

Mr. BLAKE. When the hon. gentleman brought down, towards the end of last Session, a set of resolutions granting aid to various railways, I stated that it was his duty to have preceded that submission to the House by laying on the Table at much earlier dates papers and materials which might enable us, by a study of them, to form some judgment as to the merits of his proposals. The hon. gentleman said that the custom was, when papers were of public interest, to move for them; but we could not be aware that those papers were wanted, that they existed, that they would be called for with reference to any deliberate judgment of ours to be asked this Session until the hon. gentleman's proposals were on the Table, and, therefore, the answer of the hon. gentleman was wholly unsatisfactory at that time. I reiterated the demand that, as a rule, founded upon the practice of Parliament, and founded also upon common sense, and common reason, proposals of this kind should be preceded by the submission of the papers upon which the judgment of the Government was founded. These resolutions of the hon. gentleman was printed for the first time, as well as I remember, in the Votes and Proceedings of yesterday, and I at once placed upon the notice paper a motion—which I knew could not be reached for the Government have appropriated all the days, but which I placed there to give an indication, at the earliest moment, of a renewal of my plan—a motion for all papers and correspondence with reference to grants to all these railways. The hon. gentleman, to-day, has made his statement, and he has told us, in almost every instance, of the prolonged enquiry, the careful investigation, the many sources of information from which he drew, in coming, himself and his colleagues, to a conclusion as to the merits of each one of these proposals. But the hon. gentleman did not vouchsafe to give to members of Parliament, before they are called on to decide whether the proposals be just or not, that information, those papers, those materials which were the painful results of his long labor in coming to a conclusion on those subjects. The hon. gentleman has made a speech in which he has condescended to give some particulars with respect to some of these railway grants, with that lavish hand with which he is accustomed to fling out such assurances of the toil, the labor, the care, the patience which he took to reach a just conclusion on this matter. But members of Parliament are bound to form conclusions for themselves, and they are entitled to the materials upon which such conclusions can be formed, and, therefore, I repeat that it was the duty of the hon. gentleman, if he contemplated advancing these propositions to Parliament this Session, to have preceded that step by submitting to us the materials on which to form a judgment. We often hear in this House, and elsewhere, of the vast extent of the country whose concerns at this moment engage our attention; and this Session the hon. gentleman has submitted a map, which conveys, in a very striking manner, the extent of the territory of this country, in which the Province in which we are, or at all events the undisputed territory of that Province, appears almost like a speck in the whole area of magnificent distances which comprise the Dominion. Each of us, I suppose, masters to some extent, as it is his duty to master, the geographical configurations of the particular Province from which he hails. Some of us, I daresay, but I cannot speak for more than myself, have but imperfect information, even with respect to our own Province; but although it may be our duty—I quite agree that it is a high duty—to familiarize ourselves as far as may be with the conditions, circumstances, territory, area and resources of the other Provinces, still we are not able, speaking generally, without some particular knowledge of the particular territory, to speak of these proposals in detail, and I am almost ashamed to confess, as I must confess, that I do not possess such knowledge of the peculiar conditions of the country, and the lay of the land,

so to speak, as to be able, at this moment, to form an intelligent judgment of the proposals before the House. This observation I make as emphasizing and making more plain the proposition that if the proposals of the hon. gentleman were not to be taken wholly on trust, and on the assurance as to what conclusion Parliament ought to arrive at, the prior information, to which I have referred, should have been submitted. There is one sense in which I have no right to be surprised at any of the proposals which the hon. gentleman might bring down in this direction. I told him, last year, when he brought his proposals, that it was impossible to deny with respect to some of them, at any rate, under whatever cloud of words they might be submitted, that he was, in point of fact, aiding Provincial and local works, and that the door was but opened, and he would find it difficult, if not impossible, to close it. He has found it, perhaps, difficult, or impossible, to open it as wide as he would have desired; others may have attempted to close it, but found it too late; but it is open wide enough to admit the various subsidies which the hon. gentleman has brought before the House. The hon. gentleman dealt in several statements with respect to the results of some of these subsidies, which were somewhat vague, and, perhaps, judiciously vague. We were treated to glowing statements of the importance of securing the eastern terminus of the Canadian Pacific Railway on Canadian soil. We were told that the country viewed with anxiety and alarm the prospect that Boston or Portland might form the Atlantic terminus, and that it was important that arrangements should be made whereby that terminus should be on our own soil, and the hon. gentleman pointed out how he proposed to accomplish this result. But I counted as well as I could, and perhaps I omitted some, no less than four eastern termini for the Canadian Pacific Railway in the course of the hon. gentleman's speech—Halifax, St. John, St. Andrews, and Louisburg, all of which were mentioned, one after the other, as the eastern terminus. I do not know whether the hon. gentleman supposes that these various ports will divide the trade. I do not know whether he felt that it was important to soothe the susceptibilities of the members for Halifax, whose call for the winter port has been so loud and long, and who supposed they might be left out altogether in the cold. I do not know whether the hon. gentleman thought it necessary to say a word for the city from which the hon. Finance Minister comes, and, therefore, suggested the probability of St. John becoming the terminus, by virtue of the line proposed to be aided. I was delighted that he also thought St. Andrews would be prepared to take one fourth of the Atlantic trade of the Canadian Pacific Railway, which port included among its property owners and occasional residents, the hon. Finance Minister and Minister of Railways, and they naturally take a very deep interest in the prosperity of that interesting portion of Her Majesty's Dominions on this side of the water. I hope the hon. gentleman's predictions in placing St. Andrews first and foremost as the eastern terminus, may be fully realized in spirit as well as in letter. The hon. gentleman had several good words for the Island of Cape Breton, which I was glad to hear. He referred to Sydney and spoke of Louisburg; and there he used language of judicious vagueness. The hon. gentleman pointed out the importance of Sydney and the importance of Louisburg; and that we were now arranging a connection between the Pacific and the most easterly point at which we had a harbor in the Dominion possessions. Well, the hon. gentleman pointed out, also, how the distance could be shortened between Halifax to various points and Montreal; and said: "True, the distance by land is a little longer, and the distance by water is a little shorter, but there enter certain other considerations, we all know the importance which over-rule in matters of this kind; but the distance between Halifax and Montreal is greatly