

chose as its leaders on the 23rd of June, 1896, and in whom to-day it has deservedly put its faith.

The most important measure announced in the speech from the Throne is, no doubt, the ratifying of the amendments made to the agreement with the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway Company for the construction of the transcontinental railway.

I wish, in the first place, Mr. Speaker, to express my deep satisfaction at the fact that these amendments do not in any way alter the original policy of the government on that national issue, and do not alter any essential feature of the agreement originally passed with the company. It is specially gratifying to me to note that the government persist, in spite of some interested criticisms, in their intention to build the eastern section of that great line. The building of that section, the main object of which is to give to our western farmers an all-Canadian railway line operated throughout the year and leading to our seaports, and also to develop those immense regions of northern Ontario and northern Quebec, seems to become more and more a plain necessity. I do not ask for better proof than the statements made before the Canadian Club, on the 24th February last, by Sir Sandford Fleming, our ablest expert in Canada. The statements on which that eminent authority based his approval of the building of the whole transcontinental in accordance with the government plan, have been published in the newspapers, and I need not repeat them here. I shall be content with saying that the force of such testimony is unquestionable. On the other hand, Dr. Bell, the noted geologist, has given recently on the agricultural, mineral and forest wealth of that eastern region an opinion which corroborates the testimony of Sir Sandford Fleming.

We have been apprised, Mr. Speaker, of the motives which have suggested that great plan of a new transcontinental railway. To connect the shores of the Atlantic to those of the Pacific by a new and all-Canadian route, to open up for settlement immense regions abounding in mineral, agricultural and forest wealth, to ensure new outlets for the products of the west, where immigration from Europe and the United States is constantly pouring in; lastly, to ensure the commercial independence and liberty of Canada. Such were the main reasons which the Prime Minister pointed out to the House in commendation of the scheme. These reasons, which the whole country approved of a few months ago, are to-day as cogent as ever. Let the transcontinental railway be built at once.

MR. RIVET.

such is the general wish of the people, as expressed by the result of the by-elections and voiced by enlightened business men and our ablest and most reliable experts in Canada.

As regards the amendments made to the agreement, they will, no doubt, have the approval of parliament. Those amendments are of such a kind as to leave no place for conflicting opinions. The terms of the contract were so much in favour of the government, certain conditions were so stringent on the company, that one could foresee how difficult it would be for the company to carry out the whole of its obligations. Unfortunately, those fears materialized. In spite of their good will and good faith, the company were at first unable to make the cash deposit of five million dollars required by law. However, the recent and happy news of the replacing of the interim deposit by a legal one will be gratifying to the country as a whole. The increase in the government guarantee as regards the mountain section, which, as intimated officially a few days ago, forms one of the proposed amendments, will be approved of by all who will take the pains to investigate the immense difficulties which the company may encounter in the building of that part of the road.

The new recourse granted to bondholders is evidence of the wish of the government to protect more effectively those who are willing to invest their funds in the carrying out of this national undertaking. On that point, as on many others, England is letting us have the benefit of her practical ability and of her old-time experience in the management of public affairs. Our leaders could not seek inspiration at a better source or find a nobler example to follow. The additional delay of three years granted to the company for the building of the western section is a change of small importance, which only shows the willingness of the government to grant all the necessary liberty in the carrying through of a work which will last for centuries.

In short, all these amendments are commendable, inasmuch as they are in accord with the spirit of the original agreement, and are further evidence of the government's resolve to carry through an undertaking from which all parties interested are destined to reap great advantage. For those reasons, Sir, it would be desirable that no voice should be heard in this House in opposition to the Act introduced by the government.

My task would be incomplete, Mr. Speaker, if I did not make reference to a question of the greatest interest to the electoral division which has chosen me as its representative. That question, raised by our opponents, old