

we not have more particulars of that offer? The hon. the First Minister, at a pic-nic on the 29th of June last, said this:

"He could say this, and the Minister of Finance, who was on the platform, could corroborate his statement, if necessary, that there were capitalists at this moment who, knowing that there was a certain fortune to be made out of the construction of the railway, were asking that the work be handed over to them. They had said, 'We will relieve you of all anxiety and the people of all apprehension of being taxed. We will take the railway in hand, build it, and make fortunes out of it.' The Government, at this moment, had the offers made under consideration, so that there was no danger regarding the road."

That the hon. gentleman stated before he went to England. Now, who were these gentlemen, to whom the hon. gentleman refers as friends of the Government who, in the interests of the Government, or with some patriotic motives, were exerting themselves to meet the views of the Government? He tells us they were capitalists who, wanting to make fortunes out of this enterprise, made these offers. Now, Sir, why should we not see the offers of these gentlemen? Are their names not to be disclosed to us? Are they to make offers to us secretly? The hon. gentleman says they were not made secretly. Why should we not hear and know all about them? Why should this transaction be shrouded in mystery and concealment if it was not done in secret? I am glad to hear that the hon. member for Lambton will divide the House on this motion, and I have only to say that I hope as many gentlemen opposite as possible will record their votes against it.

Mr. LANGEVIN. I am sorry that the hon. gentleman characterises the action of the Government in this case as despotic. There is no despotism: we have brought down every paper in connection with the contract that we could bring down. It frequently happens that the Government says it cannot, in the interest of the country, bring down all the papers in connection with a contract, and Parliament assents to the declaration of the Government. The hon. gentleman says it is not for the Government to be judges in this case, but Parliament. Well, the Government knowing what has occurred in the negotiations, states positively that the papers now before the House are really the only papers that can be put before the House—that it has no better offer than this—that offers, informal offers if you like, were made and withdrawn, and the Government sent three of its members to England to enter into negotiations there. If two or three capitalists come to the Government and say, we are disposed to build this road for so much money and so much land, the Government is not to take that as an offer; but we say, here is a tender that the capitalists have made and are able to carry out, and we have made it a contract. The leader of the Opposition says this is not more than an ordinary case of a public work; when we make a contract, all the tenders are laid before Parliament if they are called for; and he asks, why should it not be the same in this case? If a man tenders, why should he be afraid that his tender should be known? Surely the hon. gentleman does not consider that this great work, perhaps the greatest that has ever come before Parliament, should be put on the level of a tender for a lighthouse or a wharf. It is a work of very great magnitude—of such magnitude that hon. gentlemen opposite, that Parliament, that the Government, thought we should not undertake it ourselves, but place it in the hands of a company composed of capitalists backed by the largest amount of money we could find; and yet the hon. gentleman must know that, with all their money, these gentlemen have hesitated to undertake such a work. He knows full well that capitalists cannot make tenders of that kind without consulting with others, and negotiating with the great moneyed institutions, and that if these negotiations had been with the Government, it is no reason why they should be laid before Parliament. Why? Negotiations proceed in cases of this kind *viva voce*, and are not reduced to writing like other negotiations. I hope the hon. member for Lambton will not succeed in his motion. If he persists in dividing

Mr. BLAKE,

the House I have no doubt that the majority will consider it one that should not be supported.

Mr. MILLS. The hon. gentleman (Mr. Langevin) says this is a very great work, and is not to be put on a level with ordinary contracts given out by the department; that while it is proper that all tenders for ordinary public works should be made to the House, those for a work of infinitely greater magnitude should not be made public; that the House should be kept in ignorance with regard to them. The hon. gentleman seems to think there are different grades of people, that those who are very wealthy and capable of tendering for so important a work as the present possess much finer feelings than the tenderers for ordinary public works, and are to be dealt with in a different way; and that while it is right and proper that tenders made to the Public Works Department for ordinary railway contracts should be brought down, whether the parties failed because their tenders were too high, or because they could not give the necessary security, the other kind should not be submitted to the House. In the case of the most important works, whether the parties fail for one reason or another, the people's representatives in Parliament are to be kept ignorant of the character of the propositions made to the Government. We find those hon. gentlemen who are supposed to be responsible to this House, and whose conduct, if the House properly discharges its duty, must be examined into and judged by it, are to be, themselves, the judges of their own conduct in this particular matter. It is argued that the House has nothing whatever to do but accept the conclusions they have come to with reference to their own transactions. I do not think hon. gentlemen on this side of the House will be disposed to agree to any such proposition, and I do not think that the country, in so far as it has supported hon. gentlemen opposite, will be disposed to support them in upholding the Administration at this particular time in this important public matter. One hon. gentleman on the Treasury benches tells us there is no proposition except this one. Another tells us other propositions have been made by parties who failed because unable to give the necessary security, and that the present tender is the best. This is a very extraordinary statement—that this is better than another proposition not formally made and better than propositions in respect to which the parties were not able to give the necessary security. That this contract concerns the expenditure of public money, and, with regard to the application of the public resources to any public purpose, whether land or money, it is the peculiar function of this House to carefully supervise administrative acts. This Parliament, or House, would be derelict in its duty to the country if it did not insist upon the Administration laying all the correspondence on the Table, and allow members to judge for themselves whether this is the best proposition made. I cannot well conceive how a worse proposition, or a more atrocious proposition, could have been submitted to any Administration. I cannot conceive how gentlemen of very fine feeling could come to the people's representatives, or the Administration, and say: these are the terms upon which we are ready to go on with the construction of such an important public work. I am not disposed to place the most implicit confidence in the statements of hon. gentlemen opposite. I do not know with what care they have made their calculations, or how very different they may have been from those actually laid on the Table; and until I have an opportunity to judge for myself, I can form no decided opinion with regard to the matter.

Mr. KIRKPATRICK. It seems to me that hon. gentlemen opposite have got themselves into a white rage at a very early period of the Session, and upon a very small matter; and it is only to be expected, when we understand, as has been said by the hon. gentleman who has just taken his seat, that the reason why they are pressing this matter