

interest to them, it is a drag and a load upon them, to compel them to accept a road from Winnipeg to Quebec and Quebec to Moncton. I am with the right hon. gentleman in any proposal that will help to develop any part or portion of the country. But we are proceeding upon the wrong lines. As the hon. leader of the opposition has said, what knowledge have we as to the country through which this new road is to run between Winnipeg and Quebec? The government say they have possession of the knowledge. They have mountains of information. Why did not the right hon. gentleman give us some of that information? I can tell him something with reference to that country through which he proposes to build this road. As we all know, the granite ridges to the north of the height of land extend, in the province of Quebec, as far as the shore of James bay. It is a country with small spruce trees growing in muskegs, the muskegs separated from one another by granite ridges running at right angles to the proposed road. For fifty miles south of James bay you have a comparatively fertile country. As you go westward the width of this fertile tract increases, and it reaches in some places two hundred and fifty miles from Hudson's bay. I have been assured in that section it is possible to grow grain nearly as well as in Manitoba and the North-west. But does this railway go near that fertile section? No. It will be built—it must be built—in that section north of the height of land reaching to the plateau which borders Hudson's bay and which, at the verge of the plateau, drops to the extent of three or four hundred feet. Between that drop and the height of land, the land is totally unfit for any purpose known to civilization, a land of low scrubs and unfathomable muskegs crossed by granite ridges. The reports are there in the Department of Railways and Canals. There was a survey made before I was minister, from the Ottawa river north of Lake Temiskamingue north of Lake Nipigon, along the English river to Selkirk. It was supposed that an easier line for the construction of the road around Lake Superior could be found than that which was afterwards adopted, and it was surveyed to a certain extent by the government. I remember reading the reports in the Department of Railways and Canals. I think that one party of surveyors went to the east nearly one hundred miles, and one under Mr. Bailey, if I remember well, went westward towards Winnipeg. And the reports were identical with the statements I have made, and showed that the cost of that railway would be greater than it would be to build through the Rocky Mountains. We all know that the road which passes along the shore of Lake Superior and from Lake Superior to the city of Winnipeg cost more per mile than did that portion of road running through the Rocky Mountains. That section of the road,

Hon. Mr. HAGGART.

1,400 miles in length from Quebec to Winnipeg cannot be graded and constructed for less than \$30,000 per mile, or \$42,000,000. Then add \$13,000,000 for the road from Quebec to Moncton; add between \$5,000,000 and \$6,000,000 for the bridge crossing the St. Lawrence at Quebec. And yet the right hon. gentleman in making the speech introducing the Bill says that all this and also the prairie section of 1,000 miles west of Winnipeg, and the 600 miles through the mountains to Port Simpson will all be built at a cost to the people of this country of the small sum of \$12,000,000. Such an absurd statement! It reminds me of the right hon. gentleman (Right Hon. Sir Wilfrid Laurier) long, long ago, when he was Minister of Inland Revenue and introducing a Bill in this House to amend the Inland Revenue Act. I remember the mess he made of the Bill, and I remember well the remarks of his leader the late Alexander Mackenzie whom I knew very intimately at the time. He said: 'why, the fellow nearly defeated the government; he does not know how many ounces there are in a pound.' When the right hon. gentleman appeals to the heart, I am with him. But when he gets into any mathematical question or anything involving mechanics or anything of the nature of a calculation, he is always astray. Why, look at it. In order to build that road from Winnipeg to Quebec at least a year and a half must be occupied in preliminary surveys. It is impossible that it can be constructed under government superintendence, or under the commissioners proposed in the Bill, in less than seven years. The Grand Trunk proposed to build a road from Winnipeg to the coast in five years from 1904. It is a much easier task to build that section of the road than the other. They cannot build it and have it completed in less than eight years and a half from this date. Look at the interest we will have to pay, the interest on half the cost of the road for eight years and a half. Then there are the seven years in which we give them the use of the road free. Then there are the three years during which they are not obliged to pay any interest, if the earnings of the road do not meet the expenses. Then we have to build the Quebec bridge, or pay for it any way after it is built. You cannot buy that for less than \$5,500,000. With the money we spend on the Moncton road, it will cost the people of this country \$12,000,000.

Now, Sir, if the right hon. gentleman and the House want to know my views on the transportation question, they are quite plain. It is an absurdity to build any such road as that from Quebec to Winnipeg. It will virtually ruin the Intercolonial Railway by duplicating it from Quebec to Moncton. There is no necessity for it at all. Surely the people of this country have carried out in good faith their bargain with the maritime provinces in the expenditures which we have made on the Prince Edward