

work. We supposed, when we made the last arrangement to pay these men, that the road would have to be completed by ourselves.

Mr. TUPPER. My hon. friend from Halifax has alluded to the discussion which took place in regard to this Minute of Council the other evening, and referred to the argument which occurred between himself and myself on this particular question. I would like to explain, in answer to the hon. gentleman's remarks, both then and now, that, as I understood the question, I challenged a statement made by him, which he seems to believe still, that this policy, as now presented to Parliament in definite shape, was first considered advisable and necessary, and decided upon shortly previous to the last general election. Now, what escaped the hon. gentleman's attention, evidently, in connection with the history of this very important railway matter in Nova Scotia, was the action taken in reference, not merely to the road between Oxford and New Glasgow, but in reference to the whole question of the extension of our railway system to Cape Breton. This work is specially one of the most important features in connection with the extension by Government, to which Parliament was pledged before the last Parliament ended, that could possibly be imagined, as it shortens the distance between this part of Canada and the Island of Cape Breton by about forty-five miles, making a short cut through the three finest counties in Nova Scotia, and crossing the Intercolonial Railway, and making a branch which would be remunerative to the Intercolonial Railway from one end of it to the other. I would point out to the hon. gentleman opposite that the reason I challenged the statement that this policy was first mentioned in the Minutes of Council was because Parliament, having taken up this question, first undertook to deal with it by granting very large subsidies, both a money subsidy and again a subsidy formed partly of the Eastern Extension Railway from New Glasgow to Canso, for the construction, not only of that portion now being built in the Island of Cape Breton, but also for the construction of this piece, forty-five miles in length. When a company failed to carry on that great public work and complete it, Parliament deemed it wise to take the necessary steps to construct as a public work the portion in the Island of Cape Breton, and the reason at that time, I take it, that Parliament did not make arrangements to build, then, this piece of forty-five miles between Oxford and New Glasgow, a portion of that general system, was because that portion of the line was involved in difficulties. The company to which I have referred, and which had already begun to build the piece of forty-five miles long, having a contract in reference to it, and having done certain work, failed, and left this matter in a tangle, as far as this portion of the work was concerned. Well, when Parliament took this definite action in reference to the Cape Breton extension, these difficulties existed upon a portion of the seventy miles—I think I alluded incorrectly to it as forty-five miles; it shortens the distance by forty-five miles, but it is about seventy miles long. Parliament had already sanctioned the construction of that portion of this seventy miles as a public work, the piece lying between the town of Pictou and New Glasgow, which, as I explained in the discussion when that matter was before Parliament, is a part of this piece between Oxford and New Glasgow. Therefore, I say that when Parliament having first of all attempted to build this piece of railway, and the portion in Cape Breton by a company, and that arrangement having fallen through, Parliament then took up the very portion to which allusion has been made last, lying between Oxford and New Glasgow, and having built that part of it which was not involved in the title of the company. Since then the rights in that piece formerly owned by the company have passed from the company. The Legislature

of Nova Scotia, understanding the great value and great importance of this railway to Nova Scotia, took such action as to ratify a mortgage given by that company to the sub-contractors, and the leader of the Nova Scotia Government, Mr. Fielding, himself introduced a Bill which passed unanimously in that House, arranging for a sale of these rights under this mortgage which had been given informally, to some extent, by the company themselves. But, under a vote of this Parliament, and by authority of the legislation of this Parliament, the Government of Canada obtained the title that was in the sub-contractors under that lien, and under the authority of this Parliament the money was paid for the acquisition of those rights, and therefore all the rights of the company are now almost completely in the Crown. Steps were taken in the courts of Nova Scotia by the company to resist the sale, but the decision of the court has been on two occasions in favor of the Crown against the company. But be that as it may, the matter simply stands in this position through the inability of the Short Line Company that began this work to go on with it, the importance of which the hon. gentleman from Halifax has acknowledged. The Parliament of this country having recognised that, I am glad the Government is now making an application to Parliament which will enable them to go on and construct this work, in which so much of the money of Canada is already invested, and for which there is every justification to induce Parliament to sanction this legislation—legislation which I called, the other evening, the consequence or outcome of legislation already passed, and which may be found in the Acts of two or three Sessions of this Parliament.

Mr. BLAKE. This is another but a striking example of the necessity of the Parliament of the country demanding an entirely different course from the executive Government of the day, with reference to the financial proposals which they lay before Parliament. I very well remember the time at which the first proposal was made with reference to assistance to be given to the construction of this piece of railway—I cannot now recollect the exact denomination, but it was a very large one. The Minister of Finance, no doubt, remembers it, whether it was the Great Short Line, or the European and American Short Line; but it was some magnificent name, very long and very expensive. When the hon. gentleman, then acting as Minister of Railways, proposed to Parliament that they should grant \$3,200 a mile as a subsidy, I enquired what grounds there were to believe that the object which he stated would be accomplished, would really be accomplished by the grant which he proposed, apprehensive as I was, that in that, and in many of other cases, the hon. gentleman would lead us along into an expenditure manifold that which he presented to the House as the total expenditure to be incurred, when he asked us to engage in that transaction. The hon. gentleman stated with the greatest positiveness that he had had communications, representations and negotiations with capitalists and able men who were concerned in the company we were to subsidise, and he pledged himself that the results would be satisfactory. The results were very far from satisfactory, and other proposals were afterwards made, and great difficulties, to the bottom of which we have never been permitted to look, were encountered, as to the contract and the relations of the Government to the company; but in the end it happened that some work I believe was done. I know of no law under which the company incorporated for the purpose of constructing the work and failing altogether to perform its work could have a lien upon the enterprise in reference to which some grading was done. But that is by the way. Then after a year or two or three we were appealed to *ad misericordiam*. We were told there were certain unfortunate persons, laborers and small contractors, along the line, who had invested