

rio and Quebec, the provinces have reaped some advantage from them. Whether they have got what they should I do not know; probably some persons get the upper hand and reap an advantage that they should not have. We are proposing to do the same thing now with our public lands in the Yukon territory. Those lands are either valuable or they are not. If the minerals on those lands are valuable we should keep them. How can we ascertain that? By thorough exploration and examination. If our people in days gone by had taken the trouble to explore the vast forests of this country and ascertain that from actual knowledge whether a section of the country was fit for a settlement or not, and if they had excluded the whole of the lumbering district from settlement or sale at any price and kept it in the hands of the government, selling only such lands as were fit for settlement they would have taken the best course in the interest of the country. They did not do so, and I am very sorry for it. I believe the same thing will occur again if this arrangement in the Yukon country is carried out. This country is supposed to contain an immense amount of gold. There is no possibility, I suppose, of telling what it will be worth, whether \$50,000,000, \$200,000,000 or \$500,000,000—no one can tell, but the parties who make this arrangement. I rather think they know something about it; I cannot believe that any business men would go into a transaction of this kind without having some knowledge of what they are going to receive from it. It is true that this railway ought to be built and there are difficulties we all admit, but at the same time, the contemplated traffic upon that road will be immense. In my judgment it will be sufficient to recoup the parties who build that road in a very short time. If we are going to have such an immense trade, the contractors can well afford to build that road and to trust to what they will realize from the transportation of freight and passengers to recoup them for their expenditure. The transportation charges, of course, will be, and must necessarily be, very large; but at the same time, when the road is constructed the company will be able to realize their expenditure in a very short time, and a very large profit as well; and they will deserve it and ought to have the advantage of their enterprise. My suggestion, as a business man, is

this: let us know what country we have, let us find out exactly from examination, and then we will be able to come to a conclusion; and then say to the people of England and the people of this country, go and examine for yourself, make us a bid and tell us what you can do. I think that course should have been adopted, and in the place of having to give anything away, we would receive a large amount of money for the privilege of building that road into that country. Of course, these are all suppositions, but there are people, particularly at the present time when money is so plentiful in England and men are so anxious to get contracts, who will run great risks for the purpose of prospecting. I have nothing to say against Messrs. Mann and Mackenzie making the best arrangement they could, but are there only two men in this country, in this world financially able to undertake this work? I have better opinion of the people of this country, who generally undertake affairs of this kind, than to suppose that it is only in the hands of two men. Urgency is the plea that is raised in extenuation of this contract. Urgency may be all very well in some cases; but urgency is not always the best justification. The Ottawa Canal was never viewed as a matter of urgency, but still I believe it is of far more importance to Canada and its effects will be far greater to the province of Quebec and Ontario and the country in general than even the building of a road into this great gold country. It will yield greater and more substantial advantages; it will confer great benefit to this country, yet in this matter we are left to paddle our own canoe. Now, hon. gentlemen, I am afraid I am trespassing upon your patience. You have heard this talked over and reiterated a great many times, and therefore it is merely going over the same ground. Let us calmly consider this matter, and when it comes down before us we will be able to judge carefully of its effects and defects, and if it is found to be in the interests of the country that this contract should be accepted, then let us so decide and know that we have performed our duty. If I had my way I would have built that line through the Edmonton district. In this country we have men; our lumbering men I believe would think no more of making a road through that country than they would have of eating their breakfast.