

cent. had been temporarily paid, but even that trifle, I believe, had been recouped out of the subsidies or other assets of the road, to those who paid it. I believe the hon. member for Gloucester (Mr. Burns) was the contractor, the company, the railway. In truth, he seems to me to have beaten Foo-Bah "out of his boots." He was the shareholder, he was the president, he was the manager, he was the contractor, he was the customer, he was the financier, and he was the supplier of the railway company. He was all these things; and so you may call him everything in connection with this company, however inconsistent, rolled into one. I believe the alleged cost of the construction of this road, as represented in England, was the modest sum of \$23,200 per mile, while, in fact, it would not cost, at fair values, rails included, and with contractor's profit, more than about one-third that sum. I believe that the whole cost of the enterprise, rails included, at fair values, with contractor's profits, was provided out of the Government subsidies and the sales of the bonds in England for £100,000 sterling; and not merely was the whole cost, at fair values, with contractor's profits, so provided, but there was left an excess of a very considerable amount, which went into the pocket of the hon. member for Gloucester (Mr. Burns). So that he received eleven-twelfths of the stock, and he made a considerable fortune out of his construction contract. It is quite possible to project a railway which will result as disastrously as this railway has resulted, and yet to make a fortune out of the undertaking. The railway may be useless, but the contractor may become a proprietor and a man of fortune. I believe the hon. member paid a very large proportion, probably about three-fourths, of the wages and local supplies in truck out of his store; and that he issued a sort of ticket, which passed as a local currency in the country to some extent, and by this means of paying in truck he made a very considerable addition to his profits. In fact he could give a wrinkle to his colleague the Finance Minister, who was troubled a good deal in getting the Banking Bill through the House, which has now fortunately gone to the Upper Chamber, with respect to the redemption and circulation and the keeping up of our currency at par. I am told that the hon. member for Gloucester (Mr. Burns) by means of these little tickets, which came down to very low denominations, managed, for the cost of paper, type and ink, to keep in circulation a considerable sum, and to subsequently redeem it, I will not say at par, but in a manner that left him very handsome profits indeed. I believe there is an explanation of the lengthening of the line, which must have puzzled us all, which puzzled me for a long time, for I could not at all understand how it turned out that this line which was to be only 60 miles from Bathurst to Shippegan could afterwards be represented as being 70 miles in length, and how even when that extreme length had been curtailed there could still remain 67 miles. It is to be accounted for thus. The hon. Minister, as I have told you, stated, during the progress of this affair through Parliament, that it was a great misfortune to have too short a railway; and, carrying that view into practical execution, there are two arrangements for lengthening the mileage. The hon. member for Gloucester (Mr. Burns) has a couple of mills in

that neighborhood. To one of these a branch somewhere about a mile long was built, which forms part of the mileage, and to reach the other mill he deflected the road, increasing its length in that way, five or six miles. Thus it was, and in these two ways, that he found a method by which to swell sixty into sixty-seven or sixty-eight miles in getting from Bathurst to Shippegan. Why, Sir, the great highway between the East and the West, the great link stretching from the ocean port of Shippegan, connecting with the Intercolonial Railway, and thence with the Canadian Pacific Railway, and so on to Vancouver, thus linking England with China and Japan, was lengthened seven or eight miles, in order that the traffic to be derived from the mills of the hon. member for Gloucester (Mr. Burns) might not be lost to the world! Well, seven or eight miles may not be much, but it is between twelve and thirteen per cent. on a mileage of sixty. Now, Sir, I have acquired some verbal, and some written information on these subjects which I wish to communicate to the House. A correspondent says:

"But, according to my mind, the most objectionable point on the line is the curve to Burns' mill. It makes the road longer by at least seven or eight miles, for which, not counting the extra expenses for building the road, the expenses of travelling and freight will be much higher than if it followed a straight line to Caraquez, which could have been very easily done. If, at the mill, there was a kind of town, there might be some reason for a deviation from the straight line, but the only traffic there is that of the mill. As far as I know, the right of way has not been paid yet, which causes more or less murmuring among the people."

"This letter was written some years ago; I hope it has been paid since.—"

"But Mr. Burns promises that it will be all right by-and-by. The people who worked upon the line have been, I think, pretty well paid, although I heard many complaints, that they had to wait long for their pay, and even forced to accept store pay; but I cannot say to what extent these complaints were founded."

Then, Sir, I have another letter from another correspondent who says:

"I do not know how many stockholders there are, but feel safe in saying that there are not more than eight or nine besides Burns. The original stock list contained a large number of names and the amount subscribed was in the vicinity of \$1,000,000. In order to get rid of such an unwieldy number a call of 5 per cent. was made on the subscribed stock. The stockholders were, of course, unable to pay, and many of them transferred their stock to the president, others declined to pay and their names were struck off the list. Some say that the stock was sold and Burns bought it in, but as I never saw the required notice of sale in the *Montreal Gazette*—although it might have been published—I am inclined to the belief that the stock list was reopened. Seven of the subscribers were allowed to hold sufficient stock to enable them to act as directors and went through the form of paying the 5 per cent. call. I heard that two others were retained. Burns then took the balance of the stock allowed by law, \$250,000. I cannot speak with certainty, but it is generally understood and believed that the amount which was paid upon the stock by a few of the stockholders has been since refunded. I was told by a man who had a contract for grading a section of the road that the grading would not exceed \$2,000 per mile. I judge that the cost of grading and bridging from Bathurst to Caraquez did not exceed \$2,500 per mile. From all the information that I have been able to gather I should say that about one-fourth of the whole was paid in cash, and three-fourths in goods from the stores of the president; the sleepers cost 8 cents apiece and were paid for chiefly in goods. Then men employed on the road, placing the sleepers and rails, ballasting, &c., are nearly all paid in goods, as far as I can learn nothing has yet been paid for land taken for the road, nor for damage to crops, except a trifle, nor for lumber cut upon the lands through which the roads run and used in building culverts, &c."