

we should upon the consideration of the great question, for the discussion of which this House has been summoned. I thank the hon. gentleman for the remarks he has made with respect to every possible contingency which may arise out of the giving of the construction of the Pacific Railway to a private company. While we thank him very much for the suggestions he has made, and for the doubts he has raised, we cannot say we have little doubt whether the measure, when submitted to the House, will meet with the hon. gentleman's objections or his approbation; but that it will be accepted, not only by this House but by the whole country as a satisfactory solution of the great question which overhung the destinies of this country and which, in some degree, from the apprehension that the country was going to be plunged by it into an unlimited expense, has retarded the progress of the country and prevented people from having in its future that confidence which it deserves. I am satisfied that this House and the whole country will receive a measure of relief from the responsibility which has been thrown upon us in respect to the construction of the railway. The hon. gentleman has said—and this is the only other remark I shall make, in connection with the Pacific Railway—that the Government ought to have laid their arrangements before the country before Parliament was called. I do not think he could have meant to go so far as that, because he is too good a Parliamentarian not to know that such a course is contrary to Parliamentary practice and principle. No measures of Parliament are to be submitted, in the manner at which he hints, to the people for their approbation. All measures are to be carefully prepared and considered by the representatives of the people specially elected for the purpose. The members of Parliament are to sit down together to consider the various questions before them, to listen to the views and opinions of their brother representatives, and to bring to bear upon every question, all the knowledge they can acquire regarding it. It is for them, according to the British Constitution, to deal with questions of this kind; and it is contrary to the British Constitution to submit any complicated measure for the discussion of the whole people. The hon. gentleman, who is a good parliamentarian, knows perfectly well, that we would not have been carrying out the principles of the Constitution, had we taken the course which he suggests. It is not a question of whether it would be an affront to Parliament or not, to lay these papers before the public in the first place rather than before Parliament, it is a question of principle involved in the difference between the American and the British systems. It is a matter of principle that, of all such subjects, Parliament should have the first knowledge. Parliament should listen to the proposals, and Parliament should be the tribunal to judge of their wisdom, because its members are appointed by the people to apply their best judgment to the decision of all such questions. There can be no more imperfect tribunal, for the decision of any specific question involving details, than the whole country, no matter how well educated and intelligent the people may be. The hon. gentleman almost went as far as to say that we should have a plebiscite. He says that a question of this kind should have been submitted to the people in the first place. Sir, we know what a plebiscite means. A plebiscite means the machinery by which a tyrant forces a question upon the people. We know what that is in other countries. We are not going to introduce the French system, the Imperial system here. We are going to adhere to the grand old rule of the British Constitution. But, Sir, if it was right, or obligatory, or expedient that we should have submitted the measure to the people, involving, as it does, questions of great import, as to the expenditure of money and the development of the country, why did not the late Ministry, of which the hon. gentleman was for a considerable time a member, and for some time a supporter, though occasionally not a very strong one, submit

to the people their new railway measures in 1874, which effected a complete change with respect to the railway system and especially with reference to the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway? Why was not there then a dissolution and a measure submitted for the decision of the people? The hon. gentlemen came into office in 1873. They had prepared their measures before 1874. According to the doctrine laid down by the present leader of the Opposition, I do not believe the late leader of the Opposition can, as a British parliamentarian, support the doctrine, the late Premier would have had, on account of the largeness of the scheme, to have submitted his proposals to the people before laying them before Parliament. But we had a measure in the ordinary way just as if it was to incorporate an orphan asylum. A bill was introduced, the ordinary parliamentary practice was followed, the bill became law, and enormous expenditures were incurred without a previous announcement of the measure to the people, and without asking them for their decision or their opinion upon it. However, Sir, I shall say no more about the Canadian Pacific Railway except in this relation: the hon. gentleman alluded to a remark of mine when I was caught on the wing at Hochelaga, when coming home here to Ottawa, by a deputation from some of my political friends in Montreal; and when I said that contractors were ready to go on with the road and build it, whether the Parliament met in November or February, I stated what was the fact. The contractors are in earnest, Mr. Speaker. The Syndicate are resolved to build this road and they are able to do so; and they had such confidence, in fact, in the arrangement being a fair one, both for themselves and for Canada, that they were confident it would meet with the sanction of Parliament whenever it was submitted, and, therefore, if Government had told them "go on at once and we are satisfied that Parliament will confirm our action, and sustain you in whatever expenditure you have gone into," they would have been quite ready to have gone on with the undertaking. And, Sir, notwithstanding sneers that have been thrown out on the subject, I believe, the gentlemen who have undertaken this great and responsible work will complete it successfully, that they will run and work it successfully, and that they will open up that country to the utmost extent which such a great enterprise is calculated to cause; and in doing so, they will relieve this country of immediate responsibility of expenditure in building the road in a great degree and from apprehension that a great railway like this would be used as a political engine, and that, run as a Government work, it would not be so satisfactory an institution, or means of opening up that country. While this would be the means of enabling parties who had gone into that work to receive reasonable compensation for their expenditure, it was felt that they would accomplish the work infinitely better than Government could possibly do. The hon. gentleman, in his remarks, then went on to speak about the land policy of the Government. I think, Sir, that this is a question which the hon. gentleman ought to have well considered before he threw broad cast insinuations, not charges, with respect to the land policy. He says he had read that certain people had been driven away from Turtle Mountain, and that notices had been issued, stating that people's claims would not be recognized. What I can tell the hon. gentleman is this: that the law of the land is there, and that the Government thought it well the people should get notice of exactly what the law of the land was. They were told, lest they were mistaken, lest, lying under misapprehension, they should feel themselves wronged hereafter. People got full notice of what the law of the land was; and therefore if they acted in contravention of these laws, they should do it at their own peril. Their attention was merely called to the character of the law and this was the extent of any notice which was given. The hon. gentleman says, in speaking of the influx of immigration into that country, that the statement, or calculations rather, which I