

become convinced of the uselessness of this expenditure, without the completion of the intervening section; and shortly previous to the General Elections he advertised for contracts for the road over those 185 miles. I am not going to find any fault with that step. I gave him credit for it before, but must withdraw it now, as he stated the other night that he had not at all decided to construct those 185 miles—had not decided whether he would allow the enormous expenditure to lie dead while he paid interest on it, without accomplishing anything by it. I can readily understand why the hon. gentleman did not let the contracts before the election. He had stated, in and out of the House, as a ground of his claim to public confidence, that he was building the Canadian Pacific Railway at a cost of \$24,500 a mile, and he had learned that if the contracts for the intervening 185 miles were let, it would become apparent he had made an enormous miscalculation as to the cost of the road, the contracts for portions of which he had given out without any surveys or information to warrant that action; so the ground for his appeal for the public confidence in this matter would be swept from under his feet. On the Georgian Bay Branch, Canada Central, the Pembina Branch, and the line between Thunder Bay and Red River, we found, when we came into power, that over \$11,000,000 had been spent; and to make that outlay of any practical value would involve the proper completion of those works, and I stated a year ago the expenditure involved could not be estimated at less than \$28,000,000. I am now able to take something like a million off that estimate, as by pursuing a different policy from that of the late Government, in letting the contracts, and in their supervision after being let, we expect to effect a great reduction in the cost undertaken. Before I had been a week in the office which the hon. member for Lambton vacated, I called on Mr. Marcus Smith for a statement of the work done upon those 228 miles, an estimate upon which the contracts had been framed, and a statement of how much had been paid, and how much was required to complete the work. I was astounded to discover that the additional expense had to be counted, I may say, by millions. I

called the attention of Mr. Fleming to the same matter as soon as he returned from England. Mr. Fleming said that, so far as Section 5 was concerned, it could be the difference accounted for as the character of the work had been changed; but with respect to the other portions that there had been no location surveys—no sufficiently accurate estimates made—no knowledge of details acquired when those contracts were let to enable a close estimate to be formed. He had no means of accounting for this great disproportion between what they supposed the cost of the work would be, and what it was now evident it would cost. Mr. Fleming sent for the engineers who had been in charge of the works, both east and west, and they were unable to give a satisfactory account of so much money having been spent, and, in consequence, a careful remeasurement has been made to ascertain where the discrepancy was. With regard to Section 15, Mr. Smith and Mr. Fleming said that we could account for the great disproportion between the cost and the estimate because the plan had been changed. The contract was originally invited for that section of the road, but the amount asked by the tenderers was so enormous that the moment the then First Minister saw them he discovered it would not do to let the contract on those figures, or he would have to add something like 50 per cent. to the cost which he had stated he was building the Pacific Railway at per mile. The contract was not let. It was subsequently let upon a system of trestle-work for embankments; and after the work had proceeded in that way for a length of time, a report was made by the Engineer in charge that the wood in that country was of a very inferior description, and that so soon as the road was completed it would probably be either all burnt up, and if not burned the wood was of such an inferior quality that we should have to commence rebuilding it at an early day, and he therefore advised that embankments should be substituted for trestle-work. That report was referred to Mr. Fleming, who was here on a brief visit from England. He entirely concurred in the proposition that the work should be changed from trestle-work to embankments, and he discussed that matter with the then Minister of Public Works, who also concurred in