

the Provinces should construct connecting railways to that point.

Hon. LETELLIER DE ST. JUST—Yes; but it was meanwhile understood, and the idea was well circulated, that this road was to be constructed by the Government to connect with the eastern railways, and it was one of the promises made by Sir George Cartier when the Pacific Railway scheme was adopted, and the very line which we have selected was that which was chosen by the Government of that day. I think I may say, before sitting down, that the more appropriate time for the hon. mover to discuss this question would have been when the papers were placed in possession of this House.

Hon. Mr. MILLER said he had not intended to take any part in the debate; but after the speech of the hon. Minister of Agriculture, the style and tenor of which had very much surprised him under the circumstances, he felt called upon to squarely meet the hon. gentleman on the issue he had unnecessarily raised, although it was not pertinent to the present question. When the terms of Union with British Columbia were before Parliament, he (Mr. Miller) had taken an earnest and active part in advocating the measure; and he had never since regretted, nor had he seen cause to regret, the course he then adopted, or to alter the views he then expressed. Since that occasion five years had nearly elapsed, and although the subject of the Pacific Railway had frequently been before the House during that time, he had never troubled hon. gentlemen with a single observation regarding it, with the exception of a few words last session, when the Esquimaux Railway was under discussion. He had felt all along that the men who were responsible for the terms of Union with British Columbia were at a great disadvantage for the moment in every attempt to defend their action, in consequence of the unfortunate revelations in connection with Sir Hugh Allan and what was so well known as the Pacific scandal. The dexterous use made of these revelations had the effect of drawing away the public mind from the real merits or demerits of the Pacific Railway scheme of the late Government, and the verdict of the country in 1874 had been represented as an unequivocal condemnation of that scheme, notwithstanding it had been ratified by the people at the general election of 1872. He had always felt that it would be well to allow the excitement consequent on the stirring events of 1873

to subside; to allow the public mind to calm down and assume a fairer and more judicial temper, before the real friends of this Confederation, and the supporters of the terms of Union with British Columbia, should appeal to public opinion in justification of their conduct. He believed that that time had then arrived, and that the present Government had done much to precipitate it by their shifting and unstatesmanlike course on the subject. When the hon. Minister of Agriculture told the House that the Pacific Railway scheme which he (Mr. Miller) had supported in 1872 was a mad scheme and a bad scheme, he thought that language very unbecoming in a member of the Government, whose policy, if they could be said to have a policy at all, would be, were it not for the disastrous consequences upon the best interests of the country, little better than a subject of ridicule and contempt. Looking back on the scheme which the hon. gentleman had so spoken of, he was prepared to say to-day that it was perhaps the very wisest that could have been devised for the attainment of the great and patriotic end that was in view. At any rate, the country knew what it was asked to undertake—what extent of liability it was required to assume under the scheme of the late Government. The policy of hon. gentlemen on the Treasury benches was one involved in darkness, uncertainty, and gloom, and, he feared, inevitably threatened oppressive taxation, if not national ruin. Moreover, while at one time willing to assume the whole cost of the railway as a public work, at another nobody could tell what they meant to do or leave undone, and even their Orders in Council were framed to suit the purposes of a Delphic oracle, and incomprehensible to their most trusted friends. In other people such conduct would be looked upon as evidence either of incapacity or dishonesty, or a combination of both. But he would take up the policy for building the Pacific Railway, which he (Mr. Miller) had supported, and which his hon. friend had characterized as a mad scheme. The time had come when such language would have to be dropped, and when wild assertions must give place to reason and stubborn facts. Without stopping to enquire who was to blame for its failure—whether its friends or its enemies—he believed the miscarriage of that scheme was one of the greatest calamities that ever befel the Dominion. That scheme was the granting of a subsidy of \$30,000.