

mile ; that is the report of those who have been over the road. If that be so, a policy similar to that adopted in Western Australia could be followed here. You might have extended the time ; you might have said : You shall have ten or fifteen months to complete that road, and we will give you a monopoly of the proceeds of passengers, traffic or trade for one, or two, or even three years, if you like ; and if you had given it to them for five years, the country would have been in an infinitely better position than under the bargain which has been made. Then, there is another point. If the contractors for the construction of the Western Australia Railway into the gold fields could construct that road and be paid by the government very little more than half its actual cost, and could by the passenger fares and the freight enrich themselves in a very few months, comparatively speaking, in a country where the population is as small as it is in Western Australia, what would be the result if this is to be the main line to the Yukon district with a country like ours. We have the whole of British Columbia, we have the whole population of the Dominion. We have the mining population, and those who enter into these speculations of 65,000,000 in the United States, who are rushing there by the tens of thousands, so that in three or four years the owners of that 150 miles could have retired millionaires, simply from the freights and passenger rates alone. Instead of that, you give them a charter to build a road and give them a monopoly of the whole country for five years, and you give them 3,750,000 acres of gold land. It is true you may say, formerly it was considered to be worth nothing, but it has been known for the last quarter of a century that gold existed in this country, and if you want any evidence of that, read an extract from one of Sir John Macdonald's letters contained in his history by Mr. Joseph Pope, when he was writing to Lord Strathcona on this very important question, in which the then Sir Donald Smith pointed out the necessity of securing, under the Washington treaty, the navigation of the Yukon and Stikine Rivers, because, he says, that is looked upon as a gold country. The Hudson Bay people I suppose, had discovered the fact that there was gold in that country, but acting on their policy they never gave the information to the public. But that is not all. Contractors

are to receive some \$375,000 from the British Columbian Government to aid in its construction. So that you have all these advantages granted to a couple of gentlemen who are undertaking this contract. Personally, I have the highest esteem and greatest respect for these gentlemen and I do not blame them for entering into the contract obtaining the charter for 150 miles for which they are to receive 3,750,000 acres of land and \$375,000 from British Columbia and a monopoly of the carrying trade into that country for five years at least, and I believe there is something about a ten year concession in the contract of which I cannot speak now, because I am not aware of the actual contents of the document which has been placed in my hands. What I ask is this : whether, with a proposition of that kind, this House or this country would be justified in adopting it and in placing the law upon the statute-book. Urgency, I know, is all that can be said in its favour. Urgency existed in Australia at the time I refer to. The hon. gentleman (Mr. Mills) shakes his head, but the fact that they made time the essence of the contract is the best possible answer to that wise shake of the head of the hon. Minister of Justice, that urgency induced the government to take the course they did, and I do not hesitate to say that a more extravagant and indefensible contract—perhaps I may change my mind after I read the terms—so far as it has been made public, could not be conceived by any person, nor can I understand how any government could enter into such an arrangement secretly on the eve of meeting parliament. Would it not have been as easy to have said to all these gentlemen seeking charters “ We want this road built immediately, it is urgent that it should be constructed in order to keep the people who go into that country from starving, and what are the terms upon which you will build the road ? ” I believe the road could have been built without the granting of one single dollar of money or one single acre of land. The traffic over that section of the road will be sufficient to justify the expenditure of any amount of money in order to enable them to construct it. When the measure comes up I shall take the trouble to go more fully into this whole question, because then I hope to be better informed upon the subject ; but in the meantime I cannot believe that this country will justify the adoption of any contract involving the sequestra-