

revenue. You would have to devise other means of taxation than those which already existed and in place of the tax which you repealed. And if that were the case, every administration, as long as it retains its senses, must consider what would be the effect of that alteration of the taxation upon the public opinion of the country, and whether, if such a system of taxation had been proposed as part of the question submitted, the vote in favour of prohibition would even have been as large as it is. Let me suppose, as an abstract proposition, that we had carried through a perfect measure, we had provided another system of taxation, that we had imposed taxes upon tea, coffee and sugar, and a per capita tax or such other tax as might be required to make up the six or seven millions of revenue that would have been displaced, and we had asked for the vote of this country upon a perfected measure of that sort, I think we were bound to consider what would be the probable vote given upon a measure of that sort. I have no hesitation in saying that there would necessarily be a good many people who would vote for an abstract proposition in favour of prohibition that would not vote to pay a few dollars of the taxes that are at present paid by the men who drink. That I have little doubt about, and all these matters are to be taken into consideration. If instead of 278,000 votes there had been over half a million votes in favour of the proposition, it would have indicated a very different state of public opinion from that which exists, and a state of public opinion that might have justified the government in going forward and meeting the wishes of those who desire to see a policy of prohibition adopted.

Hon. Mr. MACDONALD (B.C.)—Take another plebiscite.

Hon. Mr. MILLS—My hon. friend has also spoken about the proposed telegraph line from Skagway into Dawson, and he seems to think in some way or another, that that is contrary to the policy which the government adopted last year, and inconsistent with the contention which my hon. friend beside me and myself on behalf of the government made in this House last session. I do not see that. I am unable to see how my hon. friend arrives at such a conclusion. I was of the opinion that if we

opened a line of railway into that northern country within our own territory with a view of extending it as soon as possible to a seaport within our own limits, it would have been the right policy to adopt. I am still of that opinion. I think it was most unfortunate—my hon. friend I dare say holds a different view—that that policy was frustrated by the vote of this House. There can be no doubt whatever we have turned, by our action, the whole trade both from Canada and the United States to the ports of Dyea and Skagway. We no doubt arrive somewhat nearer to our own territory by going to these ports, but we place the trade at its initial step under the control of the United States, subject to their policy. We are building up considerable towns on United States territory that could not live without our trade if that trade had been diverted into another channel. That is an accomplished fact. A railway is being constructed which will facilitate, no doubt, communication with that country, and what we propose to do in the meantime is to construct a telegraph line, located in that same district, for the purpose of holding more ready communication with that distant portion of our Canadian possessions. We do not suppose for a moment that that is to be our permanent line into that territory, but it is the one that can be most readily constructed, and which will furnish at the earliest day facilities for intercourse, to enable us to communicate with the territory, until we are able to begin at a point connected with the telegraph system in Canada as it now exists and extend a line from that system into the Yukon country. No doubt that must be done, and it must be done with as much expedition as possible, but in the meantime a line can be constructed in the course of a short period of time which will place us within a few days communication with the ports on the western coast. It will take a vessel a few days to pass from Dyea or Skagway to Victoria, and that link, of course, in our telegraph communication will be wanting, but nevertheless it will enable us, in the course of a week, to communicate with Dawson and with the mining district in the Yukon country. At present our communication is very slow and extremely uncertain, and that slowness and uncertainty will be overcome temporarily by the construction of this section of telegraph line. My hon. friend referred