

Mr. CHARLTON. I think at 25 cents on the dollar, all but \$5,000,000, which was sold at par. So I judge from this that the transcontinental line financially will have an assured success. It will secure the trade of the North-west to our ports, if that can be secured by any railway; and if it is made essentially a first-class road, with a four-tenths per cent grade, heavy rails and perfect construction, it will be able to compete with the water routes in bringing down grain for shipment to Europe at our own seaports.

The contrast between the policies of the two governments, in relation to the first transcontinental line, and in relation to the transcontinental line now under consideration, is so marked, so striking, that I do not see how any man of dispassionate judgment can fail to approve of the scheme which we have under consideration. This scheme, Mr. Speaker, notwithstanding all that may be said in regard to it, has been thoroughly matured. It bears internal evidence of that fact. Let the ablest lawyer in this country scrutinize this agreement and seek to pick flaws in it, and they will be of the most infinitesimal character if he finds any at all. The interests of the government are safeguarded in the most perfect and complete manner. The only surprise to me is that a great railway corporation, with the resources which the Grand Trunk possesses, should have consented to be bound in the manner in which it is by the stipulations of this agreement. It is folly to contend that this is not a contract in the interest of the people of Canada. It is folly to contend that this is not a contract that reflects great credit on the gentlemen, whoever they are, who matured and perfected it. We are told that we should have waited for surveys, that we should not have been in a hurry, that we should have known more definitely where the road should go, and so forth. Sir, we have had surveys. We have a knowledge of the country in a general sense, and we know in a general way its character for railway construction. There was no time to lose in going forward. We have to go on with surveys as it is, there is no doubt about that; but we have perfected an arrangement which we might not have been able to make twelve months hence.

We have got into this arrangement a great company, which perhaps might then see the matter in a different light, or possibly might not be in a position to take hold of the contract and enter into the stipulations it has done. When you have a good thing take it. Time and tide wait for no man, and if you neglect to take at its flood the tide which will lead you on to fortune, the opportunity may never again present itself. Do not be like the Irishman, who just after he landed in America, saw a dollar on the ground and passed it by with scorn because he was going to a section of the country

where money grew on the bushes. I think that the perfection of this contract reflects unquestionably great credit on my right hon. friend the Premier of this Dominion. He may fairly claim, I apprehend, that this is his scheme. I apprehend that he may claim credit to a large extent for the consummation of this bargain with the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway. If that be the case, I believe that this will be such a monument as any public man might desire to have to his memory when he passes from this stage of action. The right hon. gentleman considered all the suggestions of the various schemes presented. He considered them courteously, fully and fairly, and I think I may say that in meeting these various presentations of these various schemes or opinions, he has left those who presented them satisfied that he was right, and willing to accept his opinion. This I believe to be the case in every instance except one—the case of my hon. friend the ex-Minister of Railways. The right hon. gentleman has shown throughout his firm belief in a national road. That has been with him the paramount consideration—a road which would serve national purposes, which would give an outlet on Canadian soil through Canadian ports for Canadian productions in the far west. It remains to be seen whether this road will do all that is predicted of it. If it be constructed in a thoroughly first class manner in every respect, I believe it will. And when both the government and the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway have to face the alternative that it be not so constructed, it will not accomplish what is expected, I believe they will see that it is built in such a way that it will be capable of producing the results we all hope for. No doubt there are many gentlemen who would throw cold water on our aspirations. We will perhaps have reason to compare these men with the late DeWitt Clinton, who, when in 1817, he was promoting the construction of the Erie canal, which revolutionized the commercial history of New York and made that city a great seaport, was ridiculed and assailed by lampoons and criticisms about Clinton's ditch from Albany to Buffalo. Well, Sir, Clinton's ditch was a nation maker. It affected the destinies of a great people in the west, just as the Laurier road will do for great districts of this country.

We are incurring, of course, heavy obligations, but they are moderate in view of what will be realized from the expenditure. In the abstract, however, they are heavy obligations, and we will become responsible for a large sum of money. But we will have an asset which will represent something. We will have an asset of great and ever increasing value in the transcontinental road. It will be money well expended. It will be a judicious investment which will not, after the first seven years, bear upon the resources of the country. The future