

Sir, it does not require much logic, to show that we should be subject to the monopolies several times over. We have also a very complete general Railway Act upon the Statute-book to provide against these excessive charges. I was rather surprised to hear the hon. leader of the Opposition read the other night the distinct provisions of that Act to protect the prices of tolls and rates to the effect that no toll should be levied or taken until approved of by the Governor in Council, nor until after two weekly publications in the *Canada Gazette* of the by-law establishing and of the Order in Council confirming it. It is true the hon. gentleman gave it as his opinion that that law was nugatory; the expression is his own. I do not know exactly what it means, but my impression as a layman is that if we enact a law in this House, and it is placed on the Statute-book, it is applicable and remains in force. I do not know what would happen if the hon. leader of the Opposition were the administrator of the law. Perhaps he means that he would not put it in force; but we have a very efficient provision for the enforcement of this law. I believe every gentleman in this House recognizes the great energy of my hon. friend the Minister of Railways, and I believe that, under this Act, as well as under the General Act, one part of his duty would be to see that this law is carried out. I believe this corporation would be under his particular care, and, I think, we may be satisfied that, under the present arrangement, it will receive his care, as he will have time to devote to it. He will be relieved of the enormous strain and burden which has been put upon him by this very project, leaving him with scarcely any time to devote to the other great interests of his department. I make this statement in justice to the Minister of Railways, because I believe this House and the country have scarcely appreciated the labor which that hon. gentleman has been compelled to assume in the present condition of this undertaking. Then we have been told, in very expressive language, that the North-West country is handed over as a perpetual monopoly to this great corporation. Well, the hon. leader of the Opposition the other day told us in his loftiest style, that modern commerce knows no such limitations, his idea being that we should have competition for the carrying trade of the North-West. Well, Sir, I believe he was right; I agree with him. Modern commerce has always found the means of overriding anything in the form of a monopoly, and if there were no provision in this Bill to guard the public interests, I think the considerations of mutual interest and independence of the interest of the corporation in having the country settled, and in providing every facility for carrying traffic, would of themselves be a safeguard in this respect. A great point is made in this connection of what the contractors might possibly do in holding lands for advanced price and then charging high rates of freight. Well, I think the statement made the other night effectually meets that objection. We were told that there were instances on the railway that crosses Minnesota of cultivated land, from which a revenue equal to \$4 an acre was derived by the railway company in the way of freight. That is an excessive case, but the best proof that there is much done in that way is the well-known fact that the company has returned purchase money to the extent of \$2.50 per acre to the farmers after the lands were in a state of cultivation. I do not think it would injure the comparison if we took the land as yielding one dollar to the acre to the company to show that it will not be in the interest of a land holder to keep his land tied up for ten or twenty years without cultivation. But this Company will not be without competitors in the North-West. There are already existing charters for important lines of railways which cannot be interfered with by this contract. One of these lines will open a road to the coal fields of the South-West, and I believe the Government which made the arrangement for granting land to this great

corporation retains power to reserve coal fields or any other lands that it may be desirable in the public interest to reserve. But we have something more in the North-West, and the Providence that has given us such a vast extent of valuable land has not left it without a fair supply of water. There is reasonable provision for communication by water in the North-West. I do not mean to say that there are mere water stretches, I do not mean to refer to anything so futile as the policy of the preceding Government, but there are water stretches as wide as the Atlantic, and giving to the North-West communication to the great Hudson's Bay. We have been told lately by Professor Bell, who has been employed by the Government, that there are five or five and a half months of navigation in the Hudson's Bay. We shall probably have the report before long, but if there are five and a half months navigation to Port Nelson, I think we are secure in the competition that will protect us against any monopoly of carrying to or within the North-West. It is well known that there are charters for two companies to extend from Winnipeg to Hudson's Bay, and if gentlemen will look at the map they will discover that the distance from Winnipeg to the settlement of Prince Albert, near the forks of the Saskatchewan, is about the same distance as from Winnipeg to Port Nelson, that is about the same distance from this central point where there is a considerable settlement in the great fertile belt upon the Saskatchewan. If gentlemen will consider that here we have a sea-board brought to this great fertile belt, brought within the distance of Winnipeg, that there are two charters in existence to connect the base of this triangle, that is, from Winnipeg to Port Nelson; that there is water communication for half the distance, requiring the construction of only 250 miles of railway to form an independent connection with Winnipeg; that there is the same facility for independent connection with the fertile lands north of the Saskatchewan, making communication and stretching away into the great Peace River; I think we may relieve our minds of any apprehension of a monopoly, of which we have been warned in such emphatic terms. Some gentleman may doubt whether the sort of competition to which I have referred is a sufficient safeguard. I do not think we need to look beyond the St. Lawrence to establish that fact. We have here one of the best routes of communication with the great Province of Ontario, and drawing supplies of freight from the great North-West as well, and upon terms that enable us, as the trade of the port of Montreal for the last year will fully establish, to compete fully and successfully with the great Atlantic ports of the United States; to compete with them in the face of all their advantage of large lines of vessels controlled by wealthy merchants and enormous capital, that have a great deal to do with the direction of the traffic and its control; that in the face of that competition, the route of the St. Lawrence has been established and improved from year to year. And why? Because this water way is open to all the world, and although it is closed for six months in the year, the facilities are sufficient to enable the carriers and dealers in this great merchandise that travels over the country, to resist monopoly and to establish freedom of action and such guarantees as are necessary. I need not dilate upon this point: every man who has paid the slightest attention to the great waterways of the country, knows it perfectly. If it were not for this it would be impossible that the great lines of steamers, owned, controlled and run by Canadians, should be kept upon this road, in the face of the smaller business of our own country with four millions of people only to compete with forty millions, and with the smaller capital we have to control the direction of trade, and with a smaller importation of goods, as compared with the Atlantic ports of the United States. I think if we consider these points, and if we consider that Port Nelson is 60 or 80 miles nearer to Liverpool than the port of New York, and, that it is as near to the great wheat fields of the Saskatchewan as Winnipeg, I think we