

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. That is not the point. The point is this: The hon. gentleman is making a statement that the 125 miles west of Winnipeg is not well graded, and I say it is.

Mr. MILLS. If the hon. gentleman will permit me I will state my case in my own way, and if the hon. gentleman opposite does not agree with my view, if he disputes my facts, he will have an opportunity of correcting me, as I have no doubt he will. The hon. gentleman says, that but ninety-seven miles from Lake Superior westward was open under the Government of Mr. Mackenzie. That now 145 miles more are completed. But was there nothing done upon these 145 miles before the retirement of the late Administration? The hon. gentleman says that there was not a mile of this road open for traffic. There is not a mile now. It cannot be opened until the two sections meet, and a continuous line is made. The hon. gentleman says, that but twenty-two of the eighty-five miles between Emerson and Selkirk are completed. Will he say how much was done after the accession to office of the present Administration? He knows that that road was about completed. He knows the trains were running upon it a few weeks after the defeat of the late Administration, and that nothing was done by the present Government to hasten the completion of that line. The hon. gentleman has referred to the missing link as he calls it. He does not consider it beneath his position as a Minister of the Crown to seek to mislead those about him and behind him who prefer to be misinformed upon this subject. He says that it was not to the public advantage that a contract for the construction of the central portion should be given before the contracts already let for the construction of the ends approached completion. The country was inaccessible except by means of the two extremities, and to let the contract for the construction of this middle section at an early day, was equivalent to increasing the contract price to an enormous extent, without at all hastening the period of completion. Suppose this contract had been let two or three years earlier, what useful public purpose would it have served? How were supplies to be taken in there? Even as it was, there are instances of provisions having to be carried for thirty miles on the backs of men over muskegs, and through swamps and lakes, and what would have been the difficulties at a still greater distance from any proper base of supply? Would not tenders for construction have been necessarily confined to those contractors who controlled the existing means of ingress to the country? I have seen it estimated, that it would have cost from 10 to 15 cents a lb. on every crow-bar,