

not yet before us. The hon. member for West Toronto said that he placed himself in that position. I place myself in that position; but it seems impossible to do more than allude to the weighty problems which are involved in the discussion of this policy, which is to be brought before us this Session. There are very important questions upon which we are to be informed, before it would be possible for us to express an intelligent opinion as to the propriety of the course of the Administration. We know not, for example, what the price is, in works or in cash, for I know no difference except a difference of disadvantage between giving a price in works and giving it in cash; there is a difference of disadvantage, because the cost of completing the work may very largely exceed the estimate of the cost, but there can certainly be no very great advantage, unless we shall find some considerable diminution of the cost as compared with the estimate, a thing which very rarely happens. Nor do we know what is to be done by the country, what is to be paid for out of the Treasury, what are to be the payments in cash to the company as they construct the road. We know not the cash price, in works or money; we know not the amount of subsidy in land; we know not how the terms of payment of cash or of work are arranged, or what they are to be in relation to the progress of the works themselves, or in relation to the probable strain these payments will make upon the resources of the country. Those questions are not solved by anything that is before us; we require information upon them before we can intelligently discuss the subject in its clearest and most obvious financial aspect. We know not what are the terms for the selection and the sale of the lands. The arrangement for the alternate blocks is a question of the utmost importance in dealing with this branch of the payment to the company; we know not whether the company is, after being handsomely paid to build the road and run it, to own it too; we know not what the subsequent arrangements are, or whether they are to be subject to the consent of Parliament. We know not, as to the eastern link to which I have referred; whether the policy of the Government last Session is wholly abandoned, whether it is intended to substitute for the announced policy of the Government, the road by the north shore of Lake Superior, whether while we gain that 660 miles of railway, we are to lose the Sault Ste. Marie line. There are here very important questions, questions of momentous importance, with reference to the eastern link and the policy to be adopted in connection therewith. I repeat that though the question of an eastern link has been before the country ever since the arrangement was made with British Columbia, it is a practical question now first presented to our minds for immediate action, and it is the first time that Parliament has been called upon to undertake definitely to make provision for the construction of that eastern link. We know not what the rate of progress on the work is to be, how far it is to be in advance of the supposed wants of settlement; and if, as is rumored, it is to be very far in advance of these wants, how far the increased rapidity of construction is to involve an enhanced cost of construction in the first place, and an enhanced reward for working the line before the population is in the country in the second place. We know not the character of the road, whether it is to be of the character described by Ministers last Session, when they represented that the work which they put under contract on the prairies and in British Columbia, was for an inferior colonization road, or whether all these contracts, as well as the portion to be constructed by the Company, are to be returned to the old notion of a first-class trans-continental road. We know nothing of these points, nor as to the arrangements for equipment; we know nothing of other main points; we know nothing as to whether it is proposed to enter into any obligation, express or implied, or to declare any course of policy which shall be taken as an enactment with reference to other roads through the North-West territory, constructed or to be constructed, and their

Mr. BLAKE.

relations to the road that is to be constructed at this present time—the Canadian Pacific Railway. We know not what provisions are to be made for securing the means of getting into that vast territory. Short lines are of very little value to a country, and it matters little how they are constructed if they are the property of a monopoly; they are merely the means of increasing the profit of that monopoly. That is a subject upon which we ought to reflect. We have the knowledge that has been acquired as to the gigantic powers which have been obtained by railway corporations in the neighboring republic, and the difficulties which have been found in the great West by reason of the existence, in some parts of that country, of practical monopolies. The whole conditions of railway transportation have changed most remarkably in the course of the last ten years, since this scheme was first projected, and there are indications of still further change in the same direction. Great as have been the results in cheapening the price of transportation by rail, I believe that process to have been by no means fully accomplished. You find that the estimated cost—not including profit—for hauling, under the average conditions of freight, is but one-third of what it was ten years ago. The steel rail, the enlarged car, the composite engine, and, in some cases, the multiplication of tracks have produced this result. But there is still an enormous field for the ingenuity of the inventor—in saving in the consumption of fuel, the motive power, and in other ways, so that the hopes of cheap transportation by rail are by no means yet exhausted. But, Sir, while that is so, cheap transportation by rail does not obtain under all circumstances. It does not obtain at all under those circumstances which have given to particular corporations the whole profit which is derivable from these improved facilities, and given the country none of them. Let me enforce these views with an illustration which will, perhaps, bring the subject more clearly before the House, and is not wholly alien to the subject in hand. The December rate per car from Montreal to Winnipeg is \$293, and from Montreal to St. Paul \$120, which is at the rate of 9½ cents per mile by the car. If you assume that the Government Railway is charging the full average rate charged from Montreal to St. Paul, on each 67 miles, you make the charge \$6.37, which leaves for the purposes of the road between St. Paul and Winnipeg—190 miles—\$166.64, or 42½ cents per mile, instead of 9½ cents per mile, the rate over the rest of the journey—a rate more than four times as great as the rate charged in getting to St. Paul. The rate at the general rate would be \$37.95, making a total of \$153.41—a saving of \$129.59, out of \$293, or nearly half the freight over the whole distance from Montreal to Winnipeg. If you apply the monopoly rates all over, you get \$721 as the freight, instead of \$293, and the result of the extra charge on the 390 miles, alone, is this: that it practically, for all purposes of communication involving cost, throws Winnipeg—where? Not seventeen hundred and thirteen or fourteen miles from Montreal, but it throws it to the Rocky Mountains—across the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific shore, without the advantage of the Pacific trade, or adds 1,360 miles, estimating by cost, to the distance from Winnipeg to Montreal. Now, let us consider the rates in the summer time. Last summer the rate from Collingwood to Duluth was \$70 a car, but to Winnipeg \$243, the rate being \$173 from Duluth to Winnipeg, showing that, although some saving is effected by the route by water, yet if you have a link of iron controlled by two corporations, you will not effect much saving in the summer time, after all. I am told that the rate quoted for wheat from Emerson to Chicago by the car was 45 cents a bushel, while I believe it to have been carried by the big car load for 8 cents a bushel from St. Paul to Toronto—a difference that amounted, not to a compensation for carriage, but to a proportionate interest in the profits of every farm in the North-West. Now, Sir, that is the state of things in a great