

Mr. CHAPLEAU. I did not say it. I was very careful, and my hon. friend knows why, because the line was not on the same route.

Mr. BLAKE. I know it was not, and I want to know why the hon. gentleman, if he knew the line was not the same, ventured to attack me for having given an estimate that applied to the present line. He knows well that the present line is a cheaper line, that it has greater natural facilities than the line to Edmonton. If he will read the reports of the engineers carefully, he will find that the river crossings and the bridges are infinitely more expensive and the country, is much more broken, on the Edmonton route than on the southern route.

Mr. CHAPLEAU. That is not the point. The hon. gentleman said I said the same line, and I never said so.

Mr. BLAKE. I so understood the hon. gentleman.

Mr. CHAPLEAU. You could not have so understood it.

Mr. BLAKE. The hon. gentleman has no right to say I could not have so understood it. I say I did so understand it, and I will go further: I will say that a belief in the fair play of the hon. gentleman could have led me to no other conclusion than that he meant it, because, if he knew it was a different line, and if he knew that the comparison was useless, why did he state it? What is the use of comparing a line over one region of country with a line over another region of country, and saying that the particulars in regard to one region of country are applicable to a different region of country? What I stated upon that occasion I have more than once repeated in this House. My hon. friend, the member for East York (Mr. Mackenzie), was familiar, from his experience and knowledge as a Minister, with the reports of the different engineers, given from time to time, as to the cost of the railway over the then located road. My hon. friend examined those reports and those estimates, and from them he brought out a statement of what the result of those estimates was. It was not my hon. friend's estimate; it was not my estimate; it was the estimate of the engineers. What my hon. friend, and what I, as the utterer of his statement, though I gave my authority, were responsible for, was taking reasonable care that we had correctly interpreted the estimates of the engineers, because that was what we proposed to lay before Parliament. That statement has never been controverted. No hon. gentleman has ever pointed to the reports of the engineers and shown that their estimates would lead to different conclusions than those which my hon. friend produced and put into my hands, and which, he sitting beside me, I gave upon his authority to that extent, and to that extent only. He made no estimate; I made no estimate; but we took the estimates of the permanent officers of the Government and laid before Parliament the result of that information. But we all know that this question is not to be decided upon the estimates of that day, and, in fact, these were estimates, not of that day, but of many years earlier. We know that railway construction in the year 1881-82 was very much cheaper than it was in the previous years. We know that railway construction in the year 1883 and in the earlier part—perhaps the whole—of 1884, was cheaper all around, steel rails and all, than it has ever been in the history of the country; and are you not to consider these circumstances when you deal with estimates? Are you not to consider the expense, the cost of labor, the cost of materials, the cost of rails, when you consider the question of the estimates which are given for a road? What we had to do with was the cost, at the time and under the circumstances under which construction took place. Now, the hon. gentleman has said that I gave the cost on that occasion as \$120,000,000, and the road will only cost—so he says—\$53,000,000. Now, what did the hon. gentleman mean by that statement? What did he mean

by putting in juxtaposition the two things? I gave the estimates of the engineers for the construction of the road by the Yellow Head Pass in earlier years at \$120,000,000, and no one has ever disputed that that was a correct statement of what the estimates were. The hon. gentleman says I estimated the cost of the road, and staked my reputation upon it, at \$120,000,000, and now it is costing the country only \$53,000,000. I will come to what it is costing the country presently; but, supposing it is costing the country only \$53,000,000, I want to know what was the meaning of his putting those two things in juxtaposition? Did I say it would cost the country \$120,000,000? I only stated what the road would cost, and if a company is to build it, paying a part of the cost, it is very different from the country building it and paying the whole cost; but the hon. gentleman puts the two in juxtaposition. Then, the hon. gentleman refers to the value of the railway lands. I will deal with the question of the value of railway lands a little further on. But, if you will permit me, Mr. Speaker, I will just touch it for a moment now. I was amazed to hear the hon. gentleman make his statement, and I had a mind, if he had not anticipated me, to have delivered, not in his admirable style, but with such humble approach to his histrionic powers as I could make, that lecture upon patriotism which he inflicted upon this side of the House. The hon. gentleman told us we need not be afraid of the cultivable lands in the North-West not being valuable, because there was not so much of them; it was a great mistake; half were rivers, and lakes, and marshes, and, of the other half, as I remember, one-half were ranching lands, and that left only eighty millions of cultivable lands. There is the statement of the hon. gentleman, depreciating this country, belittling our resources, minimising our assets, pulling us down to a poor, beggarly eighty millions of cultivable wheat lands in the North-West, when time and time again we have heard, in the thundering tones of the High Commissioner, the statement of the hundreds of millions of cultivable lands in the North-West. Only eighty millions! Only the small trifle of eighty millions, which will soon be taken up by—I forget how many families he said would take them up—and therefore you may expect your land to increase in value, because the supply will not exceed the demand. Well, that is a great source of congratulation. We will get the more for our land, because it will all be taken up, because it will soon come to an end. I have always believed, that after all said and done, the main dependence for Canada in regard to the lands of the North-West would be to put settlers upon them, who would be prosperous, and whose prosperity and the Customs duties they would pay would be the source of our wealth; that the main and ruling ingredient in our policy in the North-West, the ingredient to which all else should be subordinated, should be to keep the land for the settler and to give every facility for the settlement. But, if our estate is so small a farm, so comparatively small as the hon. gentleman has stated, perhaps the prospects are better of getting more out of the settler and making more money than we could when we supposed we had hundreds of millions of cultivable lands, since it appears that after all we have only this trifle of eighty millions. Then the hon. gentleman says that this side wants no road east of Callander, but only a local road. Where will he find that? He seems to think it is an absolute necessity, first of all, that the railway should be one railway, and secondly, that, if the railway is one railway, it should be made so by virtue of some great expenditure. Now, I have always believed that arrangements could have been made—and perhaps they were, in fact, made, for the mysteries of these transactions have not yet been revealed to us—whereby existing railways, when their availability and usefulness and value would be much enhanced by their being part of a trunk