

tleman was prepared to rely on the gentlemen sustaining him for their assured support, because he believed he was acting in the interest of the country. Have we not a right with our much more modest proposition—with the burden hon. gentlemen opposite proposed to place on this country, rendered so much lighter by us—to ask for some of that assured support which the member for Lambton so confidently relied upon when standing where I now have the honour to stand? The hon. member for West Durham was not prepared to go so far as this proposition of the late Government. It is but just to him to say that he gave expression to his dissent in perhaps the most marked manner that an independent member could do so, when he refused his vote for the construction of the Esquimault and Nanaimo Railway. But though the faith and honour of the Government and country had been irrevocably pledged to this undertaking, when it was removed out of the way by the other branch of Parliament, the hon. gentleman himself assumed the responsibility of every word and act of that Government, by accepting a place in it. He did more. He not only entered the Cabinet, committed and bound as it was to this policy, beyond recall, and without qualification as to the resources of the country, without raising the question as to whether the Railway should be completed by 1890, from end to end, thus giving practical evidence of his being in accord with its views, but showed he was prepared to take out of the coffers of Canada \$750,000 to compensate British Columbia for having generously relinquished the immediate expenditure of the \$4,000,000 on the Nanaimo and Esquimault Railway. Under those circumstances, the last source from which this Government might have anticipated obstruction was from gentlemen opposite in adopting the present policy. The late Government committed itself to the construction of this great work regardless of the cost. At the end of five years the former Government came back to power. What did we find had been accomplished in the meantime? Hon. gentlemen may be surprised to learn that one of our first duties was to lay the rails upon the Pembina Branch Railway, the contract for which was given out among the first acts of the late Government. They also early

undertook the construction of the Railway from Fort William to Shebandowan, and to develop the policy known as the use of the water stretches. There was, besides, to be a road in the west, from the Lake of the Woods to Winnipeg. To the credit of the hon. member for Lambton he is sometimes open for argument. After two or three years' discussion in this House, we were enabled finally to convince him of the folly of his course—that every dollar he expended on the road to Shebandowan on the east, and on the road beyond the Lake of the Woods on the west, would be wasted, while there was the Duluth Railway within a comparatively short distance to carry all the passengers and traffic westward, and prevent either one or the other ever going by the mixed rail and water-stretches route, the amphibious line, after it was constructed. I will credit him with practically admitting, at least, that he was wrong and we were right.

MR. MACKENZIE: No.

SIR CHARLES TUPPER: I know he is unwilling to admit it, but history will establish the truth of my statements. I cannot absolve the hon. gentleman for the folly of having undertaken the construction of the through line by this route, and letting two contracts, one running to English River on the east, and the other to Rat Portage on the west, without previous surveys, without the slightest knowledge of those sections or what the road would cost, or whether he could connect the two ends at all. It can be proved those ends had never been connected by surveys, and that there was no means of knowing whether, at any reasonable cost, the road could be completed. The result has been an enormous expenditure, largely due to the precipitate commencement of the work, and without sufficient information as to the character of the country. On attaining office we found a large amount had been expended on those two sections of 227 miles; one running east from Red River 114 miles, and the other 113 miles running west from Lake Superior. We found that the money thus expended might as well be thrown into Lake Superior, and was utterly useless for any purpose of value, there being a gap of 185 miles between those sections. The hon. gentleman had