

heard a speech surrounded with so much pride, so much presumption, so much conceit, and delivered in such a theatrical style. I do not wonder the leader of the Opposition went to sleep. From eight o'clock till the hon. gentleman closed, he never raised his head from his desk. And why, Sir? The hon. gentleman knew it was a disgrace to Parliament, a disgrace to his party, that any member who sits here as a member of Parliament should be found who would make such an outrageous speech as that hon. gentleman made. The hon. gentleman, in a theatrical style, has thrown down a challenge on this side of the House. What does he take us to be? Does he think we have been playing Rip Van Winkle, for the last fifteen years? Does he think we have not been keeping track of him? I can tell him I have been doing so. Does the hon. gentleman think we have forgotten the record? That hon. gentleman challenged hon. members on the Government side of the House to show that the Liberals had ever been extravagant in their estimates of the cost of building the railway, and that they had depreciated the value of the land in the fertile belt. I always regret in this House and in court being compelled to call a witness in whom I have no faith; and it is the last resort of a lawyer to be compelled to depreciate the value of his own witnesses. I am going to call witnesses and see what they have to say about the matter. In the first place, did hon. gentlemen opposite make extravagant estimates as to the cost of building the railway? Let me take the leader of the Liberal Party, in the first instance. Let me call his attention to a time when he met the late distinguished member for Halton (Mr. McDougall), in the county of Welland, in his famous four hours speech in which he dealt with the extravagance of the Government in entering into such an enormous and outrageous scheme as that of building the Pacific Railway. What did the hon. gentleman then say:

"Mr. Blake then proceeded to criticise the Pacific Railway scheme, which was one of the maddest schemes ever thought of. The cost of equipment, construction and stock of our present railways ranged from \$80,000 to \$100,000 per mile. The first section of the railway from Ottawa to Fort Garry, at this rate, would cost \$100,000,000; the next was intersected by great rivers, which would necessitate costly bridging; and the third section, from the base of the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific Coast, was full of mountains, and one of the most difficult in the world for the construction of a railway. He showed the dangers attendant on the carrying out of the Act passed last Session, the probability that the road would cost \$100,000,000, the inadequacy of the present grant, and the dangerous power conceded to the Government."

Then we have a statement by another high authority, the Speaker of the Grit Government, Mr. Anglin, on March 30th, according to the report of the *Globe* newspaper, used the following language:—

"He thought the estimate of \$100,000,000 would be found small enough. At any rate, the Government knew very little about what it would cost. The member for Wentworth has estimated the cost at \$200,000,000. The member for Lennox (Mr. Cartwright), who was well known as a careful calculator, had estimated it at \$240,000,000. Who could say that the Dominion, with its present resources, could pay the present debt, and assume a debt of \$240,000,000. \* \* \* But in addition to that, it would cost at least \$2,500,000 to run the railway after it was built. \* \* \* The cost of carrying a railway through British Columbia would be money thrown away, and a millstone on the neck of the Dominion."

Then we have another witness, the hon. member for East York (Mr. Mackenzie). He is reported in the *Globe* of November, 1873, to have said:

"I may also add, that I hope we shall be able to devise means by which this shall be accomplished at a very much less cost than was contemplated by the company of Sir Hugh Allan. You are, perhaps, not aware that it was contemplated that the expenditure under this scheme would be \$180,000,000. That fact is not generally known."

Then we have the hon. gentleman still further delivering himself of a speech at Glencoe. He said:

"That gentleman (A. P. McDonald) saw no difficulty in undertaking to spend at least \$100,000,000, and he believed very much more, in the construction of the railway. It cost over \$300,000,000 to build the

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American, which was one-third shorter and had less natural difficulties in the way than ours, except in one portion of it. From the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific, through British Columbia, was exceedingly rough, and from the Lake of the Woods and Winnipeg River to the head waters of the Ottawa, the country was undoubtedly the roughest on the continent."

Then we have a statement by the hon. member for South Huron (Sir Richard Cartwright), made in a Budget speech, in which he said:

"I entertain no doubt that if it were incumbent upon us to push the line through within the time specified (if it were possible) the revenue would be enormously increased, and that a moderate estimate would reach \$150,000,000 to \$160,000,000."

I submit to the House that I have proved—I will not say by reputable witnesses—that hon. gentlemen opposite made extravagant estimates of the cost of building the road. What do they now say? They tell us it can be constructed for from \$60,000,000 to \$70,000,000; and they talk about millionaires engaged in the work rolling up money. The next challenge is contained in this question: When did they under-estimate the extent and value of the lands? That is rich. At page 1965 of the *Hansard*, of 1879, we have the following statement by Mr. Rymal:—

"It was evident from the nature of the discussion, that they were not ready to commence the construction of the road. He had always looked upon this scheme as one calculated to outweigh the capacity of Canada. He did not believe there were 100,000,000 acres of fertile land in the North-West, and he feared that the price of \$2 per acre, placed upon the land there, would turn the tide of emigration to the United States."

Take another witness; ex-Speaker Anglin, at page 1590 of *Hansard*, 1880, says:

"The hon. member has clearly proved that the net proceeds of all the lands to be sold in that country would be entirely insufficient to pay the cost of this railway. He showed that if the road is to be such a one as we were led to expect; if, even on the prairie land, we were not to have the construction slighted, and the road made a mere colonization road, it must cost much more than the amount the hon. gentleman stated."

Another witness is the hon. member for North Norfolk (Mr. Charlton). He always inserts a reservation—provided I do not change my mind. That hon. gentleman said, at page 1556:

"From the estimates as to the extent of the arable land in that country, given by the hon. member for Lambton, it would appear that the total amount of arable land south of the north line of the railway belt really does not exceed seventy millions of acres. I have no doubt this is a very liberal estimate."

"It is barely possible that it may reach 95,000,000 acres. I believe this is a liberal estimate."

He goes on:

"Taking all of the land of the North-West, it is barely possible that it may reach 95,000,000 of acres. I believe that is a most liberal estimate."

The hon. member for East York also expressed his opinion on that question. He said:

"Having thus satisfied myself—indeed, I do not require any additional information to satisfy myself—on this point, that it is impossible for the Government to build the road from the produce of the land in the North-West, I have to consider what is the best course to be pursued. I have always held that whatever revenue is realized from the lands will be absorbed, mainly in settlement and Governmental expenses, and that the money must be contributed by the people of Canada for the building of this railway; that, therefore, any extravagant expenditure would simply involve us in an amount of debt such as we cannot venture to carry."

The same hon. gentleman made a speech at Cornwall, when claiming to speak by authority—because he said he had consulted General Palliser—he said: "I give you my word there are 44,417,235 acres." I think I have proved my position, in accepting the challenge of those hon. gentlemen, who assert that they have not under-estimated the extent of the country; for I have called them as witnesses, and out of their own mouths I have convicted them. I have shown that not only when time and occasion suited, but at all times, they have exaggerated the cost of building the railway, that they have in the most unpatriotic manner run