

time to come the control of the carrying trade of a great part of the North-West. At some time afterwards when they have all their lines laid down, when they have selected the best lands in the North-West, when they have the people who go into that country surrounded in such a way that they can scarcely shake off the yoke, if there still remains any energy in the country, if there remain any probability of opening new avenues of trade, if any capital remains in the country, it may be possible to build other branches which may make remunerative returns. The monopoly is a thorough monopoly; it has no redeeming feature whatever; there seems to be in it no legal or constitutional escape for the people of the North-West. It is a monopoly to which has been practically transferred all the sovereignty and property of the whole of the North-West—a monopoly which will, as has been well said, make them not landlords, in the ordinary sense of the word, but the owners of the country. Every cent that can be extorted from the people, without actually driving them from the country, will be extorted; every cent that can be exacted from the wheat trade, without preventing the growth of wheat, will be exacted by this grinding monopoly. It is folly for any one who knows human nature, or has studied the history of the world, to expect anything else. And we are asked to ratify this monstrous bargain. We are asked to say that it is in the interests of the people of this whole Dominion, that the great North-West to which many were looking forward anxiously as likely to be the centre and the seat of our Canadian Empire, we are asked to believe that it is in the interests of the whole people to hand over these territories absolutely to the control of men, some of whom we know to-day, but none of whom we may know in twelve months hence. We are asked to place things in such a position that those men may have the chance of building only the productive and profitable portion of the railway, and receiving, therefore, a price far in excess of what it would cost the Government to build the whole work within the time specified, and to hold that whole country absolutely for twenty years, but practically, and in point of fact, for all time thereafter. I, for one, am not prepared to assent to any such bargain. My assent may be of very little value; my voice is but the voice of one, and we know that the majority on the side of the Government is strong. We have reason to conclude that the Government know well how to lead and control their majority, and there are few of us who venture to hope that this measure will not pass, and perhaps pass without alteration or amendment. Nevertheless, it is our duty to protest against the bargain. I confess that when I first received the summons to attend this meeting of Parliament to consider this question, I hoped that the Government had somehow or other made a bargain of which I could approve. I read the speeches of the hon. Premier; I read very carefully the utterances of other hon. Ministers, and I looked very closely into those newspapers which are regarded as the organs of the Government, and I tried to form some opinion of this bargain about which there was so much mystery. I never did believe, nor do I believe now, that the dignity of Parliament required that the bargain should be kept secret. If the dignity of Parliament did so require, it would have so required that the secret should have been an absolute one; but the remarkable feature of the whole affair is that those portions of the contract which were, perhaps, regarded as not likely to create much objection somehow or other all leaked out. We all heard that there was to be paid over to the Company \$25,000,000 and 25,000,000 acres of land, and we heard that the portions of the road under contract were to be handed over to the Company. It was not inconsistent with the dignity of Parliament that we should be told these particulars, though it was quite inconsistent with the dignity of Parliament that we should be told that the Government

had engaged to finish these sections which they are to build, and to build another section of 90 miles, which has never been commenced. I am satisfied that no hon. gentleman on this side of the House ever suspected or dreamed that there was any such stipulation as that. That was carefully kept back from us; the dignity of Parliament was most carefully guarded. But, Sir, we were not told that this monopoly would be so guarded; that all competition would be prevented; that this Syndicate were to obtain absolute control for 20 years of the carrying trade of the North-West. Now, though I do not go so far as some who say that no railways ought to be built or owned by a Government, I think that under a wise and prudent administration it might be possible to adopt a policy whereby the great trunk and central lines of railway that are now becoming so common might, to a great extent, be built and owned by the Government, and I was quite prepared to assent to any proposition for the transfer of this work to a company. In fact, Sir, I was gravely calculating how the Government was to be re-constructed, for I thought the vocation of the Minister of Railways was about to cease, and that there would be nothing more for him to do except, perhaps, to administer the affairs of the Intercolonial Railway. I did not think that a gentleman of his energy would care to preside over a department having no other duties than that; and I was thinking we would have to pass a Bill for the re-distribution of seats in the Cabinet. But I never thought we were to have all the binding and objectionable features of building Government railways continued for fully ten years to come; and I can assure you if I had, I would never have dreamed of supporting the measure introduced by the Government. I also puzzled my brains a good deal to know why a Commission was issued into all matters relating to the construction of the Pacific Railway, and after having read all the evidence given before the Commission, I tried to come to some conclusion on the subject. If its purpose was to convict the late Minister of Public Works of having acted corruptly or improperly, or without a reasonable degree of care and ability in the discharge of his duties, then the Commission was an absolute failure. I saw that great efforts were made by the Commissioners to bring out evidence that would have the effect of reflecting upon the member for Lambton, and I felt quite satisfied that they must fail, as they did fail. If the object was to remove some suspicions that hung about the letting of recent contracts, in that also the Commission was a great failure, and I can hardly expect that any Minister of the Government expected that anything else could be proved. I was forced to the conclusion that the object of this Commission was to disgust the public so thoroughly with the building of railways by the Government that they would be prepared for the roady adoption of this bargain, which, I supposed, was about to be laid on the Table of the House. I think it would have gone far in that direction if the contract had not been a monstrous job, unjustifiable as we find it to be. But the contract renders it more difficult than ever to guess the object of the Royal Commission, for I find that the construction of railways by the Government is to be continued for at least ten years longer. I did hope that the whole of these unconstructed portions of the railway were to be handed over to the Syndicate, and that more provision would be made for the work being done without the Government binding itself to pay for those sections to be finished, or to have anything further to do with them, than to employ an engineer to see that the specifications were fairly carried out. But we have not only to hand over this work to the Syndicate, but we have to give them, besides, \$25,000,000 and 25,000,000 acres of land, and these lands, instead of being taken in the same way as under the Sir Hugh Allan contract, are to be chosen at the