

be done just as fast as it can be done without further burdening the people of this country, and I believe that the step thus taken is a very long step on the part of the people of this country in redemption of the pledge given to British Columbia. At the period when terms were proposed to British Columbia, which her rulers did not see fit to accept, I had ceased to be a member of the Canadian Government. Those terms, in my opinion, went to the extreme verge, and demonstrated the existence of an earnest desire to do everything which could be—with any show of reason—demanded, and I should very much regret if any attempt were made to entangle the country further, or arrange for the commencement and prosecution of the work more rapidly than is involved by the terms so offered, and the large provision which we made by the increase of taxation last session. We are called upon to commence the work immediately. I do not know that I can point out to you more strikingly the rashness—the insanity of the bargain thrust upon you by your late rulers, than by telling you that the abandoned line of the Fraser—abandoned early because it was thought by the engineers to be so expensive and difficult as to be impracticable—has been returned to, as affording the prospect of a better line than those upon the exploration of which such large sums have been expended. And this is the state of things long after the railway should, under the bargain, have been begun. We are asked to begin at once, though we cannot yet find a route, and while a mistake in the choice may involve an extra expenditure not only of many millions in the first cost, but of annual millions more in the running of the road. (Hear, hear.) Until these surveys are thoroughly completed, and until we have found the least impracticable route through that inhospitable country, that “sea of mountains,” it is folly to talk of commencing the work of construction. Speaking conjecturally, I am of opinion that the British Columbia section of the railway, even if it turns out to be practicable as an engineering work, will involve an enormous