

SPEECH

OF

MR. JOHN CHARLTON, M.P.

ON THE

NATIONAL TRANSCONTINENTAL RAILWAY

OTTAWA, AUGUST 11 and 12, 1903

Mr. JOHN CHARLTON (North Norfolk). Mr. Speaker, excuse the slight embarrassment resulting from changing seats, and from my resuming my usual position, from which I shall attempt to enunciate doctrines which are much more to my own satisfaction than those that have been promulgated for the last five hours from the seat which I now occupy.

We are engaged, Mr. Speaker, in discussing a question of very great importance. Never in the history of Canada has a question so important engaged the attention of parliament, and been brought before the people of this country. It is a question which we should attempt to discuss in a spirit of fairness, in a spirit of candour, in a spirit actuated by a desire to promote the best interests of Canada. This is a project which has to do with the future of Canada. It has to do with the future of our country far down in its history, and no individual in this House, no individual in this country has an interest in this matter different from that of other individuals. The interests of all are alike; all are interested in having a policy promulgated and carried out by this government which will be in the best interest of the country. There may be differences of opinion, honest differences of opinion. There inevitably will be such differences, and differences indeed have existed within the ranks of the Liberal party. This question has been discussed in all its phases within the ranks of the party. The most courteous consideration has been given by members of the government to the views presented by the members of the Liberal party with regard

to this project. The policy has been thoroughly threshed out within the ranks of the Liberal party. There is nothing that has been presented here to-day by the hon. gentleman (Hon. Mr. Blair) that has not received consideration, that has not been fully considered and a decision reached with regard to it. The hon. gentleman (Hon. Mr. Blair) tells us that this measure has been urged with unexampled haste, that it has been sprung upon the country without due deliberation. Why, Sir, this question has been under discussion in the country and has received the attention of the public for months; for years almost.

Mr. BROCK. Almost.

Mr. CHARLTON. Yes, the question of another transcontinental line was dealt with nearly a year ago by the very gentleman (Hon. Mr. Blair) who has been addressing the House to-night.

Some hon. MEMBERS. Hear, hear.

Mr. CHARLTON. Yes, and I will read in due time what that hon. gentleman said, and I shall contrast with a feeling of pain the difference between his sentiments uttered a year ago and the sentiments which he uttered to-night. The question has not been sprung without due deliberation; the question has been thoroughly considered. Of course, parliament has been delayed by the consideration of this question; we have remained in session much longer than we would have done if this question had not been under consideration. I have approved of the delay and the country will approve of the delay. The government has