

to the Government to accord to this particular railway the privilege of acquiring lands at the price which was at that time stipulated as the price for railway grant lands. It will be remembered that in those days of boom and expansion, it was believed that a grant to a railway of railway lands at \$1.06 per acre would be a very good thing for the railway as well as for the country, that it would afford a large margin of profit and of credit to the company, thus strengthening the basis for construction, in addition to the intrinsic merits of the enterprise itself. The Government took the power to give to such railways as they thought fit, this opportunity, by selling them lands at \$1.06 an acre. An application was therefore then made by the political directorate of this railway, which I read in the committee, praying the Government to grant to this particular enterprise the usual grant of 6,400 acres a mile at the usual price of \$1 per acre and 6 cents per acre for surveying, and that application was signed by the hon. member for West Toronto (Mr. Beaty), the hon. member for Bonaventure (Mr. Riopel), the hon. member for Rimouski (Mr. Billy), the hon. member for King's, Nova Scotia (Mr. Woodworth), and Mr. Bunting, a gentleman who, though not at that time a member, had been for some years in Parliament, and who then occupied and occupies still a very important political position in the ranks of hon. gentlemen opposite as the manager or editor, or as having some very intimate relation with their chief organ in the Province of Ontario. It was also mentioned in that paper that Mr. Norquay, the Prime Minister of Manitoba, was another director. Thus, you see, the political directorate was composed largely of members of Parliament, and you will find that it was able to accomplish what had not been accomplished by the business men, who had, up to that time, been engaged in the enterprise. The Government looked favorably on their request, and granted them, by Order in Council, the privilege of purchasing this land. Very soon afterwards there came the rumor that the Government policy was about to be enlarged and that the Government were about to propose to Parliament free grants to railways instead of grants at a price. I need hardly say that that made the position of the corporators who had obtained Orders in Council, and of those who might expect them, infinitely better, provided the Government should decide to submit to the Legislature the names of their enterprises as worthy of this additional favor; because if it was possible to obtain a basis of credit upon the merits of an enterprise, with a grant of 6,400 acres a mile at \$1 per acre, the credit was just \$6,400 a mile better when the \$1 was removed. Under these circumstances, the hon. member for West Toronto (Mr. Beaty), in his capacity as president of the company, pressed the Government, as appears by papers which are upon the Table, pressed the Minister of the Interior and the First Minister, to recognise the rights or the claims of his company—I may call it his company, I think, in a very peculiar and special sense, under the circumstances—to be amongst those which should receive this favor that the Government proposed to ask the Legislature of this country to grant to railways, namely, 6,400 acres a mile free. Well, the Government came down with their policy to this Parliament, they brought down proposals in reference to several railway companies to give them free grants to the public domain, in furtherance of the new policy, but they did not bring down any grant for the North-West Central Company, and we can now partly conjecture the reasons why. But the pressure continued, and was, after the Session, successful. The hon. gentleman obtained an Order in Council for the free grant, subject, of course, to the ratification of Parliament, so that the Legislature was to be invited by the Government to agree to this. In the meantime, as appears very plainly, the hon. gentleman was not, any more than any of his political colleagues, a railway builder; he was not engaged

Mr. MITCHELL.

in that trade or occupation. I believe that the hon. gentleman belongs to the same profession as that to which I belong, and that this is his vocation in life as a business man, but he certainly was not a railway builder, and no more, as far as I know, were his political colleagues. It has been made very plain that their purpose was to make money out of this contract, to sell this charter, and that the efforts which had been made in England, in New York, and elsewhere, had been efforts to sell this charter, at a price and under circumstances which might put large sums of money into the hands of the hon. gentleman, and certain sums of money, in all probability, into the hands of his colleagues. I think it would be very unfair, from any evidence that has appeared before the committee, or any facts that have come to my knowledge, to impute to the hon. gentleman the slightest design of selling his company. I do not think there is any evidence to show that he intended to get a private advantage to himself personally, and fraudulently to represent to his co-directors that he had sold the charter less advantageously than he did, or made an arrangement less advantageous than that which he really did make.

Mr. BEATY. Hear, hear.

Mr. BLAKE. I state that, because I heard the hon. gentleman repudiate in the committee, and repudiate it, I thought, unnecessarily, because I had not heard him accused of it. But since he did repudiate it, I at once say I have heard nothing to justify such a charge, if one were made. The hon. gentleman's position, in fact, was so fortunate, as he has declared in committee, that it was hardly to be expected he would propose a private advantage to himself, if that could be consistent with honor and honesty, which considerations, I have no doubt, although we not altogether agree about what those principles require, would have prevented the hon. gentleman taking such a course. It appears that out of \$750,000 of stock, he is the holder of \$368,000 worth, which, he stated to the committee, on my declaring I thought there was some dispute as to his holding part of it on account of others, he held entirely himself. He therefore was the holder, according to his own account, of more than one-half the whole stock, and, according to the information, the inaccurate information, it seems, I had received, the holder, not of so large, but still of a very enormous proportion of it. You see, therefore, if he could make a very handsome bargain by which the charter could be sold, the larger proportion of the profits would go into his pocket, without the necessity for his resorting to any such unworthy practice between himself and his co-directors, as that which he very properly repudiated, if he supposed any one charged him with it. If, therefore, an ultimate gain of \$750,000 were made out of the transaction, the hon. gentleman would have become hereafter tolerably independent of the electors of West Toronto, with his share, whatever that might be. Now, here is the case which we have to consider: Whether it is to the credit and respectability of the Legislature and of this country, that such relations, when they come up, when they are made apparent between members of Parliament and the Executive, shall be countenanced by the Legislature, shall be approved of, shall be ratified, by our granting that vitality to this charter which but for our act it cannot have. We are called upon to say whether we will give it life, and, if it be unworthy to have that life, then we ought not to give it that life which is asked. I ask you if it is consistent with the independence and respectability of this Legislature that the practice should grow up of these enterprises being taken up by members of Parliament who are not concerned in them in their profession or walk in life at all, taken up as the intermediaries between the Executive of the country and the Parliament of the country in order to procure grants of money or of land, public advantages, the larger share of which will in all probability go into their own