mills) submitted to Parliament, in the last years of the Government of which he was a member, and that of the present Administration; when it was pointed out that my hon. friend actually proposed to give free to railways something like 6,000 acres of land a mile, in the early settlement of Manitoba and the North-West Territory; when it was pointed out that he profligately proposed to allow the railway companies the opportunity of obtaining the benefit of 6,000 acres of land per mile in order to help the construction of these roads. Hon. gentlemen opposite then thought that was a very bad policy, a policy too liberal, unnecessarily liberal, and they were determined, by a happy combination, at once, as I have said, to fill the Treasury with cash and the country with railways, and upon that enterprise they entered, and in that enterprise they have been since engaged, for some years, and with the general results which the hon. gentleman has depicted to-night, namely, that we have got some 50 or 52 miles of Manitoba and South-Western built, and some 80 miles, I think, of the Manitoba and North-Western built, and there is the end of the account, apart from a small mileage of lines which the Canadian Pacific Railway has itself built, in the way of branch lines. After their efforts to develop the North-West, after the glorious results which they have declared they have obtained in the North-West, after the greatly enhanced value which they say they have given to lands in that country, they propose now to hand over, for the construction of branch lines, 6,400 acres a mile free, and I am sorry to say that the papers which are before me show that some, at any rate, of the corporations to which these grants are to be given, are not sanguine of being able to construct the roads, even with the aid of the grants, although they are larger, in fact, than 6,400 acres a mile, with reference to two corporations, for reasons I will point out when we get to committee, and deal with the particular grants; but, for the moment, waiving that, we have 6,400 acres a mile proposed to be given by a policy adopted in the fall of 1884 and presented to Parliament for its ratification in 1885, when hon. gentlemen told us, a number of years ago, that they would obtain the railways to be constructed and would procure for us, in addition, \$1 an acre for the lands. It seems to me that under these circumstances the hon. gentleman might have entered into some detail before he asked you to leave the Chair, some review of the various proposals with reference to the railways, and some detail as to the circumstances which have given rise to a reversion, in fact, to the condemned policy of my hon. friend from Bothwell (Mr. Mills). The original proposition, I think, was for something, perhaps, even smaller, in some cases certainly smaller, than 6,400 acres. I think the original proposal was for 3,840 acres a mile. The first scheme of hon. gentlemen opposite was to sell 3,840 acres a mile to such branch railways as they thought were sufficiently important to justify that sale, at \$1 an acre—plus the cost of survey, of course, in all cases—\$1 an acre cash: and upon that it was expected that a sufficient margin would be obtained to secure the construction of the railway. That policy was modified, and they decided, upon the request of the railway companies, to increase the sale to 6,400 acres a mile, at \$1 an acre, cash, and thus, by the added acreage, to enlarge the margin of profit to be made by the railway company, and so to secure the construction of the railway and this sum in cash to the Treasury. Then another change was in the postponement of the time of payment. After having increased the acreage they were asked to postpone the period of payment, so that the resources of the companies might be made available for the construction of the railway, and the payment might not be exacted before the companies were able to sell to the purchasers; and to that, also, they agreed, as a modification which might be given without danger to the State and with obvious advantages to the companies. And then, an abso-

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lutely free grant is asked of the larger area. It seems to me that these statements that I have made of the various proposals of hon. gentlemen at different times ought, when they now come before Parliament for the first time, for the formal adoption of the policy for aiding railways in the North-West, to have induced a review of their past policies and some explanation of the reason why, at this time of day and in the condition of the North-West as it was in the fall of 1884, the proposals are, in their view, rendered necessary in the interest of the country, which they thought so improper at its earlier and less matured period of development, when my hon. friend from Bothwell submitted to the House. If it be that, by a more liberal policy in the earlier days, we could, many years ago, have secured the construction of branch railways through the North-West, I venture to say that the condition of that country—its material condition, and the state of its people, and the elements of prosperity in that country—would have been very much more developed, very much to the advantage of Canada at large, than that which obtains at the present day. I do not at all disguise the view that, while the construction of these railways is, as I conceive, of the last importance to the Province, my opinion is that they have been, in more than one way, practically thwarted by the course hon. gentlemen have taken. I have referred to the course with reference to the Manitoba South-Western. I refer also to the difficulties which are created by the special conditions under which the great through line was chartered. It is perfectly obvious that one of the elements of prosperity of the interior lines of Manitoba and the North-West must be the terms of connection which they make with the outlet for the through trade. So long as the railways in the North-West were restricted to connection with one line, by which only they could obtain access to the outer world, and which must, therefore, be the arbiter of the rates of freight for the through trade, it is very clear that their prospects must be much more doubtful than they could be if they could make arrangements which would secure to them a share, however little, of the profits derivable from the through trade. If they are connected with one company alone, that company having the right to dictate the terms upon which their traffic shall be taken, the margin of profit upon which this traffic can be carried, or an undue protection of that margin of profit may be extracted on the arrangements—they are not free arrangements, but on the arrangements, so to speak—which shall be effected between the branch railway and the through railway for the handling of the business; and, under these circumstances, it is obvious that prudent men have to rely on the prospects of the local freight, without relying, to any great extent, upon the profits derivable from through freight from the North-West. Another observation of a general character which I think fit to make on this occasion, and which I make with reference to the policy of the Administration, is, that I think it might fairly have been indicated by the Government, who have brought down to-night proposals to assist four railways, and four railways only, whether this is a policy which is applicable in its details to other enterprises of a character equal in importance, or fairly important, which may be projected, or which may have been projected through the North-West. I think it is of very great consequence that there should be some degree of certainty in that matter. I am not quarrelling with the view—there is no use in raising a contest upon it; it would be absurd, in the present condition of the country, and of the arrangements which have been made for the construction of railways, to enter, at this moment, upon a serious contest in reference to it—I am not quarrelling with the view that a measure of control should be retained by the Government over the location of the railways. I do not express one opinion or the other upon that, but I am