

east and the west and that the government is right in proposing that a line should be built covering these two points. And the answer is: Yes; but I do not want to build the road; there is a road already built and I propose to buy it. Well, I do not care very much whether it is made one way or the other so long as it is done. Then conscience said: The prairie section must be built; the prairies are developing so rapidly and so thoroughly that present railways are inadequate and the people who are going in there must have means of communication. And again comes the admission: Yes, that road must be built—but it must be built north of existing railways. Well, north or south is not a point that has yet been settled. The point settled is that there must be a road, and it is for the engineers to say whether it is to be built north or south. Then conscience went on to say: The mountain section has to be built. Yes, he had no objection to that, but simply said: I would force the Grand Trunk Pacific and the Canadian Northern to unite in building that road and if they would not agree I would build it myself. Well, if the hon. gentleman accepts the mountain section, the prairie section, the sections between Winnipeg and Quebec—whether colonization or otherwise—and the road to Moncton what is it that he does not agree to? He does not agree to it without qualification. But, when he has put in all these qualifications, the admissions are there just the same.

Now, my hon. friend says we have not sufficient information as to the character of that country. It is true, we have not instrumental surveys; but I maintain—and would appeal to hon. gentlemen on the other side and I would appeal to my hon. friend himself—we have all the information as to the character of the country that is at all necessary for our present purpose; all the information, all the knowledge, to justify us in saying whether that road should or should not be built. I stated in my opening speech on this subject that there were mountains of information; I do not retract a word I said—there are mountains of information. The eastern legend tells us that when the mountain would not come to Mahomet, Mahomet went to the mountain. But our Mahomet on the other side would not go to the mountain, and so we had to bring the mountain to them, or, at least as nearly that as possible. Of course we could not bring this mountain of information and lay it on the Table, the Table is not strong enough to bear it. We had to summarize it in the form of a pamphlet printed and placed in the hands of hon. gentlemen opposite. And if they had taken the trouble to peruse it, they would have learned that the character of the country through which this road is to run, which has been so greatly misrepresented, is a country equal to some of the best parts of the older provinces, a country with a great future. But my hon.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER.

friend to-day made an argument which he has repeated several times, and which I have always heard with some surprise from him. He has told us that we have not been consistent because we decided on this railway before we had received the report of the transportation commission which we had appointed?

My hon. friend says that we promised that report before any steps would be taken with regard to this transcontinental railway, but upon this point I take issue with my hon. friend. It is not exact on his part to say that we had promised a report of this transportation commission before we would bring up our policy with regard to a transcontinental railway. This question was before the House twice during the present session. We discussed it on the debate on the address and again on the 26th of May. During the debate on the address, I stated, speaking for the government, that this transportation commission was to be appointed for the purpose of obtaining information with regard to lake transportation and terminals and connection with the lakes, but we did not require further information with regard to a transcontinental railway as we had all the information in regard to that which we required. As my hon. friend has made that the text of his motion to-day, it will be perhaps better that I should once more furnish the evidence upon this point and call the attention of my hon. friend and of the House to the information which we gave him upon this very subject. The speech from the Throne had this paragraph:

The great influx of population into our North-western territories and the very large additional areas of fertile land which are being brought under cultivation combine to further press upon us the need for increased transportation facilities for the forwarding of our grain and other products to the markets of the world, through Canadian channels. The whole question of transportation and terminal facilities continues to occupy much attention, and my government will immediately appoint a commission of experienced men to report on the subject.

My hon. friend thought that there were two different ideas in that paragraph and he asked for an explanation from the government on this point. We told him that he was right; that there were two ideas, one with regard to the transcontinental railway and another with regard to water communication. The hon. gentleman (Mr. Borden, Halifax) very properly raised the question in the debate on the address and I answered as follows:

The question asked by my hon. friend is quite legitimate. There are two ideas involved in this paragraph. In the first place, the rapid filling up of the North-west territories makes it absolutely indispensable that measures be promptly taken for opening up ways of communication into the prairie sections and for the extension of those communications to the sea-board. Numerous projects have been placed before us, but up to the present the govern-