

acres. Now this last week we are told we have 250,000,000 acres there. I would like to be able to believe anything of the kind, that there was 250,000,000 of acres there fit for settlement in every respect, where the climate is not too severe and the frost not too early. This is a recklessly wild assertion; we have no evidence to show anything of the kind. Professor Macoun has done his utmost to extend the area of fertile lands, to persuade us all that lands formerly considered barren and useless are among the most fertile in the North-West. But no one man could in two, three, five, or ten years so examine the country as to be able to say there was 100,000,000 acres of good land in it. It is simply physically impossible. But even if it were all fertile land, that which is close to the railway is estimated to be worth only a dollar an acre, what then would be the value of land from 200 to 500 miles off? The older Provinces will, therefore, have to pay the whole of this \$53,000,000 in cash, and the chances of their ever receiving \$1,000,000 of it back again is very small indeed. The very interest upon the amount we have already paid would absorb the product of a great many million acres of land to be sold every year. The last returns show an expenditure of about \$18,600,000, which, at five per cent., give an interest of nearly \$1,000,000 a year. This would require, according to the best estimate, a million of acres to be sold and not repay a single dollar of the principal. I regard the prospect of getting back the money that we will expend utterly out of the question. Had we any reason to expect that tens or hundreds of thousands of people would flock into that country within a few years, we might possibly try to be content with having to pay so large a sum towards opening up that country. But the monopoly we are about to create will effectually prevent the settlement of that country. There were very serious obstacles already to its settlement; it was difficult to persuade people, that a country where the average temperature during the whole winter was very low, and where in many parts early frosts were experienced, was a very desirable country for settlement, no matter how rich its soil might be. But we are about to create an obstacle greater than any that nature has placed in the way of the settlement of that country. The monopoly which we endeavored to extinguish in that country, was not essentially so odious and detestable as that we are now asked to create. Why, if the gentlemen associated with the Syndicate in the Company, do choose to construct all this railroad, just see what a position that country will be in. The hon. member for Glengarry (Mr. McLennan), this afternoon, in the effort to prove that we were not about to close up all avenues and lock up all the gates of that country, and hand over the keys to the Syndicate, said that there were other modes of getting into the country, and I think I heard him speak of water stretches—those water stretches so much despised and scorned for many years—by which another avenue could be made. Well, suppose the people in that country become numerous and wealthy enough to be able themselves to open some sort of communication in the way the hon. gentleman indicated, what would it amount to? It would be but a summer route, after all. But the possibility, not to say the probability, of any such a route as that being open for many years to come, is very faint indeed, and the very fact that a gentleman of the experience in business and in public affairs of the hon. member for Glengarry felt obliged to argue that such an avenue could be opened, proves in itself how extraordinary are the powers we are about to confer on this Company. Having already access to the great railway centres of the United States, and being in such a position that we may, in a year or two, have easy access to the waters of the great lakes, why should we place that country in such a position that the day after this Bill is passed, it will have no means of communication with the outer world except such as are provided by the

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Syndicate, that we shall have deprived these people of all power to help themselves, save such power as ever rests with a people determined never to submit to oppression? We give this monopoly the power to build railways wherever they choose—in one instance between points a thousand miles apart. True the consent of the Governor in Council must be obtained for such works; but what guarantee is there that the Government who entered into such a bargain as this will ever use its power to prevent the Syndicate from doing what they consider best for themselves? Why, we have heard it argued that these men, who are commercial men, know best where to locate the road. If they know best, where should they be restrained? If the true intent of this policy is to enable these men to do the best they can for themselves, why should we expect the Government to interfere? They will locate that road wherever they please—there is no doubt about that. The Government may make some show of insisting that the line must go one way or must not go another way, but even for that little show of independence, let me tell them, they will get no credit. The public will not believe in their sincerity, will not believe that, after having sacrificed so much, they are likely to insist on such trifles. The Syndicate can select lands and positions where they please, which will for all time virtually give them the command of the whole country. They file their plans as one of the departments here and forthwith their route is established, and they build railways wherever they please, and for such railways they get the right of way anywhere and everywhere, and along such lines they get such lands as they please. This monopoly presses down upon the population in that country until it makes them its perfect slaves, cramped, cabined, confined, utterly unable to help themselves; and we are depriving ourselves of the power to help them, so that appeal to us for assistance or redress would be useless. All that, Mr. Chairman, for the long period of twenty years. We hand them over the Pembina Branch, the line of railway from Lake Superior to Selkirk, and with a strange infatuation we provide that no other company shall build any line of railway south of south-west, or shall build any line of railway approaching within fifteen miles of the American frontier for twenty years to come. We divest ourselves of the power, as far as it is possible for this Parliament to divest any future Parliaments of such power, to authorize any company, no matter what the circumstances of the country may be, no matter how monstrous we may find this monopoly, by-and-by to be, to connect with the railway system of the United States for twenty years. And so we surrender absolutely and entirely the whole carrying trade of all that vast region to this Company. It has been argued that other companies, if they choose, can build branches to the north of this line. So they can, if companies can be found foolish enough to invest their money in any works of the kind. It was all very well when the Government owned this road, that some restriction of this kind should be made. It was not absolutely unreasonable, because it was supposed that the Government would use that road for the public benefit, and would also pay due regard to the interests of the people living in the North-West. It would have been perfectly safe if the Government owned the main trunk line, if companies were allowed to build branches running east, north-west or north-east, as they might then be in a position to obtain reasonable terms for any freight that might be brought down over the Government line of railway. But under this scheme the owners of such lines become merely the contributors to this Company, and if they bring their merchandize over this road they must expect to pay just such rates as the Company choose to impose. It is not to be expected that private companies, under these circumstances, would build any line; and it is to be expected that this Company will so lay out their branch lines as virtually to give them for all