

he give the whole number of the votes to the candidate?

Hon. Mr. FERGUSON—My hon. friend may find the opposition made the mistake of not knowing the very full extent of their own strength, or they might have made it quite as uncomfortable in the constituencies where they allowed the government to return their candidates by acclamation as in the constituencies where the change was brought about. I know that in West Queen's we seriously considered the advisability of allowing the seat to go by acclamation. That was our conclusion until a week after the by-election was called on. It was, however, determined that another course should be pursued, and the result compared with the general election, was a falling away of the government majority by 453 votes, and that in a constituency where it was not expected from the start to the finish by the opposition that they could elect their man, in consequence of the powerful patronage of the two governments in the city of Charlottetown, which controlled a very large vote. I find that the change in the feeling in these eight constituencies is 530 votes on an average, and I find by applying just simply the change that occurred in West Queen's, in Prince Edward Island, to the other four ridings, supposing a similar result was to occur in the other four ridings of the province, that the majority against the government in these ridings would have reached from 213 to 678 votes. The result of these elections is a clear indication, to my mind, that the policy of the government upon the Transcontinental Railway question which was the great issue before the electors, was disapproved by the people at the polls. It was not merely in one province. Elections were held in four provinces. In the extreme west of Ontario two elections were held. There was a bunch of elections in the province of Quebec. Another was held in the city of St. John and one was held in West Queen's, P.E.I., and it so happened that nearly all of these constituencies, or all of them that were held by the government before, were held by such large majorities that it would seem almost like presumption to attempt to overthrow the government in these places. In one case, in St. Hyacinthe, where the government majority amounted

to 1,111 votes; the majority was reduced to 185. Take the city of St. John, where such a complete overturn was made, and East Lambton, we find important results. It is not confined to one place, but it extended over a large breadth of the country. Last year, when this Bill was before the House, we complained from this side of the House, as was done also in the House of Commons, that the proposition was very indefinite, and more particularly as to the question of route. As far as the Bill itself was concerned, it seems that there was nothing very definite in regard to the route to be traversed between the main points, Moncton, Quebec and Winnipeg and the Pacific coast, but the government came down to parliament with what they called mountains of information on the subject. A report was got up under the instructions of the Minister of the Interior, by Dr. Ami, of the Geological Survey, with regard to the country that was to be traversed between the city of Quebec and the city of Winnipeg, and a map was submitted to parliament, showing the line of the proposed railway.

Hon. gentlemen will remember very distinctly all the things that were said in this House and elsewhere with regard to the route. We were told that for 700 miles west of Quebec it was absolutely a piece of tableland, a country so smooth, that there was no depression in the whole length greater than 200 feet, and that there would be no difficulty in obtaining absolutely level grades, so much so that one of the enthusiasts, a supporter of the railway in the press, said that all it would be necessary to do would be to start a car at Winnipeg and it would carry itself right along almost the whole distance eastward by its own momentum till it reached Quebec. All that was told to us last session of parliament. They told us that the government had made the wonderful discovery that along this height of land in a direct line between Quebec and Winnipeg there was a piece of tableland over which a route could be located that would afford such easy grades as would put all other railways in the shade, not only in this country but in every other country. That was the statement made in this House and elsewhere, and that is the substance of the official