

The subsidy which is proposed to be given is \$25,000,000. But besides that, we have incurred annual obligations forever for the extinction of the Indian title, of at least \$600,000, which sum capitalized will give \$15,000,000. Then if we include the extraordinary expenditures up to date, such as those for the survey of Dominion Lands, the maintenance of the Mounted Police, the payments to Indians, the cost of the Red River expedition, and the subsequent maintenance of a garrison in Manitoba, the construction of the Dawson route, and so on, all incurred expressly and specifically for the benefit of the North-West, taking Mr. Fleming's former estimate, we have expended, or will have engaged to expend, up to the 1st July, 1881, the sum of \$87,683,000 for the acquisition of the North-West, or, taking the lower estimate, \$84,683,000. We paid a million and a half to get rid of the Hudson's Bay Company, and we are now called upon to pay nearly \$100,000,000 to create the Canadian Pacific Railway Syndicate and monopoly. You will observe, Sir, that, in taking this matter into calculation, I have not counted the past interest which has accrued, amounting to a large sum. I have not counted the charges on account of the establishment of government in Manitoba, or the many annual sums we will have to pay before the railway is completed for such purposes as the completion of the surveys, the maintenance of the police, and, perhaps, further contingent charges on account of the Indians. My hon. friend was perfectly correct in saying that all the possible land sales you can make during the next 10, 20 or 30 years will not, in all human probability, clear you of the annual interest you will have to pay on these amounts alone, and that, as on the 1st July, 1881, you may put the cost of the North-West Territory to the people of Canada at probably not one penny less than eighty-three or eighty-four millions of dollars. I say, Sir, that our demand, our reasonable and most moderate demand, that time should be allowed to the people of Canada to consider what all this thing involves, ought, for many reasons, to have been granted to us, and that not merely for political reasons, although even on that ground I have a very strong opinion indeed. It has been my practice, and I believed it to have been my duty, whenever great new questions which had not been before the people at the time of my election or the election of any individual members were brought up, to take all reasonable means to ascertain what the views and feelings of my constituents were, in order that I might fairly represent them on the floor of the House. No man can say that, when, on the miscalled National Policy, the last election carried hon. gentlemen to power, this question which we are now considering was, to any considerable extent, before the minds of even a fraction of the people of Canada; and, Sir, as it is the duty of hon. members to take this course, in my opinion, so it is the duty of Ministers in a still higher degree. In England, where these things are better understood, and where more real deference is paid to the rights of the people in a great many very important respects, it is always the custom for leading members of the Ministry to explain to public meetings, or in such other way as may seem to them most convenient, any important matter affecting their policy, at the first convenient season they can obtain; and I say that these hon. gentlemen ought to have taken an early opportunity of doing this, so that the public might have had a fair chance of considering this question before it was thrown suddenly before them in the way it has been thrown. I am not going to deny that possibly cases may arise where it is vitally necessary, in the interests of the people, that a government should act promptly, and when a government, in the interests of the people, acts promptly and comes before the House, and asks for an Act of indemnity, it is not likely that the representatives of a free people will refuse to grant it. But there are more practical reasons why there

should be delay in this matter. I say that the position and practice of old Canada, in railway matters, is in a very slight degree indeed, a guide to us to the true policy to be adopted in the North-West. When our railway system was introduced in old Canada, our position was totally different from our present position in the North-West. We had to deal with an old settled country, with a forest country, and the consequence was that our development was of necessity vastly slower than it might be expected to be in the treeless prairies of the North-West. Moreover, it was our good fortune to have to deal with a country which was accessible by water at almost every possible point. I cannot call to mind any important part of old Canada which was more than 50 miles distant from water communication. We had thus wonderful natural highways provided for us, and in a situation so widely different as this, it is a matter of extraordinary difficulty for us to realize fairly and properly what is involved in the construction of railways in the North-West. There is but one excuse that I can see to be made for Ministers and that is that, belonging as they do to an older school than a great many other gentlemen in the House, their minds have not been properly opened to the development which has taken place in a great portion of North America. But, nevertheless, although all the conditions were different, every man knows what an enormous influence railways and railway policy have exercised in this country. Now, try to imagine, if you can, what the situation will be in the North-West. Try to imagine the magical effect which the introduction of railways involves in a country like that. Here the introduction of a railway is a matter of convenience and speculation. There the introduction of railways is a matter of life and death—a real vital necessity. What cannot railways do there, where they fix the value of every man's farm and every man's land, where they decide where towns and villages shall be, where railways, or more correctly, the rates levied upon those railways, do practically fix the limit of cultivation, decide the standard of comfort among the people, say where these people shall be, and how many there shall be. Sir, I say as a statement of literal fact, that the railways and those who control them, are the supreme arbiters of the whole material interests of such a country. To such a corporation you purpose to give an absolute monopoly—a monopoly, it may be claimed, for 20 years only, but really and practically, a monopoly in perpetuity. And for what country are you about to give the monopoly? If the estimates of it—and brought down by these hon. gentlemen—are even approximately correct, we are creating a railway monopoly which will completely control a country as large as France, Spain, Italy, Germany, Austria, the British Isles, and half a dozen minor continental kingdoms to boot. I have my doubts, and very serious ones, whether it is wise for the Government of a free country, in this age, to divest itself absolutely of power even here. I know, from the examples I have pointed out, that a very different course to that which we have adopted has prevailed in various continental, and some of our own colonial dependencies; but I say, Sir, that what you propose to do now, would be inexpedient even in this country, and would be most utterly disastrous if applied in the North-West. I say, Sir, there are hon. members here who, if they pleased, could confirm what I say; that were you to propose such a Bill as this in a western state, you and those who introduced it would have literally to flee for their lives, because there the people understand what a tremendous power and grinding monopoly you would be establishing. Sir, the hon. Minister of Public Works disapproved of the language of my hon. friend (Mr. Blake). He accused him of threatening the Government: that if they introduced this measure they might have occasion to rue it in the North-West.