

report of the Minister of Public Works upon which this commission was to be founded. We have not had a scintilla of evidence, we have not had anything in the shape of a report as to what the expenditure will be on this undertaking. Fancy undertaking an expenditure involving, as we say, about \$125,000,000, and that figure is within the mark, or two or three times the amount of revenue taken from the people two or three years ago, without having a bit of evidence as to what the cost of the undertaking is to be. That is one reason why the opposition object to this undertaking. We have no evidence as to what it will cost and we have no evidence as to what the liability of the people will be in reference to this undertaking. We have no engineering reports. Why should we enter into a contract without them? The late government with Sir Sandford Fleming engaged upon the surveys, and he had as many parties in the field as he possibly could have at that time, received no information from 1872 to 1878 which would justify them in entering into a contract for the Canadian Pacific Railway except between those points which I have mentioned. We built the road which it was necessary to build in order to connect Lake Superior with Winnipeg by means of the Canadian Pacific Railway. We commenced building the portion of the road in the Rocky mountains which we were bound to do under the agreement with British Columbia. We began these portions of the road. We had not complete evidence after even a six years survey. These hon. gentlemen are entering into a contract for the purpose of building this road without a survey from Winnipeg to Quebec and with only the partial survey of Sir Sandford Fleming which he made when he was building the Intercolonial Railway from Quebec to Moncton. These are the reasons why we object to this proposition. We do not know what the cost of the undertaking is to be and we do not know what the liability of the country is to be in reference to it. Surely the parliament of Canada are delegating powers which it is not in the public interest to grant when they give the government power to enter into a contract when the government cannot tell within \$25,000,000 or \$50,000,000 or \$75,000,000 what the cost of the undertaking will be. Then, the right hon. gentleman talks about the probability of freight being carried from Winnipeg to Quebec. Let me give a few examples to show the absurdity of the statement that freight can be carried profitably for that distance. Freight is carried from Winnipeg to the head of Lake Superior at the present time for ten cents per hundred pounds or about six cents a bushel for every bushel of wheat. It has been carried from the head of Lake Superior to Quebec during the present season by boats for three and one-half cents a bushel. The rate for the 410 miles between Winnipeg and the head of Lake Superior is six cents a bushel.

Hon. Mr. HAGGART.

I venture to say that this rate hardly pays the cost of transport for that 410 miles. Then, it costs nine and a quarter cents to take the wheat from Winnipeg to Quebec. Does the right hon. gentleman pretend to say that with the most favourable gradients that it is possible to get upon that road it will be able to carry wheat to compete from Winnipeg to Quebec with the rate at the present time of nine and a quarter cents per bushel? It would not pay. As I stated before, the rate for 410 miles to the head of Lake Superior is six cents per bushel and for the 1,200 odd miles to Quebec it will cost three times as much or eighteen cents a bushel. It is at present being carried for nine and a quarter cents a bushel. Any railway man, or any man who has studied the transportation question at all will say that no road constructed between Winnipeg and Quebec can successfully compete with the carriage by rail and by water. The right hon. gentleman says that there are five months in the year when it is impossible to carry freight by water or by part water and by part rail and that at these times of the year we will have two roads hauling grain from Winnipeg to Quebec. It will not pay at all. Where the thermometer goes down to 25 or 30 degrees below zero no railway can carry grain at a rate within forty per cent of the rate which would prove profitable during the summer season. The right hon. gentleman spoke about the Canada Atlantic Railway. He said that it was impossible if the Intercolonial Railway were extended to Georgian bay for it to be put in the position of the Canada Atlantic Railway, that is to own steamers, because he said that the American government insisted that wheat from Duluth to the Georgian bay must be carried in American bottoms. I do not think so. I think a British vessel with British register can go to Duluth, Milwaukee or Chicago just the same as an American vessel can.

Mr. HUGHES (Victoria). They do it anyway.

Hon. Mr. HAGGART. They do it anyway and they can do it just the same as an American vessel which carries freight from those ports to the Georgian bay. The right hon. gentleman said that the Intercolonial Railway could not go to American ports and compete for freight to be carried over our own railway lines.

Mr. McCREARY. The vessels have to fly the American flag.

Hon. Mr. HAGGART. They do not, I beg your pardon.

Mr. McCREARY. Yes they do.

Hon. Mr. HAGGART. A British registered ship can load at Milwaukee and carry to any British port. It is not at all necessary that it should carry the American flag. British ships have just as much right to