

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. This \$500,000 is to close with the contractors, to settle finally with the contractors, and also to pay the amount on the other various sections of the work required to be done, in order to place the whole line from Prince Arthur's Landing to Red River, in the condition in which the Government were bound, under the contract with the Canadian Pacific Railway, to hand it over to them.

Mr. BLAKE. What proportion is required to settle with Section "B," and what proportion for the Canadian Pacific Railway contract? As I understand it, the hon. gentleman has entered into a contract with the Canadian Pacific Railway Company itself to do all the work that is necessary to complete the line in the condition in which they conceive it ought to have been handed over to them, and embraced in that lump sum is the amount required to finish the Section "B" contract—\$970,000, I think, was the original amount.

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. No; that covered the entire work.

Mr. BLAKE. I say so.

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. It was required to put the whole line in the condition it should have been, and also to perform the work required to be done on Section "B."

Mr. BLAKE. I said so. I spoke of \$970,000 as the lump sum, and including the 15 per cent. handed over to these gentlemen, I suppose it was raised to a still higher sum. From \$900,000 to \$1,000,000 is the whole sum which goes to the Canadian Pacific Railway. He is now asking \$500,000. What proportion of that is going to the Canadian Pacific Railway, or is it all going to them under this contract?

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. It is not all going to the Canadian Pacific Railway, because a portion of it is to settle finally with the contractors.

Mr. BLAKE. What proportion has he assigned in his estimate, in this lump sum, for settlement with the contractors, and what proportion has he assigned to the Canadian Pacific Railway?

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. With the amount that was taken before, it is difficult to say how much of this will be applied for the one and how much for the other. I will give the hon. gentleman more minute information on Concurrence.

Sir RICHARD CARTWRIGHT. I should like to know from the Minister, as far as his information extends, what is the condition at present of that 400 miles, or thereabouts, from Prince Arthur's Landing to the Red River. A good deal has been said in the newspapers and by persons who have travelled over this road, as to the condition of the road. Of course, I am aware that a large quantity of the trestle-work will, in all probability, have to be replaced, in the nature of the case; but I should be glad to know, and I think the House would be glad to learn, generally, if the hon. gentleman possesses the information, what is the condition, and what is likely to be the condition, of the permanent way and what steps are being taken to fill up the trestles. I have heard it stated by parties, not political friends of mine but political friends of the other side, that a great deal of that trestle-work was in an exceedingly dangerous condition; that it was very badly constructed, and that it would not be safe, but on the contrary very dangerous indeed, to run trains at any considerable speed over it; in short, that the whole of that road required very careful overhauling before it could be made very useful for the purpose of carrying heavy freights, at any rate.

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. I may say that the result will be that this road will be a first-class road all the way from Port Arthur to the Red River. The trestles, or a

considerable portion of the work to which the hon. gentleman alluded, were temporary trestles. They were intended to carry the trains over, to enable communication to be had between these two points in the first instance, but the filling has been going rapidly on, and will be completed, so that the road will be a first-class road in every respect when the work which has been provided for is completed; and the hon. gentleman could not require much better evidence than the fact that under the contract we were bound to hand over the road to the Canadian Pacific Railway as a first-class road and in very complete order, and provision has been made in the agreement with the Canadian Pacific Railway, satisfactory to them, for this amount, to take it over and complete the road. So we have a pretty good assurance that, when this amount is expended, the road will be in a thoroughly good condition, and with the grades maintained as was originally intended—an exceedingly favourable grade, and adapted for the rapid running of trains.

Mr. BLAKE. As soon as I saw the contract, I quite thought that the observation the hon. Minister has just made was the appropriate one. The Canadian Pacific Railway Company has said this is what they think is required to put this road into such order as they are entitled to get it in. It is, of course, their interest to get it in at least as good order as their original contract provided. They have themselves proposed to do the work for the sum of money. The question for consideration, therefore, is not whether the road is not in good condition, but whether we are going to put it in too good condition for them, because their interest might lead them to make exorbitant demands. I say they might. I do not say they have done so; but they certainly must have asked—they ought to have asked—to be allowed to expend as much money as would put it in proper condition. We certainly ought to have more information than is vouchsafed. We are asked for half a million dollars more; we do not know whether that is a final vote or not.

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. I expect this to complete it.

Mr. BLAKE. If this is to complete the whole thing, we would like to know what the whole is going to cost. Of course it does not bind the hon. gentleman or the House in any way, but we would like to know what the hon. gentleman estimates he will require to pay those unfortunate contractors of section "B," who have been so harassed by the Government for a long time, and are now about to reap a tardy return from the arbitration.

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. The hon. gentleman has just touched a point which shows how improper it would be for me to make any close statement in reference to this. An arbitration was granted which is not now settled. As it is an unknown quantity that may be assigned to them by the arbitrators it would be very injudicious in me to make any estimate which might be a suggestive indication. In fact it would be impossible for me to state, in the absence of the award, what amount they may likely receive. I do not myself expect it will be very much, if anything, in excess of what they have already received.

Mr. BLAKE. We are in an awkward position. We are asked to vote an unknown quantity. How much we do not know, because it is in the nature of an unknown quantity to be an unknown quantity.

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. I do not know that it is any thing.

Mr. BLAKE. I maintain that if the hon. gentleman is in such a position that he cannot form any estimate whatever, he ought not to ask this House to vote any sum. It will be time enough for the vote after the award has been made, or when the hon. gentleman is in a position to give this House information upon which we can vote more intelligently.