

Section of the Pacific Railway should take place, that I propose to place my amendment in your hands. The line of address adopted by my hon. friend obliges me to go a little more minutely into what I may call the antiquities of this question than I had intended. I must now advert to these antiquities a little more in detail than I would have done, not so much to discuss them in their party aspect, or to ascertain the extent to which each party has become committed, one way or another, not so much to ascertain who was right and who was wrong in the past, not so much with a view to recrimination as to determine what, on the whole, has been the settled policy of Parliament on the subject of increasing the burdens of the people on account of the Pacific Railway. It was on the 1st of April (a fitting day), in the year 1871, that hon. gentlemen opposite, then as now controlling public affairs, carried an address of this House, praying that British Columbia might be united with Canada, on a stipulation to be included in the Terms of Union, that the Pacific Railway should be commenced within two years and finished in ten years. At that stipulation of the Terms of Union the Opposition, and other hon. members not in their ranks, expressed an honest, a genuine alarm. The Terms of Union were believed to be prodigal in all their aspects, and ruinous in particular, with reference to the Railway stipulation. The scheme met with earnest opposition on the part of many not belonging to the Liberal party. There were several divisions upon it, and in one of these it nearly met its fate, the majority which served it being only ten. My hon. friend from Dundas, a supporter of the Administration, moved that amendment which went to postpone the consideration of the question until the sense of the people could be taken upon it. The Government became alarmed lest they should not be able to carry the scheme, and they gave assurances that some resolutions would be brought forward, which might serve as a defence to their followers against the public indignation, which it was apprehended might be aroused by their assenting to the bargain. The Address then passed. This was on the 1st of April; and it was not until the 4th of April that there was a proposal made in the

House for a definition of the liability for the construction of this Railway. The first proposal, made by Sir George Cartier in the absence of the then and now First Minister, and seconded by the present Finance Minister, was that the House would, on the following day, consider a resolution, "That the Railway should be constructed and worked as a private enterprise, and not by Government, and that the public aid to be given to the enterprise should consist of such liberal grants of land, and such subsidy in money or other aid not unduly pressing on the industry and resources of the Dominion, as the Parliament of Canada shall hereafter determine." This resolution was not satisfactory to the friends of the Government. It did not meet the exigencies of the case;—it was too elastic, too vague, it did not mean enough; and the consequence was that on the 11th of April, in substitution for that, a proposal was moved and seconded by the same hon. gentlemen in the same terms—with this exception, for the words "not unduly pressing upon the resources of Canada," the words "not increasing the present rate of taxation" were substituted. This was more precise. The alteration was made in order to satisfy the supporters of the Government, and if possible the people. The hon. the Minister of Railways asserts now, but I deny, that the Terms of Union were in form and fact modified by that resolution. During the debate, an hon. member of this House (Sir Antoine Dorion) moved an Address to Her Majesty praying her to incorporate the resolution into the Terms of Union. That motion was supported by the Liberal party, but was defeated by the votes of hon. gentlemen opposite, who insisted that no such resolution should be carried; that it would prevent the proposed Union, and deprive us of the inestimable blessings to flow from annexing British Columbia to this Dominion; and that the opportunity of so annexing that Province might be lost forever. The opportunity thus fairly offered to make that a condition of the Terms of Union was rejected by hon. gentlemen opposite. Well, I have always urged, and still urge, that the surrounding circumstances cannot be wholly ignored. Having regard to the fact that