

perfectly ready to admit, if it gives any satisfaction to the hon. gentleman, that I would have greatly preferred, as my colleagues would have greatly preferred, to have been able to deal with this question in the ordinary way and by the ordinary methods; we would have been very glad indeed to have been able to have a proper survey made of this route, and we would have all been delighted to have asked for tenders at public competition. But, Sir, we did not do so, and I think we will be able to show the House that if we had done so, we would have utterly failed, on technical grounds, in doing our duty to the people of this country, we would have exposed the interests of Canada to very great peril, and that under the circumstances which exist there was no option whatever for us to act otherwise than we did act. I do not in the slightest degree deprecate the hon. gentleman's criticism, or the criticism of any other hon. gentleman as to the line which we saw fit to adopt; but I do desire to place more particularly before our own friends and before the country at large, briefly the reasons which led us to adopt this extraordinary and unusual course. Now, Sir, I think there is no man who has paid the slightest attention to the affairs of the Yukon, but realizes that there is need of very great speed in opening up that country if we are to avert a grave disaster in the event of any large number of people finding their way into that country with the present communications remaining as they are. I think, in the next place, that every man, in spite of the rhetorical declamation of my hon. friend, will admit that in this matter those persons who are going to expend several millions of their own money, not the money of the people of Canada, mind you, for the purpose of carrying out this enterprise, are taking tremendous risks. There is no use in gainsaying the fact that this matter in its present shape is a huge gamble. Our duty, I think, required us not to risk the money of the people of Canada; our duty, I think, required us to take measures to secure that if this did turn out, as we hope it may turn out to be a very rich country indeed, the people of Canada should have their share of the profit while they escaped taking any risks. I should like to know, given those conditions, what plan, scheme or device hon. gentlemen opposite have to propose. What better scheme could they devise? It is idle to say we should have waited till the House met, then have called for tenders, then have entered into the long and tedious negotiations which of necessity would have elapsed before we could have finally adjusted so difficult a matter to our minds. Had we done so, farewell to any hope of obtaining adequate communication with the Yukon this year. This would have been a disaster, in view of the extraordinary influx of people which we have reason to believe will flow into that country. Had

we sat still and failed to rise to the occasion, had we failed to do what I say is clearly and manifestly our duty to do, who would have been so loud in denouncing us as utterly incompetent and unfit to hold our places as the hon. gentleman who has just taken his seat? Sir, suppose, and it is supposable and it is an imaginable condition that after all it is said and done we find there is no such huge amount of gold as we expect in the Klondike and Yukon, and suppose we had undertaken the construction of the railway and spent millions of money in endeavouring to exploit it, and then received nothing, how this Chamber would have rung with denunciations of our folly and incapacity. I now take the other alternative, which we all hope will prove to be a fact. Let us suppose that these regions furnish the richest gold fields known in the world, that they possess huge and rich placers—what then? The people of Canada stand to receive dollar for dollar, pound for pound, in thus opening up the country. I repeat that we stand in that position without risking a cent or a copper. I do not wonder that the hon. gentleman takes exception to such a proceeding; it was not the way he and his colleagues went about such matters.

Mr. LANDERKIN. They gave both land and money.

The MINISTER OF TRADE AND COMMERCE. Just one observation more. I trust, and here I appeal to the better sense and better feeling both of the right hon. gentleman and of his colleagues, that throughout this discussion we shall be wise enough and prudent enough to preserve a courteous and temperate attitude towards the United States and its proceedings. I have always felt that in dealing with our neighbours, the golden rule is: 'suaviter in modo, foriter in re.' We propose to act on that maxim. In a case like this, bluster is worse than useless. There is no doubt these boundary questions are both difficult and tedious. The Government of Canada in dealing with this matter are necessarily acting under a sense of grave responsibility. They are responsible to Canada first, they are responsible to the Empire in the second place, and I hope and trust that while we shall stand firmly together to protect the just rights of Canada, both sides of the House will agree to conduct the discussion so far as may be so far as affects the pretensions or claims of the United States in a calm and dignified manner, and assuredly this is infinitely more likely to bring about a proper solution of these difficult questions than any bombast or any declamation on our part. We will not surrender the rights of Canada; neither, on the other hand, are the Government going to be forced forward into taking injudicious action to please a small section of the population. The hon. gentleman (Mr. Foster) was good