

of the 16th of April, are by him called "assumed distances." It is obvious that there was at that time no precise or accurate information with regard to that line. This becomes essentially important in the great discussion in which we are engaged in consequence of a fresh statement, as I understand it, made by the hon. the Minister of Railways the other evening, in which he shortened the distance between Winnipeg and South-East Bay, by stating that Linkoping station, on the Thunder Bay line, would probably be the junction, a point further removed from the terminus of that line than I had supposed was contemplated. I suppose that idea is based upon further information—I am sure it is, because the hon. Minister, late last Session, said there was every probability of finding a good line right in the present terminus, and it was probable they would run the railway into the present terminus, and not run it to any point along the Thunder Bay line. It is important, in considering this subject, that we should have all the information available with reference to the line on the north shore of Lake Superior, and the probabilities of connection with the Thunder Bay branch. This notice was placed on the paper before the speech of the Minister of Railways in which he adverted to the possibility of a junction at Linkoping station, and therefore, it speaks of the line as one between South-East Bay and Thunder Bay. I have no doubt the hon. gentleman, if he accedes to the motion in other respects, will agree that it should be extended to any point on the line from Thunder Bay to Red River, which would embrace the point to which the hon. the Minister of Railways alluded. I only repeat, Sir, with reference to this motion, the statement I made as to the last, that this information should have been placed on the Table of the House as preliminary to our discussion, and that we should not have been obliged to ask for it; and I hope there will be not merely an agreement to bring it down, but an immediate bringing down of the return.

Motion agreed to.

MANITOBA SOUTH-WESTERN RAILWAY LAND GRANTS.

Mr. BLAKE moved for a copy of the Order in Council granting about 1,328,000 acres of land in the North-West to the Manitoba South-Western Colonization Railway Company; together with the application for such grant and all correspondence and Orders in Council connected therewith, and a statement of the lands selected thereunder; also, for copy of any Order in Council as to the route or terminus of the railway, and of any correspondence in connection therewith. He said: I think I am correct in saying that the provisions of the charter of this Company was one which left some discretion to the Governor General as to its course and terminus; at least, that is the case with regard to some of these railways. Independently of the information which is asked for in the latter portion of the motion, it is important that we should understand upon what grounds, and upon what application, and by whom prompted, and upon what evidence it was that the Administration determined to make the grant to which I have referred. The evidence of their having made such a grant is the prospectus of this Company to which I alluded the other day. It states:

"The total length of the authorized railway, which will be divided into sections, is about 295 miles, of which the first section of 119 miles is now under contract for construction by a responsible contractor at prices favorable to the Company. The works are in progress, and it is confidently anticipated that at least fifty miles will be completed and opened for traffic by the 1st of September, 1881.

"The Governor-General of the Dominion has approved the report of the Privy Council of Canada, recommending the grant to the Company, at the nominal rate of \$1 per acre of an area of land immediately contiguous to the line of route, equal to 3,840 acres per mile constructed, commencing from the south-west boundary of the Province. This grant will thus embrace some 1,328,000 acres, and it is estimated

Mr. BLAKE.

by Canadian experts that a judicious realization of these lands will ultimately produce to the Company the clear sum of £2,000,000 sterling. The Company has refused several offers already made to them for the purchase of large portions at \$5 per acre. By the terms of the trust deed, hereafter referred to, the proceeds of the sale of all these lands are specifically appropriated to the redemption of the bonds thereby secured, thus placing the same in entire independence of the success of the railway.

"In addition to the aid thus liberally, yet wisely, afforded to the Company by the Dominion Government, the Company have received from several of the townships, on the line of route, substantial offers of monetary assistance in the form of municipal bonds, created under the provisions of the Manitoba Provincial Municipalities Act, 1880.

"At the Souris River the line will strike the extensive and important coal fields which have recently been discovered at that spot, and which will unquestionably furnish to the Company the means of overcoming the most serious difficulty which has hitherto been experienced in the working of railways through prairie countries, namely, the scarcity of locomotive fuel, caused by the absence of large timber.

"Not only will the Company derive great advantage from being thus able to obtain cheap fuel for its own consumption, but, inasmuch as the Canadian Pacific Railway, for nearly 800 miles of its entire length, the city of Winnipeg, and the various townships in line of route will be dependent upon these coal mines for their supplies of fuel, it is estimated that the Company's mineral traffic alone would justify the construction of their railway, apart altogether from the passenger and grain traffic which must in any event fall to it.

"The railway throughout will run almost on a dead level, and rock cutting will be avoided, thus enabling it to be constructed and equipped at an average of £3,000 per mile. It is proposed to complete the works sectionally in three years, and the engineer's estimates conclusively show that each section will command a remunerative traffic as soon as opened.

"The total amount of bonds authorized under the Act is £1,180,000 sterling, which can only be issued in proportion to the length of the railway actually constructed or under contract to be constructed, nor until at least \$250,000 (£50,000) of the capital stock shall have been subscribed; which condition has already been fulfilled, the whole having been taken up in Canada. * * *

"The Corporation of the city of Winnipeg, under their charter of incorporation, undertake the construction, at their sole cost, of a railway and ordinary traffic bridge over the Red River within the city limits, the use of which for their traffic is granted to the Railway Company for five years, free of tolls. By virtue of an agreement dated 26th December, 1879, the Corporation agree to transfer this bridge to the Railway Company upon certain conditions, and, further, exempt from all city taxes for a period of fifteen years, the station, workshops, and lands within the city of Winnipeg occupied by the Railway Company."

It thus appears that this railway possesses elements as a commercial enterprise, which should make it remunerative from the start, and, therefore, of course, that it would pay interest on the capital invested. It seems that to assist in the construction of this railway no less than 1,328,000 acres of very fine land—I believe they are largely in the Turtle Mountain District—have been appropriated by the Dominion Government as is said, as the Company rightly puts it at the nominal price of \$1 per acre; that for large tracts of these lands \$5 per acre has already been refused, and that it is expected that they will net to the Company no less than \$10,000,000 altogether. It seems to me that a transaction of that magnitude is one which should have been submitted for the sanction of Parliament; that it should have been accomplished as a matter of policy by Bill or other procedure, and not by the action of the Executive only. It seems to me that the moving purpose in this is obvious—though, of course, the Government did not sell at less than the minimum price at which Parliament allowed them to sell—that the moving purpose was not to provide money by selling lands at \$1 per acre to aid the Canadian Pacific Railway, but to give substantial aid to this other company. That granting of aid may have been perfectly justifiable. I do not say that it was not—I do not say it was, but, it seems to me, we did not authorize the Executive, so far as I know, to grant aids to railways in Manitoba or outside of it; that we did not put power in their hands to do so, and that they should not have so used powers entrusted to them for another purpose, but should have brought down a scheme last Session—or, if they could not do so last Session, then this Session,—and should have submitted it for our consideration and determination before engaging in an operation so important as this. I think, then, we are fairly entitled to the information for which the motion asks.