

money in labor or supplies for those people and were unpaid, and were asked to pay those poor suffering people; and we agreed to a vote, which, with the fine sense of humor in which Parliament sometimes indulges on those occasions, was said to be a lien or charge on the \$224,000. It was only a charge on our subsidy. And it happened after a time, a little later, we were asked to repeat the operation—I think last Session—and we had to make a second advance on our subsidy to pay many debts on construction. Now we learn, if the hon. gentleman in the statement which he has made has based it on an accurate recollection of the facts, that so long ago as when he proposed to Parliament, last Session, the second grant on account of the subsidy of \$224,000, the Government had come to the conclusion that they would have to take up the enterprise and build it themselves. But, although the hon. gentleman tells us that the Government had come to that conclusion, he did not tell us then. He did not state there was any such policy, he did not in the slightest degree indicate to Parliament that that which originally had been a proposed aid of \$224,000, not complicated by any question of running the road afterwards, was to be turned into a grant of one million and a quarter dollars, and we were to have the blessing of running it after it was built. There was not a word, a whisper or a suggestion made to Parliament, when it was asked to make this additional advance on account of the subsidy, that the Government saw that their whole plan failed and they would have to execute it as a Government work. Nay, I am almost inclined to believe that the hon. gentleman was not guilty of that surprise upon Parliament, of that undue reticence towards Parliament of which his statement to-day would lead us to suppose he was guilty, for I claim that it was his duty, if the Government had resolved on a change of policy, to have announced it then. There are circumstances which seem to indicate that that was not really the state of affairs. I will now tell the hon. gentleman why I say so. I remember to have read a speech delivered by the Minister of Finance in Cumberland when he sought to woo the suffrages of that constituency once again, just a few days before nomination day, and in that statement—I will not pledge myself to the exact words, because I have not seen it for some time, since very shortly after it was delivered—the hon. gentleman appealed once again to his former constituents and told them that, at Ottawa, when he was asked to join the Government, he made but one stipulation, which was that an Order in Council should be passed and effect given to it for the building of this work as a Government work.

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. Hear, hear.

Mr. BLAKE. If that was done in January, if the Minister of Finance made it a stipulation in January, and it was the only stipulation and condition of his joining the Government, I want to know how was it all settled the summer before? Why, there was nothing to do. The hon. gentleman boasted to his constituents that he had secured this boon for them. He told them, wooing their sweet voices: "I was asked to leave my fine office, my handsome house, my position of ease, dignity and consideration, and engage once more in the turbulent atmosphere of Canadian politics, and when I was invited to do so, what did I do? Did I make any stipulation for myself, did I say anything about office, about any arrangement of any kind? Yes, one thing only, and that was with respect to your business. I said I wanted this matter settled." But, Mr. Speaker, it was all settled before; there was nothing to settle. The Government had decided on it six months before, and the hon. Finance Minister, if the statement of the Minister of Railways is correct, was claiming credit under false pretences with his constituents for having accomplished a result which had already, in secret, been decided on by the Government six months before. Now the Minister of Railways

Mr. BLAKE.

tells the House that he does not know the length of the line. Not he—he does not trouble himself about twelve or fourteen miles of railway; he said it is sixty or seventy miles long. The hon. member for Pictou (Mr. Tupper) told us at one time it was forty-five miles, and another time seventy.

Mr. TUPPER. I corrected that.

Mr. BLAKE. I know the hon. gentleman corrected it: he said it was to build seventy, say forty-five miles, or something of that kind. However long it may be, the Minister of Railways said there were sixty or seventy miles to build. When asked as to what it was going to cost after all these years, after we had made payments so long, and made agreements with one company and with another company, and given one subsidy, and settled with one set of people and then with another, and after six months repeated the operation, and when the Government, according to one Minister, determined, in January, to build it, and according to another, arrived at that conclusion a year ago, the Minister of Railways made no reply. We are told that the Government have not got the cost, but that it may be one million or so in addition to the subsidy. It is a matter of no consequence—it is well to leave these matters elastic—what does it matter how much it costs. It is under such circumstances as these that we are asked to proceed. It does seem to me, as I stated in the opening, that Parliament in past days has been wholly remiss in its duties to require close investigation and full information from the Executive with respect to its pecuniary proposals, that information which would enable us to judge intelligently whether the undertaking could be carried out approximately, for the money which is proposed, that the scheme is a feasible one. We have it stated here now by the Minister, that the work, which was to cover a distance of between sixty and seventy miles, would cost about \$20,000 a mile. We were told that it was going to be built for \$3,200 a mile. Before it is completed the cost will, no doubt, reach \$25,000 a mile, six times as much as it ought to have cost, and there is to be set off the profits we are to make on the running of it.

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. I never listen to the hon. gentleman who has just taken his seat, without envying his powers of special pleading, and without envying him the ability he possesses to make the worse appear the better reason. If ever there was a case presented to this House that on its own merits should at once commend itself and receive the candid consideration and the approval of this Parliament, it is the question that is presented to-day. Several years ago I proposed to this Parliament to aid in the construction of seventy-five miles, I will call it, of railway—I have not measured it exactly, I have not the measurement under my hand, but as far as my recollection serves me it is about seventy-five miles long. I proposed to Parliament to grant a subsidy to the European and Short Line Railway Company of \$3,200 a mile, for the purpose of constructing a railway from Oxford Junction, on the Intercolonial Railway, to New Glasgow. I can best illustrate to the House the position if I say that that corner of the chamber is New Glasgow, that corner is Oxford Junction, on the Intercolonial Railway, and that corner is Truro. At present the people of the whole of the eastern portion of Nova Scotia, the whole of the great county of Pictou, the county of Guysboro', the county of Antigonish, and the whole of the Island of Cape Breton in addition, have, in order to reach Moncton in New Brunswick, to travel to Truro, and this intersection, taking the hypotenuse of seventy-five miles—that the construction of the road which I proposed to this Parliament to secure—shortens the distance between the whole of that great portion of Nova Scotia and the rest of Canada by no less than from forty to forty-five miles, for every pound of