

What was the population of Canada and what was their knowledge of the country they intended to traverse? I believe that except myself there is but one other man in the House of Commons, and not one from Ontario and Quebec, who was in Parliament when those things were discussed. Who opposed the scheme, and why? Sandfield Macdonald, Sir Alexander Galt, Mr. Blake, Mr. Dorion, Mr. W. McDougall, Mr. Holton, Hon. Alexander Mackenzie—(applause)—and others. They amply justified their position.*

IGNORANT OF THE DETAILS.

It was not possible in the ten years called for by the treaty to have built the road. To my certain knowledge it consumed almost ten years before the engineers even found a pass through the mountains of British Columbia. What did those men know at the time of the country? I well remember the debates which took place when the C.P.R. was launched, and I will take it upon myself to say that I believe there was not one man in the Government which brought down that measure who when examined on oath could have said whether one or three chains of mountains had to be surmounted in British Columbia. I do not think a single man among them had set a foot in the northwest except Sir Charles Tupper, who visited Louis Riel under peculiar circumstances—(laughter)—and spent half an hour with him in securing a practical knowledge of the geography of the Northwest. (Renewed laughter.)

A CONTRAST OF COST.

Suppose it did cost us two, three or four times as much as we expect and have reason to believe it will. What would the charge amount to? It would amount to one-sixtieth part of our present gross income. What would it have amounted to in Sir John Macdonald's time? No one dreams that it

*It is not generally known that so grave was the opposition to this measure in 1871, and so dissatisfied were very many of the supporters of the Government with the explanations they received that the decisive vote committing the country to the immediate construction of the road was carried by a bare majority of 10 (75 to 85) in a House in which as a rule a Government could command a majority of 50. It was an open secret at the time that several members of the Cabinet strongly disapproved of the terms of the bargain, and it was notorious and admitted even by their own strongest partisans that, had the vote been taken by ballot, the measure would have been defeated by a large majority.