

I suppose the roses are growing there yet. But that is no guarantee that the country is a fit place for settlement. What we have pointed out all along is that we should have a reasonable knowledge of the country before proceeding to build a railway through it. In the first place there should be a reasonable exploration of it, we should know something about its topography, its climate and all these matters. Then if the exploratory reports be satisfactory, we should have regular surveys made, before attempting to go into a large railway enterprise such as this, involving such an enormous expenditure. Should this scheme prove a blunder, no one will live long enough to see its worst results. We do not claim that it is a barren country, unfit for settlement, or that it is all rocks or impracticable in its topography for the building of a road, but what we say is that we know nothing about it. We were promised a lot of information, but we have not had one iota added to the meagre, scanty data given us when this House rose last October. If any has been obtained, it has not been imparted to the House or the country.

Last year we were assured again and again that the bargain was closed, that no suggestion, however good, no amendment, whatever might be its merits, could be received or entertained for one moment, because the agreement had been made with the accredited representatives of the Grand Trunk, and simply required to be ratified by the Company in Great Britain, which ratification was bound to follow. Consequently no amendment could be entertained, no matter how desirable, nothing could be accepted which was not in the bond. We were told emphatically that the agreement was of such a character, made with reputable men, with a strong company, of such repute, that there need not be the least doubt of its being carried on their part, and that they would be held to their bargain. My hon. friend the Minister of Finance told us that, if there should be any attempt or any appearance of any attempt not to keep the bargain, the government would find means of holding the company tight to the agreement. But where is that bargain to-day? We were told that we would be surprised at the very insignificant nature of the changes to be made. We were not told however, that all these changes were to be made in the interests of the Grand Trunk. But when the whole thing is unravelled and laid before us, what do we find? Not a word to our advantage. Not a word which will strengthen the guarantees placed in that agreement to protect the rights and privileges of this country. But we find every word in the interest of the Grand Trunk Railway. It seems as if in some way we cannot fully understand the government were tied to the Grand Trunk Railway. We cannot understand why we should

be so bound to them, but after having been told most emphatically again and again that the bargain was closed and would certainly be ratified by the company in the old country, we are confronted with these changes, which we find are most important. They take from the agreement nearly everything of a guarantee that the rights of Canada would be respected. In my opinion it will be only necessary that this matter should be discussed a little while longer, that it should permeate throughout the country, that the people should be set thinking and talking about it, in order that they may decide on entirely repudiating it and the government which fathered it. Here is an enormous expenditure estimated as low as \$8,000,000, \$9,000,000, \$10,000,000 and \$13,000,000 by the government and their supporters, but estimated at \$139,000,000 by the greatest railway expert in this country. And if you add the changes made by the concessions to the Grand Trunk Railway, the road will certainly cost not less than \$150,000,000. This is the estimate given by the man who is credited by the premier with being the one best fitted to offer an expert judgment on a matter such as this. The government are condemned by their own expert and out of their own mouth. All that we want is that the country shall have an opportunity of giving its judgment on the question. We shall be quite satisfied on this side if this matter is intelligently discussed throughout the whole country. Here is an expenditure of an enormous amount, not less than \$150,000,000; or at any rate obligations incurred to that amount, and which may amount to \$50,000,000 more and very probably will. Out of all that, all that the Grand Trunk Railway, according to the assurance of its president given at the annual meeting of the shareholders, can be liable for is \$14,500,000 or less than 10 per cent of the whole. Would anybody of common sense endorse such a policy? If we are to incur such a large expenditure and such enormous obligations, we might as well go \$14,500,000 more and own the road ourselves. But instead we are practically giving to the Grand Trunk Railway the whole transcontinental railway from ocean to ocean at a cost to them of about one-tenth what it is going to cost the people of Canada.

When this comes fairly before the rate-payers of this country I feel that thoughtful men throughout the length and breadth of the land will repudiate it with their voices and with their votes also. Men are not going to be tied to party to-day, whatever they have been in the past. I believe there is a large measure of independent intelligence in this country than there ever was in our history before. And it is an intelligence that ought to be brought to bear upon a great question like this in order to make sure that, if we are to undertake such an enormous expenditure we shall get some-