

to the Intercolonial now and for many years past, the same as it was during all the years when the fiscal policy of hon. gentlemen opposite was in operation. There is no change whatever. The government have the privilege if they so wish to bring goods in free without having them go through the form of passing through the customs house. As a rule the government does not avail itself of that privilege but has in some instances, chiefly with regard to importations of rails, availed itself of it. But it is a pure matter of option and there is not a line in this contract which obliges the government to import a penny's worth free of duty. The government may exercise that right if it so wishes just as it may in relation to the Intercolonial. Inasmuch as there is no change in the position, and as the law is left exactly in the same position under this Bill as it has been for many years, we see no reason for the change which the hon. gentleman proposes.

Mr. ANDREW BRODER (Dundas). I wish to say a few words in reference to what might be called the 'blue-book railway.' So far it is only in the blue-books and the mountains of information that the hon. gentleman has presented to the House and to the country are not so hard to find as the hon. gentleman might suppose. I desire to read from this interesting document a clause in one of the reports of the engineer's or officers who were asked to report to show how they intend to get information. He says here on page 72, speaking of the north country around the region of Hudson bay :

It would be the means of opening up a country hitherto shrouded in a very considerable degree of darkness, and enable us to obtain full and reliable information.

The idea of any person building a railway in order to get information in regard to any locality! That is the proposition, that we will build this railway in order to get information about a certain country through which we intend it to pass. If you look at this map what do you find? You find a red line drawn across the map from Moncton to Port Simpson. I want to call the attention of the right hon. gentleman to this. A great deal has been said about being free from American influence. We are to go away to the north away from the contamination of these Americans whom hon. gentlemen opposite were courting a few years ago. Does the right hon. gentleman not know that when he lands at Port Simpson he is right close to the disputed territory in reference to the Alaska boundary, right within reach of American influence? I do not for a moment pretend to admit or to say, as a public man or a member of this House, that Port Simpson is not entirely within Canadian territory. But when you get to Port Simpson you are very close to the disputed territory about which

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negotiations are at present going on. Thus hon. gentlemen are going right into trouble instead of out of it and it is well to consider all these things when we are talking about a railway of which the government seem to know very very little.

I wish to call the attention of the right hon. gentleman to another point. When freight comes from the west to the great lakes it is virtually common property because there you get competitive rates. But it is proposed to build this road out of reach of that competition so that it will be impossible to obtain cheaper rates owing to any competition that might exist at the great lakes. It is being made impossible for this country to solve this question which every Canadian is anxious to have solved, the obtaining in a reasonable way of cheaper transportation for the products of Canada. Not one of the gentlemen who have advocated this scheme from the right hon. gentleman down to his most humble follower has been able to prove that this proposal will lower the freight rates of this country one cent per hundred pounds, that cannot be done under the proposed scheme and that is a question that should be solved by this House.

While I am on my feet I wish to say further that the Finance Minister takes a peculiar position in disputing the contention of the hon. member for West Toronto (Mr. Osler) in reference to the position of the government in regard to the duty on importations for the betterment of this road. The Minister of Finance says that the government will be in the same position as they are in with reference to the Intercolonial. Is that a fact? Who will have the control of the purchasing of supplies for the betterment of this road? It will not be the government but the contractors, the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway, and they will be able to claim the right to have that advantage, under that contract, of freedom from duty in reference to any importations for the betterment of this road and they will force hon. gentlemen opposite to carry out that contract. The government are not in the position the hon. Minister of Finance says. Why? Because the government are the absolute owners of the Intercolonial, but in the other case, the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway Company have a right to purchase the goods and hon. gentlemen opposite would be forced to carry out this provision.

The MINISTER OF FINANCE. That is not so. The Grand Trunk will not have the power to make these importations. It is the government and the government only which will have that right.

Mr. BRODER. Then I wish to ask this simple question. Why did hon. gentlemen opposite take so much credit for the clause obliging the builders to buy all their materials in Canada? If you are going to do it why do you have to put a clause in