

substantially a part of the terms of union with British Columbia, that that work should be constructed, not by the Government, but by private enterprise, aided by a grant of lands and money to that extent. But even that was limited by the declaration placed before the House, that the progress of that work should not involve an increase in the then rate of taxation.

Mr. BLAKE—Hear, hear.

Sir CHARLES TUPPER—Now, I am a little surprised to find the honorable member for West Durham (Mr. Blake) taking exception to the statement I have made, that it formed a part of the terms of union with British Columbia, because the Government of which that honorable gentleman was a member, at a later date, found it convenient to fall back upon that resolution, and embodied it in a Minute-of-Council which they offered to British Columbia, and to the Imperial Government as well, as a reason for qualifying the engagement that was entered into. I am safe, I think, in saying that there is no man in this House, there is no intelligent man in this country, that would not heartily concur in the accuracy of the statement, that it would be greatly in the interest of Canada if it had been possible to accomplish the construction of that work upon those terms. Honorable gentlemen opposite took exception on many occasions to the sufficiency of the means that were thus provided for the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway. I think the honorable member for Lambton (Mr. Mackenzie), when the leader of the Government, at a public meeting at Whitby, committed himself to the statement that we might as well have offered \$10, as \$30,000,000 and 50,000,000 acres of land for the purpose of securing the construction of that work, so strongly did he feel the entire inadequacy of the means proposed. Now, it will not be at all necessary for me to discuss the circumstances under which the Government found itself unable to accomplish the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway upon those terms. We are sufficiently familiar with that view of the question to render that entirely unnecessary. But we went out of office, and the duty and responsibility of dealing with this great question devolved upon the gentleman, who, during the subsequent five years, led the Government of this country. Now, I think, we must all admit that successive Governments must pay great deference to, and must hold themselves to a large extent responsible—for carrying out the policy of their predecessors. I am satisfied we all agree in the opinion that it is only under the gravest circumstances that a new administration is in a position to repudiate, if I may so speak, the engagements in relation to a great public question, to which their predecessors have committed the country under the authority of Parliament. But I quite admit it was in the power of the honorable gentleman who was then called upon to form an administration, to say that since, in Parliament, he had opposed the policy of attempting to construct the Canadian Pacific Railway, that he believed this country could not engage in a work of such gigantic magnitude without seriously injuring the financial position of the country—that, under those circumstances, he must decline to hold himself responsible for the engagement into which his predecessors had entered. The honorable gentleman had that course open to him, because Parliament, having declared that the work should only be constructed provided a company could be found, aided to the extent before