

Well, Sir, all I can say is this: that when you get half a million of people established in the North-West, you will find it extremely difficult, indeed, to maintain the provisions of this Bill. I believe, when there is a quarter of a million there you will be confronted with extremely formidable demands for the repeal of many of its most important provisions. I tell you, Sir, not as a threat, but as a warning, which you will do well to heed, you are providing ready material for a most formidable and dangerous agitation throughout this country. You know that by your blundering you have caused one Red River Rebellion, and do you now wait to provide material for a dozen with such a Bill as this. Now, among the other charges brought against my hon. friend (Mr. Blake) was this: that my hon. friend used different estimates at different times for the prices of lands. Most undoubtedly he did, most undoubtedly it was his duty to do so. There is nothing plainer than that the whole situation has been radically changed within the last six or seven years. I say, Sir, that terms which might have been perfectly justifiable for the construction of the road in 1872, or even as late as 1874, would be monstrously extravagant and entirely without warrant in the condition in which we now find ourselves. I repeat that every single individual element which can affect the condition of this country has been radically changed, and, that, within the last ten years there has been a perfect revolution in the rates of transport over all the railroads in America. I believe I am within the mark in saying that one-half the rate which appeared only a good working rate ten years ago is cheerfully accepted now by the largest railroads in America. Do we not know that there is a great risk that all the enormous sums that we have expended and are expending on our whole system of canals will be rendered worthless by reason of the enormous changes which have taken place in the cost of transportation by railroad? Do not we know that there has been an enormous change in the cost of construction of the most difficult parts of railways, and also in the cost of materials? I say, Sir, everybody knows that the improved system of rock drilling, the steam shovel, and other mechanical appliances, have effected an enormous reduction. Take an instance in which the hon. gentleman (Sir Charles Tupper) has greatly glorified himself, the enormous reduction which has been effected in the cost of steel rails alone, and see how enormously all these new conditions have reduced the cost of any railway that may be built. Sir, I say nothing of the future possibilities of still further reduction in the rates of transport or the cost of construction; but I do say this: that I believe \$60,000,000 would go quite as far to-day in the construction and equipment of a railway of first rate grades as \$100,000,000 would have gone ten years ago, when this project was first under consideration. And not merely has the value of land and the cost of construction changed, but, as everybody knows, there has been an enormous reduction in the price of money. There has been an enormous increase and change in the value of land in the North-West. Sir, the hon. Minister of Railways called attention to the case of the late Mr. Foster. Now, I can give him and the House some little information on that case from my own personal experience. He correctly states that Mr. Foster, five years ago, in vain endeavored to construct some 85 miles of railroad on a certain subsidy, getting, with 25 years' interest, I think, on \$7,500 and 20,000 acres of land per mile. Now, to show the enormous change that took place, I can say this, and I dare say there are some hon. gentlemen here who were acquainted with Mr. Foster, and can say the same, that Mr. Foster in the same year, I think, 1875, in discussing this proposal in my own office, I being then Minister of Finance, offered to me to surrender the whole of that 20,000 acres which he was to get, for a cash payment of \$4,000 per mile, or 20 cents per acre; but we did

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not deem it wise to accept it, nor was Mr. Foster, as was perfectly well known, able with that subsidy to go on and build the railway. Sir, there is no possible ground for comparison between the value of land in 1871, 1872, 1873, 1874, or even 1875, and the value of land to-day, in 1880. These lands which Mr. Foster would have gladly sold at 20 cents per acre, or the privilege of taking other similar lands, would be gladly bought to-day, as the hon. Minister knows right well, for \$2 or \$2.50 per acre, in those portions of the North-West in which Mr. Foster would have been then perfectly welcome, and had an opportunity to select them. And, Sir, these hon. gentlemen ought to delay for another cause. Not only the cost of the lands, but our own power to construct the road is far greater. There is a very good chance of keen competition springing up among rival roads for the trade of the North-West, and, under these circumstances, I cannot conceive why the hon. gentleman should not allow the people to be consulted, that time may be taken to communicate with our constituents, time to learn what they really do think of these proposals which they are only now beginning to understand in their purport and meaning. These are not the only changes by any means. The position of whole peoples on the continent of Europe has most materially changed, to their loss and our advantage, since 1872 or 1874. All over the British Islands there has been a succession of bad seasons, amounting almost to famine in some cases, which has rudely shaken the whole fabric of society from one end to the other, and which, as the hon. gentlemen truly said, was likely if well used, to afford us the means of securing a valuable immigration to our own shores. All over Europe the people are groaning under the enormous expense of their excessive armies, and many men dreading that the war volcanoes, which are slumbering there for a time, may suddenly break out, are looking abroad for another country where they will have reasonable expectation of enjoying the fruits of their industry in peace, without being subject to the excessive exactions which they have to submit to at home. Permit me, Sir, in illustration of what I have previously stated, to illustrate it by a fact or two with reference to the prices of land. I believe that the St. Paul and Manitoba Railway, up to 1880, have disposed of 634,000 acres of their land for the sum of \$4,334,338, very nearly \$7 an acre; and I submit that that is a tolerably good proof that my hon. friend (Mr. Blake) was perfectly justified in saying that you have no right whatever in estimating the amount you are about to give these people for the construction of the railroad, to estimate the land, not at the real value which they bear to-day, but at any imaginary value which either he or you, or anybody else, chose to put on them, four or five years ago, before there was any practical means of communication with the North-West at all. Now, you have got one means of railway communication, thanks to the enterprise of the gentlemen who form the present Syndicate. You have several other roads in the hands of other corporations which would have been completed in a very few years, probably, in a very few months, if you did not deliberately take away from the people of the North-West the only chance they have of obtaining fair, unrestricted competition in the matter of rates to the sea-board. By the measure you are now proposing, you are not merely debarring them from getting these other rival routes into Manitoba, but are practically nullifying the value of the road you have nearly completed. Our intention was that when the Thunder Bay branch was completed, the people should have a direct competing route with the St. Paul and Manitoba road. You are now about to place, to all intents and purposes, that competing road in the hands of its competitor. What chance will you have then to regulate the rates of traffic by any other standard than that which my hon. friend laid down—the extreme amount the traffic will bear. Moreover, our knowledge of