

the same time Parliament can purge itself of this unrighteous act, and an act which degrades Parliament in the eyes of the public. Sir, it will afford me much pleasure to vote for the amendment, and I sincerely hope that it will be carried.

Mr. HESSON. About a year ago, it was my privilege to present petitions from Manitoba and the North-West in reference to the charter which is now under discussion in this House, calling upon the Government to assist a company which at that time were in possession of the charter, and to give them aid to enable them to make a contract to construct this road. The petition set forth the grievances under which the people suffered, the necessity there was that they should reach a market, and pointed out that they had been misled some years ago when the line of railway was diverted from the original survey, and that their circumstances were now such that unless some relief was granted them they would find it necessary to remove from the place they had settled in. I presented these petitions to the House, numerous signed by the old residents of my own county who had gone up to that new land. I took a deep interest in that matter, and the Government finally consented to give the same privileges to that road which they had given to the Manitoba and North-Western and to the Manitoba and South-Western. I understand in connection with the history of this road that in 1832 a charter was given to the Souris and Rocky Mountain Railway, a contract was made and a certain amount of grading done from a place called Melbourne to Rapid City. The people were jubilant over the prospect of a railway, but for want of sufficient means the road was not constructed. The money that had been expended was lost, the work that had been done was not paid for, and the people were in a worse position than they had been before, from the contractors being unable to carry out the contract. The present company, the North-West Central, I understand, obtained a charter in 1884 and became possessors of the franchise of that road. In 1884 they were in the position of not having the same privileges, the same aid afforded them, that were afforded to other roads. The people, in Manitoba, therefore, had a perfect right to ask the Government to come to the assistance of this road, and I myself exerted my influence with the Government and members of this House, and presented petitions in favor of that project. I think one-third of my correspondence came from people in that region, urging me to use my influence in favor of that road. Now that was the policy of this Government and of this Parliament, and it was even supported by the leader of the Opposition and his friends. A deputation came down from Manitoba headed by the member from Minnedosa in the Local Legislature, and one or two other gentlemen of importance. That gentleman, Dr. Harrison, came here and remained some time endeavoring to induce the Government to get a free grant of land, as was done in the case of the other roads. But at that period it was impossible for the gentlemen holding the franchise to make a contract. It was impossible to get parties to undertake to build the railway. They required at least as good a foundation for raising money in the markets of the world as had other roads that were being constructed in that country. That free grant, I believe, was obtained sometime from the Government in the fall of 1885. It was charged against the member for West Toronto that he had not pushed sufficiently in the money market to obtain a contract for the construction of the road. It appears to me very plain that until he obtained the consent of the Government that they would put that road on the same footing as all other roads under construction in Manitoba and the North-West, he was absolutely incapacitated from obtaining parties to furnish money to carry out the work. He obtained from the Government an Order in Council for a free grant to be made to that company, except the expense

Mr. LISTER.

of surveying. So far as I understand, the member for West Toronto (Mr. Beatty), as president of the company, made every effort to obtain parties to enter into a contract to construct the road. It seems he made several trips to New York, and I think he crossed the Atlantic once or twice, and I am sure he has not been dilatory in the matter, but has always expressed himself most anxious to secure parties to build the railway. He was aware that the people of the North-West would not submit to any delay arising on his part, and feeling that he did all in his power I am not prepared to say that he has neglected any opportunity to make a contract for the construction of the road. The hon. member for Marquette (Mr. Watson) has taken a most peculiar course as the representative of that part of the country more specially interested. If the hon. gentleman was as anxious this year as he was last that the work should be constructed, that the line should be built rapidly, he has taken a most peculiar position to-day in being prepared to grant only two weeks in order to allow the present company to establish the fact to the satisfaction of the Government that the present contractors are capable of carrying out the work and have means to complete it; but so strange is his conduct that he is yet in favor of voting for the three months' hoist, which will virtually kill the Bill. The hon. gentleman must have great confidence in the Government for he is willing that they should undertake the work and find a company that will construct it more rapidly than the company now under consideration, and yet within the next few days we may be assured the contractors will proceed with the work energetically and complete it at a much earlier period than the Government could do. It is not very long from now to the 1st of June, when, if the charter is extended to that time, the Government will by proclamation or otherwise, if satisfied of the ability of the contractors, give the charter effect. If not, we shall be in no worse position than we would be if the amendment of the member for Northumberland was adopted. I cannot believe the hon. member for Marquette is at all serious in his proposal. I am afraid he has made a very strange departure from the position he took in this House and the great efforts he made last year, if he seeks in any way to attempt or embarrass the Government in their desire to carry out this great work. I have such confidence in the Government—and the hon. gentleman has quite as much confidence, for he desired to give them full control of the work and put the present Bill aside—that I am satisfied to leave it to them to ascertain whether the contractors have sufficient means to carry out the work before they, the Government, complete the charter by issuing a proclamation. The Government have great responsibility resting upon them and I am prepared to trust them with that responsibility and am not disposed to interfere with the personal differences on the board of directors, and they should not be permitted to interfere with the success of this great enterprise. It is the imperative duty of the Government, understanding all the facts, not to be diverted by any personal disagreement on the board from what is their proper course towards this desirable road. I hope, therefore, in the interest of those for whom I speak, those from whom I have presented petitions and taken an interest in this matter and interviewed with other members of the Government from time to time asking them to place this company in the same position as other companies—and I claim I have a right to speak for those people—I hope the Government will take very good care that neither the quarrels with individual directors nor any other motive except that of the public interest will influence them in prosecuting and completing this important and necessary work at an early day.

Mr. FAIRBANK. The last three speakers on the opposite side of the House, namely, the member for Richmond