

not think, judging from the improvements that have been made on the Drummond County Railway, and which were absolutely necessary to enable the Intercolonial Railway to use it even as a feeder, that it can be done for less. We do not suppose for a moment that the Intercolonial Railway with its heavy rails and powerful engines will use a line to Fredericton with fifty-six pound rails. Common sense will force every one to come to that conclusion. Then, why should we buy that road? The only reason that I have heard or seen advanced is that if the government do not purchase it and make it a feeder to the Intercolonial Railway, it will fall into the hands of the Canadian Pacific Railway, and thereby divert certain trade which naturally, it is contended, belongs to the Intercolonial Railway. The traffic on that line, I take it for granted, would go over the Intercolonial Railway, provided that was the cheapest and most profitable way to send it. Why then do we want to buy up this road? Is it to be understood that all the lateral lines in the provinces of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia are to be purchased by the government? Is it to be a new system of government ownership and management of railways in the maritime provinces that is to be adopted? That is a question which we may fairly ask. Then I should like to ask the hon. Secretary of State, who is responsible for the utterances of the premier, how the government reconciles the declaration made by the premier not a month ago to a deputation which waited upon him, asking for assistance to survey the Georgian Bay canal, with this new policy. The premier replied that he was opposed to government ownership of railways, but was in favour of government ownership of waterways. I presume he made that statement with the idea that there should not be another waterway connecting the upper lakes with the St. Lawrence owned by a private corporation. I am not prepared to dispute that policy, but what I want to know is how he and the cabinet reconciled that declaration with the fact that they must have been then in negotiation for the purchase of this Eastern Extension Railway in the province of New Brunswick? If the public is to be constantly told that the men who rule and control the country are not in favour of a

certain policy, while at the same time they are in active negotiation for the purchase of a road, pursuing a course diametrically opposed to their declaration, what confidence can the people have in them? How many iron bridges are there on this road? It crosses, as I understand, a number of streams. Whether they are large rivers or not I am not prepared to say, but, from the information I have, there is not an iron or steel bridge on the road. If that be the case, it will necessitate the reconstruction of every bridge on that line. Even if some of the bridges are of steel, they are only built for the purpose of local trade, with light engines, and small trains. The consequence is that we shall be saddled with this 136 miles of road at a cost of \$800,000, and the cost of maintaining and keeping in repair a bridge in which we have an interest of \$300,000 and arrears of interest for about 15 or 16 years at four per cent, with the prospect of renewing all the rails for the 136 miles, reconstructing all the bridges, and retieing the road—in fact, almost rebuilding the whole line. That is the responsibility the government is assuming, and in the face of the declaration made by the premier, it is for the country to say how far confidence can be placed in declarations made by the government. If the policy is to purchase all the local roads in New Brunswick, the system had better be carried out at once to its full extent. The declaration was made in the House that during last year, or a few years past, this road in the state in which it is, has had a surplus over expenditure of about \$2,000—a very small amount, that would be swallowed up by the construction of one small bridge at any time. To any one who has given the question the slightest attention or consideration, it must be evident that this is an improvident bargain, entailing on the country an expenditure which ought not to be incurred. It is taking over property that the owners have been trying to get rid of for years, because it is an incubus upon their finances, no matter what they might say to the contrary, and foisting upon the government an unprofitable undertaking. If we live a few years after the purchase of this road, if my predictions are not fulfilled in respect to it, I shall be very glad to acknowledge my error.