

to the instructions of our masters opposite, we may get home on the twenty-third, but if we are not good boys we shall be kept here at school until we say our lessons properly. I suppose we are all willing to work; we are willing to meet at any season, however inconvenient, if the public interest requires it. We are willing to dispense with our Christmas holidays and remain at work, if the public interest demands it; but what is wanted is deliberation and consultation—and then work after there has been opportunity for consideration by the country, but not before. I maintain that if it is considered necessary to force this measure through the House before Christmas, the vast proportion of the electorate will not have even read the terms of the bargain before we shall have made them the law of the land. It was amusing to observe how thoroughly the test of experience verified the position we took with reference to the appointment of a High Commissioner at the last meeting of Parliament. You will remember that the memorandum on which that appointment was made pointed out that—

"It is now being found in practice that there are constantly questions arising connected with the administration of affairs in Canada, requiring discussions in a mode and to an extent wholly impracticable by the ordinary channel of correspondence through the Governor General, and periodical visits have to be made to London for this purpose by the important members of the Canadian Government, entailing serious inconvenience. At this moment the following subjects are thus under consideration: the Pacific Railway, and important collateral subjects; treaties of commerce with France and Spain; Esquimaux graving dock; military defence of Canada generally, and of British Columbia more especially; while the fishery and commercial clauses of the Washington Treaty may, at any moment, be re-opened by the United States; with many other matters of importance connected with the better organization of the military force of the Dominion.

"It is manifestly impossible that the views of the Canadian Government on such subjects can be submitted for the intelligent consideration of Her Majesty's Government in any other mode than that of personal communication; and as the subjects themselves relate to different departments of administration, the necessity arises for the absence from their posts at this moment of not less than three Ministers."

And to obviate all this we were to have a High Commissioner, and yet we find that this language might have been repeated this year in London, by the hon. gentlemen themselves, although their High Commissioner was along with them; indeed, I believe there was an extra Minister along, probably to remedy some of the evils created by the appointment of a High Commissioner. I do not complain that a Minister, or more than one Minister, went over to England to negotiate, but I do complain that the hon. gentlemen made it a ground for the appointment of a Commissioner, that no such results as these would follow. Some information has been given to us from time to time, some small scraps of information as to these negotiations. The hon. Minister of Railways, during the last Session of Parliament, stated that an offer had been received for the construction and working of a large portion of the Canadian Pacific Railway, at that time, by arrangements which were within his grasp, if the Government chose to accept them. On the 29th of June last, the First Minister was reported to have taken occasion, at a picnic, to state that there were two distinct offers at that moment under the consideration of the Government, and that they were deliberating which they would accept, or if they would accept either. After that period they went to England, and the announcement was made, on their return, that a contract had been made; but it did not appear to have been made so firm as to prevent a considerable amount of consideration after their return. We are promised, in the Speech, the papers connected with the contract, but I think we are entitled to have, if called upon to judge the course of the Administration, and to ratify it, the other offers also, and all the papers connected with them. Reason points to that, and precedent sanctions the demand. On the occasion of the last Pacific Railway contract, of unhappy memory, the honorable Minister himself brought down various papers connected with other offers and proposals,

Mr. BLAKE.

as to the construction of the railway. It is reasonable, if you demand from us our approval of the course you are taking, in having concluded a particular bargain, that we should know what bargains were open to you, what offers were made, so that we should judge whether you wisely chose, in that ample choice, that embarrassment of riches which presented itself to you when considering to whom you should let the work, and at how small a price, for the building of the Canada Pacific Railway. Now, vast as the subject of this railway is, it by no means exhausts the share which the North-West has in the discussion of this question. There are large questions connected with the land policy of the North-West, apart from the questions connected with the railway grant. Other questions have been raised, also, by Ministerial utterances, as to the grant of very large areas of that territory. The honorable Minister, on the occasion to which I referred a little while ago, declared exultingly, that Mr. Brassey was good enough to tell us he was willing to purchase 100 square miles of our lands, and settle how many persons? His son. So we were to get rid of 100 square miles of land, and receive young Brassey. The hon. Minister announced he was the bearer of that proposal, which he was about to lay before the Council for the acceptance of that confiding, if not obsequious, body. I suppose it has been accepted, and that we shall have the good fortune some day or other, when the country becomes habitable, and those 100 miles are surrounded with smiling farms, to see young Brassey along there. That proposed grant is, in my opinion, not only contrary to sound policy but to the spirit of the understanding on which Parliament has been acting and allowing the Government to act in this matter. The statement with reference to the general administration of these lands was wholly different, and whether this particular grant is beyond the area of the lands included within the regulations or not, I maintain it would have been more in accordance with the dignity of Parliament and the duty of the Executive not to have proposed or acted upon any other policy with reference to the outlying territories than that which they had called upon Parliament to sustain with regard to the others. The regulations of the Government were brought before us when there was an object in so doing, whenever, as to the lands as well as the railway, there had been changes. But those regulations indicated the impossibility of the acquisition by purchase, and without settlement, of any very large areas of territory together. I do not say there are not two sides to this question; there are difficulties on both sides, but what I do maintain is, that the policy of granting to individuals enormous tracts of land in the North-West, is not a policy which the Government ought to adopt, except subject to the prior sanction of this House. We have had experience of large land grants in almost all the Provinces: we have had bitter experience of them in Ontario, and severe experience of them in Prince Edward Island, and also an experience in the townships of the Province of Quebec, but I do not know that we need go beyond the limits of the North-West of to-day to judge of the important consequences of the land policy. We find in the Province of Manitoba, with reference to the difficulties of settlement there, that a large area of territory has, from one cause or another, got into the hands of speculators, and is not subject to conditions of settlement, a circumstance which does, at this moment, and is likely also in the future, to diminish and retard the prosperity of that Province. Our short experience with reference to these consequences in the North-West does not sanction the policy which is now being adopted. There was last Session, a resolution passed to modify the land resolutions, which was avowedly a proposal to make them harmonize with the existing regulations, and it has been used in my judgment for other and alien purposes. That resolution authorised the Administration to alienate 100,000,000 acres of land at a price of not less than \$2 per acre. The Government deter-