LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Debate Continued on the Bill to Hold the Yukon Trade.

Mr. Semlin's Amendment Rejected on Division of Nineteen to Twelve.

MONDAY'S PROCEEDINGS.

After Mr. Pooley's speech in support of the Railway Aid bill on Monday evening:

Mr. Williams regretted that the bill had come down so late in the session, with a view he claimed of its being rushed through. He quite agreed that the province should have a railway to Teslin Lake, but it could be secured at a less expense than was involved in this bill. The Dominion government had assumed in the Yukon bill which had been before the Federal parliament that the Dominion was responsible for a road to the Yukon. Why, then, should this province voluntarily assume that responsibility? If the Dominion had passed that bill to provide a railway from Lake Teslin to Glenora he did not believe that effort would be made now to obtain a railway to the Coast. If the province was willing to give the company all that the Dominion had proposed to grant them, that surely would be quite enough, without continuing the road through to the seaboard. Why, too, were Mackenzie & Mann to be allowed eleven months longer than the Dominion had allowed them on the railway from Glenora to Teslin Lake? The road could assuredly be built much sooner than in the time provided for by this bill. It would have been better, he held, instead of dividing forces on the two sections, to have consolidate strength and rushed the line through from Glenora to Teslin Lake. If it were true that there were to be no arrangements for utilizing the Stikine for two years and a half, what was the use of taking that time to build to a seaport when it was argued that by that time the trade would have been captured elsewheree? If on the other hand that argument was untrue, he would like to ask wherein the urgency existed for getting a road to the Coast. He submitted that the road from Glenora to the Coast could have been built in a year and a half, but he also took the view that the line from Glenora to Teslin Lake would be amply sufficient for present requirements. He quite believed that the road would be of benefit to the country, but as the Dominion had a material interest in it, they should assume their part in building it, and he believed they would. The government, he maintained, had kept secret the correspondence on the all-Canadian route to the Yukon, and had only presented it to the house after the present debate had begun, instead of introducing it when it was asked for by resolution of the opposition. The correspondence should have been available earlier in order that the members might understand the situation so far as the Dominion government was concerned. Even if Macknezie & Mann did not build the road it would have been quite possible to get other contractors to do so. He was aware that there were many business men in the Coast cities who desired this road and would benefit by it, yet there were many also who did not agree with giving a grant of $4,000 per mile for connection from the Coast to Teslin Lake, while they were willing enough to give the grant for the road from Glenora to Lake Teslin. Many in his own constituency were anxious to have a road, but he was not considering the question from a party or a politician's standpoint—rather the standpoint of a business man. He saw the member for Comox smile. He would like that gentleman to show him why this expenditure of $1,000,000 over what was absolutely necessary, should be made.

Dr. Walkem spoke very strongly in favor of the bill, arguing that the Yukon railway was a necessity to get supplies in, the country not being able to produce the articles required by the miners and prospectors. It was entirely unlike Australia and California, miners in the latter state when they were unable to find minerals being in a position to turn to agricultural or other pursuits. In order to give all the facilities to acquire wealth, they must have ready means of supply. He was not in favor of building a portion of the road and allowing the rest to go. The experience of last winter had shown that the Teslin Lake-Glenora road could only be used if built, in the winter. The past winter had not been an extreme one, but he remembered winters when it was utterly impossible to go up the Stikine river. The object of the government was to secure a route by which supplies could be taken in at all times, and men would be given an entrance to or exit from the country during all seasons of the year. Besides, it was in the interest of the province that the northern country should be developed. Our prosperity depended upon the prosperity of the north land, and we must provide an inlet to the country. Incidentally the member read a long article from the Daily Province, strongly endorsing the bill. This editorial, he said, stated precisely the scope of the bill and the position of the government in it. Mr. Williams wanted the government to wait until they found out what the Dominion was going to do. The Premier had asked for an expression of intention from the Dominion government, and had received the reply from Sir Wilfrid Laurier that he was unable to say what the Dominion would do in face of the action of the Senate. Under these circumstances the British Columbia government was justified in taking the action they had to bring about the speedy construction of the road. Every month passing saw the trade of the northern country getting more firmly fixed in certain channels. Therefore the government had to do what the Senate refused to do in order to keep the trade now going to the American cities in our hands. The opposition had drawn up an amendment simply because they refused to agree with anything the government proposed. Sectionalism he held should be dropped, and the welfare of the country considered. The road proposed would bring prosperity to the cities and to the agricultural districts, and further he believed that Messrs. Mackenzie & Mann were in the best position to build it. It just happened that they had men and supplies at Glenora ready to go on with the work with the necessary speed. He would not favor a short line from Glenora to Teslin Lake, unless work were started on the whole line. Work should be commenced at both ends, for by that means the road could be more speedily completed. The prosperity of the Yukon country could be made permanent, there being great sections of rich mineral area. In closing, the member said he was certain that the Dominion government would come to the assistance of the province and reimburse them for what money might be expended.

Captain Irving, as the representative of Cassiar, would vote for this bill. The road proposed would be of immense benefit to the north country, and it would open up such a field for settlement that in the course of a few years the whole country would smile with an industrious and prosperous population. The best thing about the proposed railway was that it was to extend to a coast port in our own province. This was what was required to build up provincial trade. As a representative of Cassiar it was his duty to see that the interests of British Columbia were taken care of, and he certainly would support the second reading of the measure before the house. (Applause.)

Mr. Kennedy, like the others on his side of the house, claimed to feel at a disadvantage by reason of the government not having had the bill down at an earlier stage of the session. Referring to the correspondence with the Dominion government, he thought there should have been more of it. The president of the council had spoken as though it was "all up" with the province unless this road were built. It was all very well to have the Yukon trade, but the bill proposed to pay too much for it, and it was not fair to subject the whole of the province to increased taxation to benefit the Coast cities. Possibly the farmers on the Fraser river would be benefitted, but the province had got along very well before there was any Yukon trade, and probably would get along after it had become a thing of the past. He did not recognize the extreme importance of obtaining a road from Glenora to the sea, while the Stikine river could very well be used from Glenora down. Referring generally to the railway, he said the Cassiar Central got privileges such as had never before been given to any road since the world began. Dr. Walkem had tried to demonstrate that the opposition were using this as a party question. This he denied, while ready to admit that the party lash must have been used pretty freely on the government side to bring all the members into line.

Major Mutter said this was the second time during the day that he had had the pleasure of congratulating the government on the measure they had brought down. He had listened patiently to the discussion, and gathered that the opposition thought this road was being built only for the Yukon trade. They forgot apparently how Cassiar would benefit far more by this road, and as a British Columbian he rejoiced in this being the case. Railway building had benefitted Kootenay, and he was for aiding other parts of the province as well as Kootenay. He did not view the matter from either a party or a sectional point of view. Complaint had been made of the late presentation of the bill. Such complaint was childish. The matter had been before the Dominion for months and the province had been forced to await the result. The provincial government had stepped into the breach rather than let this important matter fall. It was most important that the railway should be continued through to a port on the coast. This indeed in his mind was one of the most important considerations. The government had shown excellent judgment too in entering into negotiations with Mackenzie & Mann to build the road. With reference to the subsidy, it seemed to be overlooked that while the government were only paying $4,000 per mile on 400 miles, the road would be nearly 600 miles in length. Then the road would be subject to taxation as soon as completed. Again too, the government were to retain 4 per cent. of the gross receipts—this it must be remembered would equal at least 15 per cent. of the net. He thought there never before had been an act presented wherein the interests of the province had been better safeguarded. It would afford him great pleasure to be a member of the house when this bill passed. He could not see that the amendment was either business-like or common sense. The policy of the opposition seemed to be to rest on their oars and sleep, instead of being up and doing for the good of the province. He could not see what authority the opposition had for the statements in all the "whereases" in their amendment. (Laughter.)

Mr. Williams—"You'll see when the next speaker comes."

Major Mutter wanted some explanation. He ridiculed the idea of the government withdrawing the bill and said if the government had never done anything else for the country than bringing down this bill they would have deserved well of the province. The members of the opposition would find this road was asked for by the people of British Columbia, and by the business men of the province. Leave the Yukon mines out of consideration altogether and the railway would be of great benefit to the province. He would with pleasure support the bill.

Mr. Cotton said that any doubts as to Mr. Semlin's amendment must have been dispelled by what the house had heard during the evening. It had been argued by the president of the council that unless the bill passed, the trade of the province was doomed. This was based on a statement that the United States was going to put discouragements on British trade going through Wrangel. He did not think anyone need worry, as arrangements had already been made at Wrangel for facilitating the trade. Last year the government had come to the house with the bill to aid the Cassiar Central, and the Premier had said that 15,000,000 acres of good land would be opened up in the Cassiar district. The house was thus induced to make the grant for the sake of improving the district in question. Now they were asked to vote a second large sum of money for the same purpose, for in the present debate the Yukon trade had almost entirely disappeared, and it was Cassiar that was spoken of instead. He claimed that there must be more correspondence than had been brought down by the premier during the afternoon.

Hon. Mr. Turner observed that there was one other telegram which he could not find, but which contained nothing material.

Mr. Cotton, continuing, held that the government was not dealing fairly with the house. The house wanted to know what had taken place in the course of the negotiations with the Dominion government beginning last fall. He was anxious to see the semi-official correspondence spoken of the other day.

Hon. Col. Baker—"That correspondence was not with the Dominion government."

Mr. Cotton answered that it might have been with some one else, but in any event the house ought to have it. Although this matter had been kept back for weeks, yet he was prepared to stay in the house until some explanation was made. The Yukon had practically disappeared from the discussion, and the house was told now that the railway would open up Cassiar. He was of the opinion that the people of the interior would oppose the bill. In Vancouver a strong effort had been made to get up a meeting in favor of this railway, but only a few people had attended, and Westminster had gone dead against the road. It was perhaps to the advantage of a few people here to get a large sum of money spent on this railway, but the people of the province as a whole took a different view of the matter. From his point of view Mr. Semlin's amendment was right, and the whole matter should be referred to the electors themselves. The opposition were justified in asking for further correspondence before they discussed the bill, and he would therefore vote for the amendment.

Mr. Higgins said the only thing he objected to in the bill was that the house was asked to vote on it without the full correspondence. He favored an all-Canadian route, but would not discuss the bill itself until the amendment was disposed of.

Mr. Hunter regretted to hear from Mr. Higgins that the discussion must be confined within the narrow limits of the amendment. He should have thought it quite competent to discuss the whole bill, and he would therefore like Mr. Speaker's ruling on the subject.

Mr. Speaker ruled that the amendment afforded practically as wide a field of discussion as the bill itself.

Mr. Hunter was rather sorry that the amendment was so worded that he could not support it. He did not see what the opposition had to object to about the correspondence, for there was ample information before the house for a full discussion of the bill. He honestly believed from what he had seen that this was nothing more than an organized attempt to plunder the province out of a million dollars. He believed that party lines were never necessary to carry on the government of the province properly, but there were times when the interests of our common country were at stake when party lines should be disregarded and members depend on the common interests. This being the case he was sorry to have to differ with gentlemen with whom he had been associated for the past eight years, but as he had said he didnot look on the bill as in the provincial interest. No argument could be adduced that would to his mind justify the building of a railway from Glenora to the sea. Although at one time he had not been in favor of the building of a road from Glenora to Teslin Lake, yet when he found that there was a choice between a railway and a wagon road, a railway at $4,000 per mile and a wagon road at $1,500 to $2,000 per mile, he had favored the railway. He had heard many arguments as to the building of a railway to the Yukon, but what had British Columbia to do with the Yukon or Dawson City, and why should the province be asked to build a railway to draw that country to Ottawa? This case was very different from building railways to open up the Kootenay country. That had been an unqualified success as the prosperity that had resulted plainly showed. But this case was quite different. From the Kootenay there was a large revenue from a variety of sources, but where would the province derive a single cent of revenue from the Yukon after the railway was built? The president of the council had said "God helps those who help themselves," but he did not say "God helps those who help Mackenzie & Mann." By building this railway the province was not helping itself. For the three years the road would be building, the province would have to use the Stikine river, and when that time was up there would be very few in the Yukon country to need a railway or anything else. That was the possibility at any rate. Then the road to the coast did not open up the interior, for it did not run inland at all. For a great distance it ran within a few miles of the inlets open to steamers, and practically skirted the coast. He could not see that any great part of the interior of British Columbia would be opened by the railway from the coast. At the present time a person could step aboard a steamer at Victoria or Vancouver and by changing once at Wrangel be landed at Telegraph Creek or Glenora. What more could they want in the way of a railway than one from Glenora to Teslin Lake? He did not think that the prosperity of the province depended upon the Yukon to any great extent. The rush to the Yukon had stopped, never to recommence, and he questioned if there would be found in that country now 25,000 people, or that there would be one-third of that number in three years to come, when the railway was completed. He questioned, too, whether it would be possible to get supplies up the Stikine in winter, and even if it was done it would be impossible during the winter months to forward them to Dawson. The agreement with Mackenzie & Mann did not say what kind of rails were to be used in the railway—whether they were to be new ones or taken from the old iron heap. The Dominion government proposed, he believed, to give some help to Mackenzie & Mann, and these contractors were anxious to squeeze all they could out of the province before it was known what they were getting from the Dominion. He did not know whether it was possible to build a railway along the route employed on the boundary survey; he did not think it possible, as the mountains would be found too high. Before the bill passed the house there should be a hard and fast contract before the house in blank—something like that which Mackenzie & Mann were to have made with the Dominion government. What the consequences would be if the contract were not properly made he did not know but he would not be accountable for the results. He had no doubt, however, that the government had such a contract in preparation to lay before the house. He did not believe the part of the road from Glenora to the coast was in the interest of the province and the people of the province would think the same when the matter was fully explained to them.

Mr. Huff moved the adjournment of the debate and the house adjourned just before eleven.

TUESDAY, May 10.

The debate upon the Public Works bill—more commonly known as the Yukon railway bill—and the amendment offered by the leader of the opposition on the motion for second reading, was continued to-day, occupying both afternoon and evening. Before recess the amendment dropped from consideration, being voted down on a division of 12 to 19, discussion then proceeding on the original motion of the premier. The house opened at the usual hour, with prayer by Rev. W. Leslie Clay.

PRIVILEGE.

Mr. Semlin, on a question of privilege, directed attention to a circular that had been placed on the members' desks, contrary to the house rule in this regard.

NEW BILL.

Hon. Mr. Eberts introduced a bill to amend the Benevolent Societies' act, the bill being read a first time.

QUESTION.

Mr. Kennedy asked the cost of demolishing the old government buildings and levelling and improving the parliament grounds.

Hon. Mr. Martin replied that the answer was being prepared by the finance department, and could not be given until the figures were extracted from the public accounts.

THE YUKON RAILWAY.

Mr. Huff, continuing the debate on the Public Works Loan act, said that he was quite in sympathy with the bill. There had been alternative propositions before the house for decision—whether to build a wagon road or a railway to give connection with Teslin Lake, and the railway had wisely been chosen. He did not support the bill simply because it gave communication to the Yukon country, but because it aimed to open up a large and rich area of the northern portion of the province. One of the best features of the proposed road was that it started from a port on the British Columbia coast, and in this way would be of assistance in developing the business of the Coast. The opening up of this northern country would help the farmers of the province, by giving them a market for their produce. There was no necessity of his reviewing all the arguments in favor of the bill, for the advantages of the measure had been made quite evident by those who had preceded him. The bill was worthy of the progressiveness of the government and it would have his support.

Hon. Mr. Martin, who followed, dealt chiefly with the objections raised during the previous evening by Mr. Hunter. The member for Comox had remarked that he knew from his personal experience about the Stikine river, and the number of months during which that waterway was navigable in each year. But there were others who knew about the Stikine also, and a gentleman who was in a position to know quite as much about the river as Mr. Hunter, had placed the period of navigation of the river at four months in each year. For his part this was proof of the desirability of having a road built through to the sea coast, as the short period of navigation would be inadequate to the traffic which would be offering. He strongly favored the bill before the house, on the ground of the immediate necessity of action if the province were to retain the trade of the Yukon, to which it was entitled. Although coming from an inland district, he believed in dropping all sectional feeling, and he desired just as much to see Victoria or Vancouver or Westminster progress as he did Kamloops. In answer to Mr. Hunter's objection that potatoes could not be raised in the Stikine country he would say "then so much the better for the districts that could produce them in the lower parts of the province, for this meant an unlimited market in the Yukon for the products of the Fraser valley." He had no doubt that the Yukon was one of the richest districts of the North American continent, and this being the case an endeavor should be put forth to make that country tributary to this province. Therefore the measure brought down by the leader of the government did the premier credit for looking so keenly after the interests of British Columbia. Mr. Hunter had wanted to know on the previous evening on what the president of the council and based his statements as to the conditions of the northern country. It had been on his own common sense and the information he had received. What was more, those statements had not been refuted. Gentlemen on the other side of the house were very free with their criticisms of the bill, but they did not say what in their opinion the government should do. He felt assured that the government were right in giving an all-Canadian route to the Yukon, and he would therefore again ask that sectional feeling be abandoned, and that both sides of the house unite to work for the common good of the province. Mr. Hunter had inquired, too, what have we to do with the Yukon? All he could say was that the government would be very lax in its duty to the people if it did not try to get all possible trade for British Columbia. The criticism had been made, too, that the government were really getting nothing in return in the way of revenue on account of the assistance rendered. The gentlemen forgot that as soon as the road was completed it was taxable at the rate of $2,000 per mile, and that the province was to receive 4 per cent. of the gross receipts. Besides, a large population was already going into the country at the northern part of the province and more would settle there after the building of the railway. From these the government would receive at least the $3 a head revenue tax annually. It was no argument to say that because the Dominion would do this thing, the province should not take hold of the road, for to his mind the provincial government would be doing wrong if they did not use their best endeavors for the opening up of the country. The government were only carrying out the progressive policy inaugurated when the late Mr. Davie was premier, and which had continued under his successor in office. It was certain that the country would give this government once again its solid support on any progressive railway policy for the development of the province. Mr. Hunter had spoken of the success of the railway policy in the Kootenays, and in the face of this it was strange indeed that Mr. Hunter opposed the present bill. The opposition had complained of the province assisting a railway to the coast, but as he had endeavored to show, navigation on the Stikine to Glenora was only open for four months in each year and the province would not receive real benefit from a railway unless it was constructed to a port on the sea coast of British Columbia. He had great pleasure in supporting the bill, and would oppose the amendment. (Applause.)

Mr. Kidd approved the amendment as in the right direction, because he believed the bill asked by the government to undertake too much. The fact that the southern section of the road would take two and a half years to build, disposed of the government's plea of urgency. To undertake a work of this magnitude there should be some evidence of the permanency of the trade for which the building of the road was asked. The house should be in possession of more information before a final decision was arrived at on the subject. This being the case, he would move that there be added to the section in the amendment referring to the government having refused to put the house in possession of the correspondence with the Dominion government, that the government had also refused to bring down correspondence with other persons.

Hon. Col. Baker supposed that he would be obliged to confine himself to the amendment and the amendment to the amendment, for it would be impossible to discuss the motion Mr. Kidd had offered without touching upon Mr. Semlin's amendment. In doing so he would be obliged to go back to the discussion of the history that had resulted in the presentation of this bill. Those who were best versed in the Yukon country had spoken of the enormous amount of wealth in gold, and perhaps other minerals to be found there. He spoke from the fact that Mr. Ogilvie, the best authority upon the northern country, had personally given evidence of its enormous amount of gold, and had told him that not only was the country rich in placer gold but also in quartz veins, and that when the placers were worked out, the quartz mining industry would rival the output of the placers. From geological experience in other places, these statements were borne out, and by the best evidence of experts.

Mr. Williams—"That's no reason why the correspondence should not be brought down."

Hon. Col. Baker—Wait a little. The Yukon country is bounded on the north and west by territory of the United States, and on the east and south by Canadian territory. It is very well known that the Americans were leaving no stone unturned to capture the trade of this district, and in view of this, was British Columbia to wait for the Americans to establish channels of commerce to tap the Yukon country—lines which once fixed it would be very hard to divert? Was the province, he asked, to sit idle, and do nothing under such circumstances? Not at all; that was not the position for this government to take. Naturally, they first looked to the Dominion to join in arranging for a communication with the Yukon. Such being the case, and having the advantage of Hon. Mr. Sifton's presence in Victoria when the subject came up for consideration, the government entered into communication with him, pointing out the importance to British Columbia of establishing communication by an all-Canadian route to the Yukon from a provincial seaport. Hon. Mr. Sifton fully concurred in these views, and said that the Dominion intended to grant assistance, asking at the same time what the province proposed to do. The government answered that the province was quite ready to do its share. The Dominion government informed the province that they were in negotiation with Mackenzie & Mann, and it was felt by the provincial government that as they were to act in concert with the Dominion, the provincial negotiations should also be made with Mackenzie & Mann. As was well known, after Hon. Mr. Sifton's return to Ottawa, the Dominion government brought in a bill which proposed to give a land grant for the road, leaving to the province its promise to redeem. It was not necessary to go into the whole history of what followed. As was well known, the senate threw out the bill, and it then devolved upon the province to do what it could in preserving the provincial interests. It was a difficult position to be placed in, but realizing the paramount importance of the matter which had been balked in the Dominion parliament by party blickering, nothing remained to the province but to initiate a bold, progressive policy. Consequently the government entered into negotiations with Mackenzie & Mann, the result of these negotiations being now before the house. It was important to keep in mind that time was the essence of any contract, unless it was proposed to lose an entire year. By delay the Americans would be enabled to obtain such a position and such a grasp on the trade of the Yukon that there would be the greatest difficulty in ousting them from it. Therefore it must be recognized that the best possible course was to press matters forward as promptly as possible. The house well knew that the Dominion did not consider itself in a position to give the subsidy, and after numerous interviews with the contractors the province had reached a conclusion on a strictly business basis that would promote the best interests of the country. It was stipulated that the railway was to be begun at once on both sections—the one from Glenora to Teslin Lake, and the other to Glenora from the seaboard. The government insisted that the work must commence simultaneously, and went even further, making the contractors promise to put up $75,000 as security for the carrying out of the work on each section. Besides it was stipulated that the government was to receive 4 per cent. of the gross earnings of the railway. In making this provision they guarded in the best possible way the interests of the province. All these negotiations had resulted in the bill now before the house, and what were the criticisms upon it? Take for example the amendments before the house. Mr. Semlin's amendment started with a realization of the importance of the line.

Mr. Speaker here called Col. Baker's attention to the fact that he must confine himself to the amendment to the amendment.

Hon. Col. Baker—"How can I discuss the one without reference to the other?"

Mr. Smith here interposed by pointing out that the amendment to the amendment was out of order, in that the amendment could not be amended until the question was decided as to whether the words proposed to be struck out on the main question should or should not stand.

Mr. Speaker, on a reference to May, decided the point well taken, and ruled out the amendment to the amendment.

Hon Col. Baker, continuing his address, said that gentlemen opposite acknowledged that the line from the Coast to Teslin Lake was an important one to the province, but Mr. Semlin's amendment proceeded to say that the province should not build it—the obligation resting on the Dominion. In the amendment too, it was agreed that the line to Teslin Lake should be assisted to the extent of $4,000 per mile and be forthwith constructed. These two positions were decidedly inconsistent. The opposition went on, in their speeceles to forget this position taken in the amendment altogether, some even going so far as to say that the northern section ended among the ice in the mountains. Still they were bound by the amendment to support the building of that line. They forgot that time was the essence of the contract, in arguing that the Dominion should build the line from the Coast to Glenora, as it would take two and a half years to build. It was most important to begin the building of the line at once, and the arguments of the opposition landed them nowhere. In fact the opposition admitted practically that the construction of the line to Teslin Lake was of paramount importance, and the greatest objection they could make was that the government had not brought down some correspondence before. And when that correspondence was brought down, what was there in it? (Laughter.) Nothing at all. (Renewed laughter.) That was quite right; the government had said before hand there was nothing in it. There were only a few meagre telegrams. The Dominion government had not taken the matter up, and therefore the province had stepped into the breach and said "if you don't do your duty, we will do ours." Coming down to Mr. Hunter, that gentleman had taken a very bitter position of this bill—so bitter that some unknown force appeared to be moving him on to opposition: He had stood on the top of the lofty mountains, and argued and spoken of his personal experience; and in his eagerness he had piled up ranges of mountains equal to the Himalayas and the Andes combined. But his argument had tumbled him down into the valley. The member for Comox in his experiences of the Stikine forgot that the government had also had experience of the river. He was not the only man who could speak of the navigation of that waterway. He had said he was open to conversion, and that his first idea had been that only a wagon road was necessary from Teslin Lake to the Stikine, although afterwards he had changed his opinion. It was to be hoped that thus little by little, he would come around in time to acknowledge that a railway was necessary from the sea coast through to Teslin Lake. The government had tried to do its duty, and had adhered to a bold and progessive policy for the opening up of the country. This was the policy they would hold to, come what might, and if the people did not approve, the government could retime from office, feeling that they had done their duty no matter what the result. (Applause.)

Mr. Graham, while favoring the amendment, denied that he was actuated in any way by sectional[illegible] The government months since they had look[illegible] upon the building of a road merely from Teslin Lake to Glenora was not a business proposition. It was, however, only a few months since they had loked upon the matter quite differently. The correspondence presented to the house showed that the government had been over-hasty, and had not taken the precautions necessary in the matter, not knowing at the present for a railway, when they did not know stood. He did not think any company would accept the $4,000 per mile and build the road; they were counting in the present case on the Dominion support, and simply aimed to squeeze as much as possible out of the province as well. What the provincial government proposed was to expend over a million dollars to ra railway, when they did not know but that within a year there would be some other line to cut this proposed road out of the trade entirely. It had been claimed by the Premier that the province would derive an annual revenue of $54,000 from the road, but this would be found far too great an estimate.

Mr. Adams came, he said, from a district that would perhaps be as little benefited by the proposed road as any section of the province. He was nevertheless quite prepared to support the bill, and considered the bargain a good one. Even though the Nakusp & Slocan cost the province considerable money, he was sure no one could deny that that road had been of great benefit to the country, and how much more would this railway, secured on so much more advantageous terms? He favored the building of roads wherever they were required in the country if they could be had for $4,000 a mile; they would prove excellent assets of the province. In reference to what Mr. Hunter had said, Mr. Adams, reminded the house that only the previous day a petition had been received from Comox in favor of this identical road under consideration. In conclusion, the member for Caribo promised his support to the bill.

Mr. Kellie held that it was on account of the incomprehensible stupidity of the government that they should have shouldered this responsibility. The proposed road would open up the Yukon country over which the province had no control, and from which the province could derive no revenue. The Dominion government had taken in the past ten years more than seven million dollars out of the province over and above what they put into it; and the Dominion would get all the revenue that was to be derived from this Yukon country. The construction of this road if the Yukon proved a success—which he did not believe it would—would do no particular good to British Columbia. He did not say there was no gold in the Klondike, but it was fast locked in the frost-bound jaws of the country. Not one-tenth or one-fifteenth of the gold expected to be received from it would ever be taken out of this north country. Mr. Ogilvie in his report had not stated as a positive fact that there was any great amount of quartz in the country. For the want of an idea, the government were trying to grasp at a shadow in the distance. If ever the Yukon did become a valuable country and a port were estabilished in the north country, it was certain to kill Victoria; that would be the effect of the building of this railway. All that was necessary at present was a railway from the Stikine to Teslin Lake without assuming the responsibility of a road to the coast. He denied that he was influenced by sectionalism, but he did not believe in rushing into a thing without estimating the possibilities of a profit being found in it. On no consideration could he support a railway from Glenora to the coast.

Mr. Vedder supported the amendment, as it covered, in his opinion, all that the province should be asked to undertake this year. In this view he believed his constituents would support him. All the negotiations should have been placed before the house, as it was but right the representatives of the people should be made acquainted with the facts. If it had only been contemplated to build from Teslin Lake to Glenora he would willingly have supported the bill, but the present measure asked the province to assume too much responsibility. The amendment gave the opporunity of consulting the people at the polls as to the road from the sea to the Stikine, but it seemed as though the government did not care for the opinion of the people.

Mr. Macpherson, before the amendment was voted on, wanted some explanation as to how the extra expenditure provided for in the bill was to be met. The debt of the province was already six millions, and the province was unable to meet its running expenditure. How then was the country to shoulder five millions more? The Premier had said his government were going into this matter boldly and fearlessly, but it seemed that they were going into it without taking into consideration the cost. In discussing the Premier's statement as to the $50,000 to be derived by the province annually from the road, he questioned if these expectations would be realized. Supposing the road to cost $20,000 a mile, the government grant would be one-fifth of this, whereas the return they would secure would be one-eighth instead of one-fifth of the revenue of the road. Then as to the taxation of the road after its completion, it should be taken on its value and not at $2,000 a mile. He next took up the correspondence presented, and questioned whether the house had yet before it all the correspondence with the Dominion government.

Hon. Col. Baker—"There was no correspondence with the Dominion that has not been brought down, with the exception of one short telegram which has been lost, but which contained nothing important. As to any other correspondence between the government and the contractors, the negotiations have been carried on by personal interviews at Victoria principally. What little correspondence has passed was of a private nature, and not bearing on the negotiations."

Mr. Macpherson continuing, said that there should be no more of the road built than necessary, and then when it was seen how the country would turn out, it was time enough to decide as to the remaining portion.

Mr. Sword contended that the amendment did not defer for a day the building of the road. It provided for the line from the Stikine to Teslin Lake, while at the same time it practically set out that the province should not be loaded down with the expense of a line to the coast until the people had time to pronounce upon it. It was the duty of the Dominion government to have provided for communication with the Yukon—not the province of British Columbia. A point that had been overlooked while discussing the second reading and the amendments was that the members were practically discussing an agreement that had been already virtually entered into between the government and the contractors. He thought that if the bill went into committee the agreement should be so varied that instead of receiving a percentage of the gross receipts of the road, the province should receive so much per passenger, or on each ton of freight. Then British Columbians would know what they were getting.