

great, I may say, of very pressing importance; and those who have done me the honor of listening to what I have said on former occasions with reference to the construction of branch railways in the North-West will readily understand that I approach this subject with very great pleasure, at the idea that there is a prospect of some greater results being accomplished in the immediate future than have been accomplished in the last few years in that direction. It has always been my opinion that the rapid and satisfactory development of the North-West necessitates the construction of branch railways, and that it was unfortunate that a number of events should have taken place, with reference to one railway or another, some of which we may have occasion to allude to in the course of the discussion in the committee, which have prevented the more rapid construction of these lines of railway. I do not at all complain of the hon. gentleman's having entered, in the very brief statement he made, into the details, before we go into the committee. That is highly reasonable, and I have no doubt he will supplement it with still further details when we get into committee and are called upon to deal with each specific grant; and I shall not, just now, trouble the House with a reference to the particular grants, or with more than a very brief allusion to some points on which I think it reasonable that the Government should have given general explanations before asking you to leave the Chair. You remember, Sir, the varying policies of the Administration with reference to the construction of branch railways. When the Canadian Pacific Railway Company was chartered, and a very large grant of lands, besides a large grant of money, was made to that corporation, we were told by the Government that one of the inducements to the liberal treatment we were asked to accord to that company was that it would itself construct, free of charge to the country, a very large number of branch lines throughout the North-West. The First Minister, in the course of those discussions, I recollect very well, used, I think, the term "herringbone" or "gridiron" system of railways, one or other, which the Canadian Pacific Railway Company was to construct, which its interest was to construct, in order to make available the area of its land grant, which was beyond the immediate influence of the main line of that railway; and we were told that we were thus incidentally providing for the construction of branch railways in the North-West as well as for the construction of a main line of railway from Callander to the Pacific Ocean. The original attitude, or the very early attitude, of the Canadian Pacific Railway in this report, so far as their announcements to the country, and the Government are concerned, was somewhat in the same direction; because I think the House will not have forgotten that within a very very few months after their incorporation that company announced its intention to build a very great mileage of branch railways through the North-West, amongst others, a line starting from a point not very far removed from Winnipeg—I forgot the exact point—practically pretty nearly upon the pending line, by the Yellow Head pass of the Canadian Pacific Railway, and going, I think, as far as Edmonton. This line, some 600, or 700, or 800 miles long, was one of the lines which the Canadian Pacific Railway located, in a general sense, and in respect to which it invited the Government to reserve the land along each side of that railway, so that the company might have the advantage of the enhancement of value which was to be produced by its construction. That was not the only railway. A line south, also, extending in a south-westward direction, was early announced by the Canadian Pacific Railway as to be by it constructed. However, we know that, so far as the development, to any large extent, of the North-West by branch railways has been concerned, these promises of the Administration, upon the granting of the contract, and these professions of the company after the granting of the contract, have not

been fulfilled, because, though there are some branch railways, small railways, which have been built by the Canadian Pacific Railway, their aggregate mileage—I do not include, of course, the Algoma branch, which is not pertinent to this discussion at all—amounts to something like 260 or 270 miles, including the Algoma branch, or 170 or 180 miles without it, and several of them are in directions other than those which were at that time contemplated, and which, although useful enterprises, perhaps, are hardly to be considered as enterprises of the particular character which was to be attributed to those to which I have referred. There was an enterprise which the hon. gentleman is proposing to assist further by these resolutions, which was in existence a very considerable time before the Canadian Pacific Railway Company itself was incorporated, the Manitoba and South-Western Colonisation Railway; and after the incorporation of the Canadian Pacific Railway, the latter company seemed to adopt a policy of hostility, so far as I can judge, to the promotion of that enterprise. Both by its attitude towards the corporation of the city of Winnipeg and its attitude with reference to claims as to station grounds, and to claims as to lands reserved, and in various other ways, difficulties were thrown in the way of the Manitoba South-Western Colonisation Railway, which have resulted in very great disappointment and enormous delay in the construction of that work. I believe it has since passed under the practical, in fact, I may say, the formal control of the Canadian Pacific Railway itself, which, in the meantime, engaged in the construction of a road tending somewhat in the same direction, and thus also complicating the work of the Manitoba and South-Western Railway. The result is, we have two roads, not precisely, it is true, on the same line, but passing through the same section of country, and not penetrating that country into which the people had gone many years before, in the full expectation of a railway running through it, and in which great discontent, loss, discomfort and depression have been experienced, from the general result of the policy to which I have referred and the various unfortunate events which have prevented the construction of that road. Hon. gentlemen opposite might, on this occasion, or which they come formally before Parliament, for the first time, to develop a policy of construction by the Government of the day, of branch railways in the North-West, have gone into some review of their previous efforts in this direction and the difficulties which those efforts have met with. I do not say this is the first step hon. gentlemen have taken, apart from that to which I have alluded, with respect to the Canadian Pacific Railway, towards aiding branch railways in the North-West; because, executive, they have taken steps in the way of granting lands, under the general powers conferred upon them in the Dominion Lands Act. They have taken the step of selling lands to railways at what was deemed a rate adequate to enable the companies to realise a large margin, and thus to acquire a bonus, in fact, by virtue of the low rates for the lands. But, as I have said, these were executive acts, carried out by the Administration under the general statutes, and we are now face to face, for the first time, with a policy of aid upon which Parliament is expected to pronounce. Hon. gentlemen opposite might fairly have entered into the review of their prior efforts and the results of those efforts, particularly when we remember the notions which, a little while ago, were rather current on the opposite side of the House, as to the magnificent results of the executive action of the Administration in this regard, as to the grand receipts the country was going to obtain from the sale of the lands to railway companies, at once filling the Treasury with cash and providing the country with railway accommodation by the building of many hundreds of miles of branch railways. I remember the contrast painted in the strongest, the most violent colors, between the proposal which my hon. friend from Bothwell