

spent on the Vancouver Island Railway this year in construction, though a good deal might be expended in the purchase of rails. British Columbia was not unreasonable in this matter. So long as reasonable progress was made with the work she would be content.

HON. MR. READ in approaching this question would only review the commercial aspect, as the political had been fully gone into by other hon. gentlemen who preceded him. What were we asked to do for extending the time for constructing the Pacific Railway? It was simply this: The Government have agreed in reality to build a line of railway from Victoria to Nanaimo, on Vancouver Island, which by water is said to be sixty-five miles, but by the sinuosity of the coast may be eighty-five miles, and this alongside the best water communication in the world every day of the year, as there is no frost in that country to interfere as in this; and, moreover, this can never be a portion of the Pacific Railway without this country is prepared to forego every other improvement to finish a useless and exceedingly expensive one, even if it could be done at once, which I have very great doubts. We could build the road along the island, which is nearly two hundred miles long, to the place where there is some probability of crossing from island to island by spans of bridges and tunnelling through the mountains. The cost would be something enormous to contemplate. There would be hence to be built seven spans, varying, by Mr. Fleming's report, from 640 to 1,375 feet, with a tide running from four to eight miles per hour, and the depth of the water, by the Admiralty charts, something enormous, so that it would be impossible to put down piers. Now, just fancy a span of a bridge 1,300 feet or more, and seven of them. That of itself is enough to preclude its construction, all this work being unnecessary, as there is plenty of opportunity of reaching the mainland with ships of any draught of water, and easy of access. The next question is—what is this road for, and what trade will spring up for it when constructed? The whole country through which it passes is mountainous

and barren, but there are some coal mines at Nanaimo. From Mr. Langevin's report, who visited that country in 1872, we find that about \$120,000 worth per year were shipped from all British Columbia, mostly to the United States. These mines are near the water, so that the railroad would not assist that trade, if there is any, is not assisted. Indeed I cannot see, nor has any one explained what the road is expected to do when completed. Of the whole export trade, it amounts to about \$2,000,000 — \$1,000,000 is in gold, \$340,000 in furs, \$300,000 in coals, the rest fish, &c., &c. This is the trade of last year for the whole of British Columbia. What is this road to cost is the next question—say sixty-five miles at \$60,000 per mile, would amount to \$3,900,000. It may be said that is too high a figure: it might be so, but from experience we know roads on the Pacific Ocean have cost very much more than that, and when we consider the rate of wages in that country, it is not too much, and it will be so found. The rate of wages taken from the Hon. Mr. Langevin's report, is for laborers, \$1.75 to \$2.00 per day, and every other thing in proportion. Now, how is the railroad to accommodate less than six thousand people? The last census report says there are 5,959 souls, and for these we are to build a railway, costing about \$4,000,000, an expenditure of over \$650 per head. At the last election for the Vancouver District there were three candidates, and after a severe contest the number of votes polled was only 553; whilst for Victoria (the capital) we find there were four candidates, and the total number of votes polled was 959, so that for each voter the expenditure will be about \$2,600. The whole scheme is an absurdity, and should not be carried out. It is true they have a fine climate, but there are no people except Indians. The census report only gives a little over ten thousand Chinese in all British Columbia. In looking at the trade, I find they expend annually about \$90,000 in horses and cattle; \$220,000 in hay, straw, eggs, butter, wheat, flour, lard, &c.; about \$80,000 in cigars and tobacco; and \$40,000 in tea and coffee. There being no manufactories, they buy their machines, and last year they purchased