

way grants. Not at all. It is not necessary, when you are dealing with the lands of one railway company, to apply the same maximum which you would apply with reference to the lands of another. For instance, there is a railway enterprise in which I understand the hon. member for Lisgar (Mr. Ross) takes a great deal of patriotic interest—the Hudson Bay Railway Company. No one can suppose it would be reasonable to apply the same minimum or maximum to that, which would apply to some of the others. But why complicate unfairly and unreasonably a practical suggestion, whatever its difficulties, by adding these absurd notions of difficulty which the hon. gentleman entertains? We are now dealing with one grant; we are now dealing with one locality; we are now dealing with a certain mileage of railway in one part of the North-West Territories; and we are called upon therefore, if we deal with it intelligently, to determine what maximum should be applied to ordinary agricultural lands in the region of that grant. Even there, there may be great variations in the characters of the lands which will be allotted to the company. There, also, you cannot have a perfect plan because your maximum must have regard, I will not say to the choicest morsels, but to the highest class of agricultural land properties in the grant. No doubt consideration has been given by the Administration to those questions. I presume the Minister who is proposing the grant, and the Minister of Railways—for I suppose they are jointly responsible—have considered what are the difficulties and probable cost of construction; what the prospects of traffic are, and the general qualities of the lands along this proposed railway, in respect of which this grant of 6,400 acres per mile is to be given. If

this, as a branch railway, is going to cost \$12,800 a mile, and if we are to suppose those lands, including timber lands, coal lands, town sites and so forth, have only to-day an average cash value of \$2 per acre, we are giving the cost of the road. If the road will cost \$18,000 or \$19,000 a mile equipped, we still are making a free gift of two-thirds of the cost, averaging the lands at \$2 per acre. I do not know, we have not the slightest information as to whether there are any special difficulties of construction, whether there are "any more rivers to cross;" whether the bridging, the grading, the excavation and so on, is expensive. I do not know what the particular character of the land is. Upon that no information is vouchsafed. Sir, the Government policy does not regard the difficulties suggested by the hon. member for Lisgar. The grant is 6,400 acres per mile all round, no matter whether the road be easy or difficult to build; no matter whether it is one immediately promising a large traffic or promising only a large traffic in the future; no matter whether the lands are more or less valuable. Except in the case of the Galt Road, 6,400 acres is the general acreage given per mile. We are entitled to ask the grounds of the Government's conclusion. We are entitled to know whether the Government have considered these things—whether they have considered what the probable cost of the road will be, what will be the probable results to the company of the road, what the probable value of this land grant will be? We are entitled to know whether the Government have been appropriating this land grant of 6,400 acres per mile, with some regard to those considerations, or whether it is all pure guess work, or whether there has not even been a guess.

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