

what that might be done. They wished to see a great national highway built across this continent so that this country might be in a position to command the traffic of the East as our road would admit of a shorter passage between Europe and Asia, by six days and nine hours, as compared with the American roads. He regretted to see so much politics mixed up with the Canadian Pacific Railway; if there was less there would be fewer obstacles in the way. It was also to be regretted that some hon. gentlemen had seen fit to cast discredit upon British Columbia. If the people of that Province had not been loyal to the old flag they might have had a railway from the United States in return for their allegiance to that country, but they preferred to cast in their lot with the Dominion, and they looked to the Dominion to fulfil its obligations to them. He held that Canada was amply able to build the road, that fifty million acres of land and thirty million dollars would build it; and if there had been less lagging about terms and a sincere determination to prosecute the work with energy it might have been half built by this time, as was evident from the fact that the Americans in the midst of their war built their road over a more difficult territory than ours in three years and a half. If the interior of British Columbia was opened up by railway the people could send their produce to the European markets, as California was doing. He hoped this work would be prosecuted with vigor and that we would soon have a railway across the continent.

Mr. PALMER said this Bill involved questions of very great importance to the Dominion. He took the position that it was unsafe for the Government of this country to make any agreement or adopt any policy which involved the expenditure of large sums of public money without the sanction of Parliament. The hon. member for South Bruce said the reason why the Government should depart from that principle in this case was because they were trammelled by some arrangement made with British Columbia by the former Government, and that to enable Canada to keep faith it was necessary for them to enter into a new agreement. A practical difficulty rose from the fact that under the old agreement the railway had to be built within ten years; whereas under the new engagement entered

into by this Government the time is extended to fifteen years. But that late arrangement had never received the sanction of Parliament. If the Government were not authorized to make such an agreement, then its terms could not be binding until they were sanctioned by Parliament, and the Government could not go forward until they were able to do so in a constitutional manner. He was an advocate of the policy of carrying out in its entirety the arrangements made with British Columbia for the construction of the railway in ten years, because that engagement was entered into at the time of union, and he believed if the Government had faithfully prosecuted work, the people of that Province would not have complained if it had not been completed at the end of the period allotted for its completion. It was very desirable that the utmost precautions should be taken to prevent the railway referred to in the Bill falling into the hands of private members; but under the Government proposal the Americans could obtain control of the road by purchasing a majority of the stock. He was in favor of an all rail route through Canadian territory, apart from an arrangement made with British Columbia because we had not only the shortest route by land from the Atlantic to the Pacific, but also the shortest water route. He was entirely opposed to building local lines, but favored the construction of a line from the easterly point to which private enterprise would carry the railroads to the Pacific, but he was entirely opposed to any proposition made in lieu of the original agreement with British Columbia.

Mr. WALLACE said he was intended to the Government policy by which it was contemplated to build a road from Esquimalt to Nanaimo under the Bill proposed. If the railway were to be built at all, it ought to be constructed and owned by the Government of the country, inasmuch as our commercial highways ought not to be controlled by private individuals. He was opposed, moreover, to locking up in the hands of stockholders large portions of the public lands of the Dominion. It was true that those companies would act as good emigrant agents up to a certain period, but there would come a time when the interests of the company would be antagonistic to the interests of the country, because land would be held for speculative

*Mr. Bailester.*