

of. When the farmer, the inveterate grumbler, has nothing to complain of—I mean no offence to the farmers; I am one of them myself, and can therefore speak with the more confidence and freedom—I say when the inveterate grumbler has nothing to complain of, we may be quite sure there is no matter for complaint against the National Policy, so far as he is concerned; it does not pinch him at all events. I believe we might go further, I think there are a great many moderate Reformers who have nothing to complain of, though, at the same time, there is a body of inveterate Reformers whose full barns and larders turn to ashes when they reflect that those terrible Tories are in power. The hon. member for Centre Huron, after exhausting his own vocabulary, offered us a morsel from a London journal, to establish beyond doubt that his statements were true. What was the substance of that quotation? It does not prove quite so much as the hon. gentleman proved himself; but it proved one thing which no one will gainsay, and that is, that a London journalist can follow the descent of a Canadian ex-Minister at a very considerable interval. I think the hon. gentleman has established further, that a gentleman who has entered upon public life in Canada under circumstances and conditions so favorable that I regret very much that there are so few of our public men possessing such advantages, has consigned himself, or will consign himself in the natural tide of time, to that condition in which he shall not merely be known as the Minister of deficits, but as the Pasquino of debate—the sayer of bitter things. I shall endeavor briefly to show that the old ladies of both sexes, who have been very much alarmed by the opening of this debate, may lay down their heads in peace during the holidays—no longer Gorgon heads of terror and despair. In the many phases through which this question has passed, and in the frequent recurrence of these forms, I think nothing has been more fully established in this House and in this country than the general desire that the construction of the Pacific Railway should be carried on by private hands; that the Government of the country should not be responsible for a public work involving so much expenditure and so much action. The little experience that has been had of the Pembina Branch, a line only, I think, about 65 miles long, managed, I venture to say, under the direction of a chief who is economical and careful to the last degree—the many complaints that beset members of this House from day to day as to the running of that very small branch line is a slight indication of what might happen if we had 2,600 miles of road in the same position. I believe that the difficulties of such a scheme as that would destroy any Government. At the same time it is quite understood, and, I think, most completely admitted on both sides of the House, that this road should be built. It is the only way in which this Dominion can have the railway facilities we require—the only thing which will make us one people, and bring about a real union of this Dominion, so that we shall be something more than the proverbial bundle of sticks. The able leader of the Opposition, in dealing with this subject, in one of those pleasant moods in which he mingles wit and wisdom so charmingly, drew a very nice picture of my right hon. friend looking down upon his subjects—his children one might call them—whirling over that road at the rate of 25 miles an hour. There is a good deal in this of practical use and value, as I have no doubt was fully intended by that hon. gentleman when he drew the picture. I think that whatever the uses of this road in a material or social point of view, they will be much greater with the entire line upon our own soil. When I come to deal with some other questions I think I shall be able to show that in some other connection—the connection with the rates of charges and the question of monopolies which has been started—it is still more important that the line should be built entirely on Canadian soil. Now, it is said by

some that there is no difficulty in a Government building and owning a railway. It is a well-known fact that railways are run in the southern countries of Europe, in France, Germany and Italy, by the Government, and are kept under effective control. Two things may be said in this connection: in the first place, those are very short roads and very small countries. In the next place, the Governments of those countries are very different from the Government of a free people extending from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Many things can be done in a compact State like France or Germany that cannot be done in our country of more free institutions, with the great freedom of action that prevails; and many things can be done that we should not desire to see done in our country. I shall not be at great pains to reply to the arguments from the Opposition side, and to show that almost every member of the Opposition who has dealt with this subject, has committed himself to the precise terms of this contract. I believe that fact is so clear on the face of it, that I expect, fully, the adhesion of the member for Lambton, whom I am glad to see in his place, and who, I hope, will support the Bill. I am sorry that the leader of the Opposition is not in his place. I should like to call his attention to the maxim of a great legal authority, which may come in here. Capt. Bunsby says very frequently that “the bearing of this observation lies in the application of it.” I should like to call the hon. gentleman’s attention to the proposals made in 1874, very similar to the terms of this contract, with this simple difference of the “application” by the gentleman who then led the Government. I find that in 1874 he offered to all the world the sum of \$10,000 per mile and 20,000 acres for the whole length of 2,600 miles of railway, without any limitation, or conditions to be applied, to the prairie or any other lands in choice or preference. That was not all: although this sum, a very considerable amount, judged by the arithmetic of to-day, for, valuing this land at the lowest sum they have conceded, \$2.00 an acre, we have here \$50,000 a mile, for the 2,600 miles, we are not done with the consideration offered by the late Government. Nor can we tell when we are done; for there is lurking in the background of their proposal an invitation to the contractors to say upon what further sum they will take 4 per cent interest: we were to have had the Georgian Bay Branch tacked on to the 2,600 or 2,700 miles we are considering to-day, which would still further have increased the amount to be expended. There were some things in the way of safeguards to be attached to their Bill. Two-thirds of this great quantity of land was to be sold at prices to be agreed upon, and the proceeds to be paid to the contractors apart from any charge of administration. If my theory is right—and I maintain it is—that the use of those lands is for settlement—I do not think it would serve that great purpose that the sale of those lands should be hampered by the unnecessary condition of a contractor naming a price for them. Nothing could more seriously interfere with the proper and necessary use of those lands than that condition. Then, again, a question has arisen upon the location of those lands, and I venture to refer to some of those points because they have been made a subject of difficulty in connection with this contract. Among other things the proposal of 1874 provided that the Government should have the right of repurchase, that is of resumption when this road was built, by paying the contractors 10 per cent in addition to the money expended upon it. I think that one of the merits of the contract of to-day is, that there is no such provision in it for embarrassing the Government with the applications, the persevering and persistent requirements of people that in a change of Government are always asking for favours affecting the great interests of the country. I think it is very much better that a way should not be prepared or left open for any such demands. A question has arisen as to the quantity of lands in the North-West. It has been objected that, with the lands now proposed to be given