

Mr. MILLS. Seven or eight years have gone by since a proposition similar, in some respects, to that which the hon. gentleman now submits to the House was laid before Parliament by a former Administration. When I dissented from the observation of the hon. gentleman, that this was not a part of the policy of the former Government, but was merely a tentative measure, I did not mean that the hon. gentleman was not accurately representing the statement made by the hon. member for East York (Mr. Mackenzie); but I did mean to express my dissent from the accuracy of that statement, because that measure was introduced with the full approval of the Government, and received its first and second readings as a measure to which the Government was committed; and it was only abandoned, so far as I know—and I think those hon. gentlemen who were associated with me in the Administration, and who are now present, will support what I say—because we believed the measure could not be carried through the Senate that Session; and it was desirable to allow it to stand over, for that reason, until the opinion of the country was had on the general policy of the Administration. I say this with the most distinct recollection of all the facts connected with the introduction and consideration of that measure in the House. Now, the hon. gentleman has made a statement, on his own responsibility, which is not strictly accurate. He said that the policy of the Government was to prevent any railway being built within 40 miles of the Canadian Pacific Railway or any of its branches. Now, Sir, that was not the policy. There was nothing proposed to Parliament from which that inference could be drawn.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. I read the clause.

Mr. MILLS. It is true we introduced a Bill which received its second reading. It is true the hon. gentleman did not support it; he did not, I believe, either speak or vote against it; but when the vote on the second reading was taken the hon. gentleman informed us that he would oppose the Bill on the House going into committee upon it; and before I conclude my observations I shall call attention to the views that were expressed by some of the hon. gentleman's colleagues and supporters. Now, that measure was one proposing the free incorporation of railways. It was not similar to the measures which the hon. gentleman has sometimes submitted to this House for the construction of railways in the North-West Territories. It was a measure establishing a general principle. The principle had long been tried and had resulted satisfactorily in the United States; it had been tried in the State of New York and, I believe, in almost all the States along the border. Measures of railway incorporation are not introduced into the State Legislatures; the general principle is recognised, and people are held to invest their money in a railway undertaking on their own responsibility, precisely as in other undertakings; they only give this security to the State, that they are undertaking the work in good faith. They deposit with the Government plans and specifications, estimates of the cost, and a certain percentage of the cost, as a guarantee of good faith. That was precisely the character of the measure I proposed. We proposed, by the 18th section of that Bill:

"No company shall be incorporated under the provisions of this Act for the construction of any railway having the same general direction as the Canadian Pacific Railway, or any branch thereof, at a nearer distance than 40 miles."

That did not tie the hands of Parliament; it did not say that Parliament should not authorise the construction of a railway nearer than that distance; but we said we do not propose to authorise any railway company, under the provisions of this Act, to become organised, to subscribe stock and deposit plans with the Government, and then undertake the construction of their line at a nearer distance than that. That was all that we proposed. The rest was left open, to be

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dealt with by Parliament, from time to time, as it might think proper. Precisely as they deal with railway companies, it was left to Parliament to deal with those companies that might receive charters of incorporation at a nearer distance than that which is specified in this particular section. It is true the Minister who now has charge of railways and canals (Mr. Pope) subsequently expressed the opinion that the principle of this Bill was sound, but the hon. gentleman took a different view. The hon. member for Northumberland (Mr. Mitchell) expressed himself very strongly against the principle of the Bill or the policy of aiding branch lines of railways or colonisation roads, and similar views were expressed by the hon. member for Niagara (Mr. Plumb), and the hon. member for South Norfolk (Mr. Wallace). The hon. gentleman has failed to observe this in the various statements he has made with regard to this Bill, for I believe we have never had any proposition for the incorporation of railways in Manitoba and the North-West Territories where this proposed measure has not been referred to. I believe that it was a proper measure to propose; I believe the circumstances of the North-West country and the Province of Manitoba would be very different to-day had that Bill become law; I believe they would have a much larger population; I believe they would be more compact, that the country would be better settled, and the people, in consequence, more prosperous and contented than they now are. In fact, we would have had railway facilities existing years ago, which do not exist up to this moment. In that measure we proposed to grant to railway companies not more than 6,400 acres per mile, up to the 102nd meridian, and about 7,800 acres west of the 102nd meridian; a larger grant, of course, was proposed towards the Peace River country. It was not a fixed sum that the Government were to give, as a matter of course, to every railway company, but it was a maximum quantity, which was not to be exceeded. We also provided there should be no restriction upon settlement; that no company incorporated under that Act should have power to interfere with the settlement of the country, and that the Government might set apart the moneys they received from the settlers on the sale of lands would be used in paying for the construction of roads, up to \$10,000 a mile, and that beyond that the companies would not be entitled to receive anything from the Government, by way of aid, in the construction of these lines. In adopting that proposition we found that the experience of our neighbors across the line had been in favor of colonisation railways. I observed that in the State of Minnesota the increase of population was 27,000 a year and the number of miles of railway built 92; in Iowa the increase of population was 52,000 a year and the number of miles built 180; in Missouri the increase of population was 65,000 a year and the miles of railway built 107; in Illinois the increase of population was 82,000, the miles of railway 166. I found that, in fact, there was a certain relation between the increase of population and the number of miles of railway constructed. Of course, the rate of increase of population, no doubt, would tend to advance with the construction of railways, but the construction of railways at convenient points, and in sections of the country suited for settlement, also facilitates the colonisation and settlement of the country; and I believe the same results would have followed the adoption of a similar policy in our North-West as those which followed the adoption of this policy in the various States of the American Union. Now, when that proposition was made a number of gentlemen opposed it very strongly. Among them was the hon. member for Northumberland (Mr. Mitchell). He said, on this subject:

"He did not know what the opinions of gentlemen from Ontario and Quebec might be, nor did he care. He had one thing to do, and that was his duty. His duty, in this case, he conceived to be, to call the attention of Parliament to the proposed spoliation of western land. It