

would be unjust to the other Provinces to pass an Act like this, which would enable railway speculators and companies to absorb three-fourths of the whole western territory—that territory on which they hoped to construct the great Canadian Pacific road. He yielded to no one in the desire to benefit the North-West. But he certainly could not approve of an Act such as that now before the House. He could not believe in a scheme which would enable speculators to absorb millions of acres of land, with which it was hoped the country might be recouped for the money it was spending in opening up that great country."

The hon. gentleman, in fact, believed that the measure would be successful, that the country would be settled, that the lands would be opened by the companies under its provisions, and that, as a consequence, they would acquire a right in these lands. The hon. gentleman said: We will not do that; we acquired these lands, he said, to recoup us, by their sale, for the \$30,000,000 we propose to advance for the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway. The hon. gentleman seems to have greatly changed his opinions. At that time he thought \$30,000,000 was a very large sum to advance in aid of the construction of a trans-continental road, and he seemed to think that it was the bounden duty of the Government not to aid, either in land or money, the construction of any other railway, and to use the money derived from the sale of these lands to recoup all the older Provinces for the burdens they had assumed in advancing \$30,000,000 cash towards the Canadian Pacific Railway. I do not know whether the hon. gentleman still entertains these views, and is still opposed to a policy of this sort. If he is, he will oppose the proposition before the House.

Mr. MITCHELL. The hon. gentleman will find out by-and-by.

Mr. MILLS. The Minister of Agriculture spoke on that occasion, and he was equally opposed to aid being given to these colonisation companies. He said:

"He had been hitherto, and was now, a strong advocate for building a railway through that country. It would tax the powers of the Dominion to their full extent to build the one railway provided for, under the agreements entered into with British Columbia and Manitoba, and their first efforts must be given to carrying out those agreements. The construction of a Pacific railway was part of the agreement of the union of British Columbia with Canada, and the country was bound, before entering into any large engagement or making any other disposition of public lands in the North-West, to carry out that engagement. The power to build railways to any extent, provided they were 40 miles from each other, was one which should not be placed in the hands of any people without the consent of the Government being obtained to each scheme."

The hon. gentleman did not seem to have confidence in the capitalists who were about to invest their money in those enterprises nor in the people who were supposed to favor the enterprises and to whom the road would be an advantage. He declared that he was opposed to allowing them to judge of the wisdom of the enterprises in which they were engaged, and he insisted that the Government itself should have control over these transactions. He went on to say:

"He could well understand that, if the Government were about to build the Pacific Railway—and he hoped they were, for its construction was in the interests of the country—that assistance should be given in the shape of public lands, but he could not understand why, under the present Bill, Parliament should be deprived of the right of considering each charter and deciding what subsidy should be granted to each road. It was impossible to understand why a different policy should be adopted for the North-West in that regard than that which had been found quite satisfactory in the old Provinces."

In fact, the hon. gentleman was strongly opposed to the principle of the free incorporation of railways. That scheme, which has been tried for so many years in the neighboring Republic, which has prevented log-rolling, which has prevented any attempt to use undue influence in the Legislature, which has left every enterprise of this sort to stand upon its own merits, was one the hon. gentleman did not favor. He preferred one which would compel the railway company seeking incorporation to come to Parliament and fight every other company that might have an interest opposed to the one seeking incorporation. He went on to say:

"He favored the payment of the cost in money, if it were necessary, but that was no reason why they should throw away the public land, instead of endeavoring to recoup themselves from its sale. That was the policy of the late Government, which declared to the House and the country that they were about to give \$30,000,000 and 50,000,000 acres of land towards the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway."

The hon. gentleman expressed precisely the same view as the hon. member for Northumberland (Mr. Mitchell). He said the country is obliged to give \$30,000,000 in cash for the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway, and all the remaining land not required to aid in the construction of the road should be retained and sold to settlers, in order to recoup the country for the immense advance for the construction of the one line. Then the hon. member for Niagara (Mr. Plumb) spoke in opposition to the measure, and declared himself opposed to giving land grants in aid of these colonisation roads. It is true that all the members for Manitoba, at that time, whether they were supporters of the Administration or whether they opposed it, favored the proposition, but the hon. gentleman who now leads the Government, and those who had been his colleagues and were then his supporters, were opposed to this policy. The hon. member then for South Norfolk (Mr. Wallace), in speaking on this subject, said:

"He was opposed to the principle of this Bill for two reasons. First, he did not believe that it was in the interest of this country that we should create railway monopolies; he believed that railways were the highways of commerce, and that they should be owned and run by the Government, in the interests of commerce. He thought we already had in this country an example of the evil results of railway monopoly. The companies did not look to the interests of the country, but to their own interests."

And so we find that the policy of aiding colonisation roads by grants of land was opposed by the hon. gentleman and by those who are now supporting him. These hon. gentlemen, when a large and liberal aid was given to the Canadian Pacific Railway Company, told Parliament that that company was receiving a large extent of territory in aid of its line, which would not lie immediately along the line, and that they would have an interest in building railways in various directions through the North-West country, for the purpose of bringing their land into the market, and also for the purpose of bringing traffic to the line they were about to build. In fact, we were assured that they would be able to build hundreds of miles of subsidiary or branch lines in that North-West country without any further aid; and yet we find that the hon. gentleman, in the propositions now before us, proposes, not merely to aid lines in which the company, so far as we know, have no direct interest, but also to aid those which are under the control of the company. The First Minister has told us that the amount proposed to be given in the way of a land grant in aid of the South-Western Railway was not adequate, that the company could not succeed in carrying out its enterprise with the aid the Government proposed to give it. Now, the hon. gentleman comes down with a proposition to give all of these railway companies an extent of territory at least as large as we proposed in 1878. That proposition was pronounced an extravagant proposition, a scheme which would absorb all the lands of the North-West country, which would place them all under the control of railway companies, and the hon. gentleman comes down now with a proposition, after having failed in all the schemes that they have put forward, substantially, in this respect, adopting the scheme of aiding roads that we proposed at that time. I think it would have been well if the Administration had gone farther. We know that a railway company will not build a disadvantageous line if an advantageous one presents itself. If allowed to proceed unhampered, they would be disposed to take that which they believe to be the best route in their own interest; and, if the Government had now adopted the remaining portion of the Bill we proposed in 1878, they would propose a plan that would be more satisfactory than the one now presented.