

Scotia Junction to Sudbury. As any hon. gentleman in this House will see, in making the calculation on that basis, I have gone on perfectly fair and legitimate lines. I have taken the Postmaster General at his word, and adopted his estimate of \$40,000 per mile, which he applied to my proposed line from Scotia Junction to Sudbury, although I believe the government line through the northern country will cost very much more. And when I give this estimate to the country, I do not wish to be understood for a moment as expressing my belief that that line built at that cost could have such grades or be of such a character as the hon. member for North Norfolk (Mr. Charlton) has said are absolutely necessary to ensure the carriage of grain. The cost would probably be increased fifty per cent if you attempted to construct a road of that kind. I am only estimating a road with fair grades as the hon. Postmaster General did when he put the cost of the road, from Scotia Junction to Sudbury at \$40,000 a mile.

Now let us see what would be necessary under my alternative scheme to give a complete and perfect connection between the east and the west, and to bring the two great railway systems of the west and the three great railway systems of the east into close connection with each other, at a very early day. In the first place, you would have to build a line from Jacques Cartier Junction to Coteau, thirty miles, which at \$40,000 a mile—there is no dispute between us as to the cost of that—would amount to \$1,200,000. The acquisition of the Canada Atlantic Railway I estimate at a cost of \$12,000,000. I estimate it at that, because I believe that if the Canada Atlantic Railway could not be acquired for that amount, a road from Montreal to the Georgian bay not exceeding 360 miles in length could be built for the total of these two sums which I have named, \$13,200,000. Therefore, if we cannot make fair terms with the Canada Atlantic Railway Company, I believe that sum would be amply sufficient to build a railway from Montreal to a port on the Georgian bay. A line from Scotia Junction to Sudbury, 104 miles at \$40,000 per mile would cost \$4,160,000. The line from Sudbury to Fort William, 555 miles, at an outside cost of \$45,000 a mile, would cost \$24,975,000. Betterments from Sudbury to Fort William might cost \$3,000,000, and on the line from Fort William to Winnipeg, \$2,130,000. That gives a total cost of \$47,465,000 to accomplish the results which I have pointed out. That leaves a balance between the cost of this portion of my alternative scheme and the cost of the government scheme of something like \$60,000,000; and that \$60,000,000 could be applied in many efficient ways toward the improvement of the transportation facilities of this country. A portion of it could be appropriated towards those colonizations roads in the north of which I have spoken. A portion could be

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applied to the equipment of the Georgian bay ports. A portion might even be applied to the improvement and development of our canals. A further portion could be devoted to the efficient equipment of the ports of Quebec and Montreal, as well as the ports of St. John and Halifax. And after you have done all that, you would still have many millions of dollars to the good.

With regard to the proposal of the government itself, while I do not at the present moment attempt to deal exhaustively with the defects which might be pointed out—this has been done very fully in the course of the debate—nevertheless there are one or two characteristics so important that I think they should be mentioned even at this stage. In the first place, there is an absolute lack of knowledge as to the eastern section, an absolute lack of any information which can give us a fair idea of what it would cost. I asked members of the government across the floor the other day whether there was one of them who could state the cost of the eastern section within \$40,000,000, if it is to be built on a four-tenths per cent grade, and whether or not, if prepared to make such an estimate, they could present to the country any data upon which it could be fairly based. I failed to get any reply. I do not think that my right hon. friend, or any man on that side, is able to make an estimate and support it by sufficient data within the figures I have given. If we are to build a road with a four-tenths per cent grade, which is the grade my hon. friend from North Norfolk (Mr. Charlton) says it must have—the cost of a road with such a grade, with proper curves, to give it the solidity and character necessary for the hauling of trains such as my hon. friend from North Norfolk describes, is a matter of so much intricacy and detail that we cannot say we have any requisite information before us. My hon. friend from North Norfolk the other day spoke of hauling trains of 2,000 tons over that railway at a cost of \$1 per mile. My hon. friend from Hamilton (Mr. Barker), who followed him, showed that on a railway which he mentioned, having as low grades as any railway in America, the cost of hauling a train load of 576 tons was \$2 per mile, and the inaccuracy of the hon. member for North Norfolk to whom my right hon. friend the Prime Minister pointed as a great expert on railway transportation, in that regard indicates that if he is so far away from the actual facts in a matter of that kind, the government itself cannot be very near the actual truth as regards the cost of construction.

In the next place we had a commission appointed for the purpose of investigating this question. No one can read the language of the Order in Council without concluding absolutely that the commission was appointed to deal with this very question of transportation. Yet while that commission will be