

to greater nearness to market those lands have timber of more or less value upon them. This is exclusive to all free settlement. In the face of such a state of things, how is it possible \$2.50 can be got for land in Manitoba and beyond. It is, as I said before, placing the lands absolutely out of market. Sir Hugh Allan in the speech he delivered at Peterboro—seemed to think the settlement of these lands a light matter. He said "the Pacific Railroad would open up a country of which we had no idea. There were hundreds of square miles—millions of acres—of rich land in the Saskatchewan Valley, that would be opened up and made accessible by that railway. It was almost fabulous to hear the manner in which people talked of those lands; but at the same time one could not doubt the facts when dozens of persons who have at different times and under different circumstances visited that country, say that the land is rich to a great degree, that the climate is not insupportable and that the country is one through which railways can be made with comparative facility and through which it is desirable to have railways. That country will be settled in a comparatively short space of time when once opened up."

Hon. Mr. MACPHERSON—What possibility is there of selling our lands for \$2.50 an acre, and yet the Government have tied their own hands by fixing that price. If they find it prevents settlement, they cannot repair their mistake—it will be too late—they can't reduce the price; the bondholders would be up in arms the moment such a thing was proposed. It has been said that while they could not reduce, they might offer their lands free—in other words, that while they could not impair the security, they could destroy it altogether. I hope it will be long before such a code of morals prevails in this country. The plan I propose here, the abrogation of the treaty, is a very extreme one, and nothing but the public interest would induce me to recommend it. But in this particular case I think the public interest is of sufficient importance, is sufficiently pressing to render that a proper remedy, inasmuch as it is the only remedy; and, I think in this particular instance, it is a proper remedy. It is not an illegal one, for Parliament has reserved to itself the power to repeal charters, and has exercised it. The Interpretation Act of 1867, clause 7, sec. 34, reserves this power when the public interest requires it, as does the General Railway Act of 1862; also the Joint Stock Companies' Act. The principle is embodied in British constitutional law. It

was enforced in the case of the legislation respecting Municipal Corporations in 1835, but would only be enforced in the public interest. In Canada the charters of certain banks were repealed, and this is the proper course as regards this charter. Another reason for postponing for a time, if not for ever, the placing of this railway in the hands of a company, is the propriety of waiting to see what policy will be adopted in England and elsewhere respecting railways. The question of state ownership is everywhere agitated. In most continental countries the State is the owner of the railways, or are to become so at a stated time. In Belgium concessions have been granted; but in 90 years the State is to become owner of the railways; the rolling stock to be paid for at a fixed price by arbitrators. It is much the same in France and other European countries. In Belgium the Government owns some of the roads. In nearly all continental countries the state either owns or is to own them in a certain number of years. In North Germany the time is even shorter than in England, the question is being agitated, the Inspector Railways has reported in favor of the State acquiring the railways, as the only means of checking the monopoly of the companies. Many large companies have already amalgamated, and it is feared they will control the entire traffic of the most important portions of the country, to the injury of the people.

We see what is taking place in the United States in consequence of railway monopolies. At such a time therefore it would have been a wise and proper thing constitutionally and otherwise for the Canadian Government to have waited and reflected carefully before taking the action they did in this matter. It was very extraordinary to close such a charter without submitting it to Parliament—to close it after Parliament was summoned, more over. When the importance of this measure is seen and understood by the country, I think it will be felt that our constitutional and parliamentary system has been subjected to a very great strain by the course pursued by the Government in granting this charter.

Hon. gentlemen I have occupied the House longer than I intended, but the importance of the question, which I wish had fallen into abler hands, must be my apology. The course I propose to you is the abrogation of the charter. The sooner that step is taken the better for the country. I will not say a charter should be abrogated without indemnity to the parties interested if any loss can be shown. But up