

before the House at the present moment. The policy of the Government is: that the road shall be constructed at once on the north shore of Lake Superior. What would be the consequence of carrying out that policy? There would be no communication by that road with the eastern railways for ten years to come; and though we may secure the incipient trade of our own territories, we would lose the traffic from the north-western States of the Union. The other policy would be to bring the line at once to Sault Ste. Marie, thus securing us immediate connection, not only with the North-West, but with the American railways. Can any one hesitate for a moment in the presence of that policy? What reason can be urged for the adoption of the route along the north shore of Lake Superior? Though the question has thus far been discussed entirely in an unsectional spirit, I think I might well enquire which of these two policies will be of most benefit to my own Province. The immediate construction of the road to Sault Ste. Marie would at once carry over the railway system of Quebec the trade of our own North-West and of the American north-western States as well—a state of things which would prove of immense and obvious benefit to the cities of Montreal and Quebec. But this is not the primary reason for the adoption of the line by way of Sault Ste. Marie. This road would help our Province to get out of the financial difficulties by which it is at present beset. That Province has now a debt which exceeds \$15,000,000; this year it has been compelled to borrow \$4,000,000 more, and this with the pressure of constant and annually increasing deficits. It is a matter of anxiety to every inhabitant of Quebec how these deficits are to be met, but so far it has been found impossible to devise a means by which they can be wiped out. Our resources have been pledged to the fullest extent, and they have not that elasticity which will enable us to avail ourselves of them in the near future. Our only resource will be the direct taxation of our people unless we are so happy as to find a means of increasing the traffic of our railways. Unless that relief comes within a short period, the financial prospects of Quebec must be held to be critical indeed. If the road to Sault Ste. Marie was constructed, instead of having to wait for ten years we should have, within a period of two or three years at the utmost, the benefit of the trade of north-western Canada and the United States; and it must be evident to every hon. gentleman from Quebec that that traffic would be of material assistance to our Province in its present financial condition. I do not say that that assistance would be sufficient to lead us out of our present difficulties, but it would leave the present and future of our Province not so dark as it is at the present moment. I would appeal upon this question to my fellow countrymen from Quebec who are supporting the Government. We have often been told, by the supporters of the Government in Lower Canada, especially by the press, of the immense influence which these hon. members have with the Administration, that they have only to come and ask what they want and they will receive it at once. They would almost have us believe that the Government occupy the position of the servant mentioned in Scripture, who came when he was told to come and went when he was told to go. If these gentlemen have so much influence with the Government, now or never is their opportunity of exercising it to the great benefit of their Province, and for the purpose of averting injury to the Dominion, for I hold that the adoption of this contract would be a great calamity to the Dominion at large. It is a delusion, because it would not remove any of those inconveniences expected to be dispersed; because it leaves this Government with the same inconveniences that were experienced in the past with the former system, and adds to them other and greater. It is a danger, because it threatens to create, upon the free soil of this country, a monopoly which may at some time or

Mr. LAURIER.

another be a cause of trouble to the peace and harmony of this country. This is the contract of which Ministers are so proud, that the mere remembrance of connection with its inception and execution they feel proud to leave as a legacy to their children. My wish and hope is that the legacy may be as pleasant to their offspring as to the parents. I am quite sure it will, because we know it is a law of human nature that where the affections are strong and love prevails even faults are accounted merits. I think it was the Minister of Public Works who stated that this contract was calculated to enrich our country, increase our population, and secure our free institutions. How it is to achieve all these results is not to my humble perception quite visible. As to its securing British institutions in this country, I would be sorry indeed for my country if they were dependent upon the construction of a railway, whether of gigantic or diminutive proportions. British institutions rest in this country upon a surer foundation; they are impressed upon the minds and hearts of our people, because this land, inhabited as it is by men differing in creed and origin, and whose fathers were once separated by deep national feuds, have secured under those institutions, freedom, equality, amity and good will. But Ministers should remember the fact, which they seem to forget, that those institutions that have secured us our present blessings, are those of the 19th century, and not those of an earlier time, the relics of barbarian days. If hon. gentlemen opposite are desirous of securing British institutions, they must infuse into the legislation of this country the broad spirit of modern England, and not seek to establish those monopolies which at this day prove so many thorns in the side of England, great as she is. Let them look at the country they pretend to admire, and they will see what deep and firm roots abuses will strike into the soil, and what toils, labors, miseries and sufferings, such abuses can produce to the people of that country. They have examples of this kind before their eyes at this very day. If this contract is to be judged in the light of modern British ideas and principles, it carries with it its death warrant, and the only duty that remains for the House to perform, is simply to reject it on the first opportunity.

Mr. CIMON. I rise to say that it is with the greatest pleasure that I endorse the contract that the Government has entered into with the Syndicate, and which secures the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway in ten years. I quite understand the ardor with which the Liberals attack this contract. You see, Mr. Chairman, they are being disarmed. Since 1874, when I first had the honor of taking a seat in this House, every year we were obliged to vote several millions of dollars for the construction of this railway; every year our liabilities were increasing. We were in doubt. The Liberals declared that the road would cost the country \$150,000,000 and even \$180,000,000 in cash; we were told that the lands of the North-West were of no great value. They added that once the road was built it would be necessary to equip and work it, and that that would cost the Government several millions annually. We had, therefore, reason to fear and tremble. And when the Liberals rolled out these mighty figures before the people, it is easy to conceive the dread that they created. But now, Mr. Chairman, the Government brings down a scheme that puts an end to all that uncertainty. Once the contract is ratified by this House, the Syndicate will go to work, and the Pacific Railway will be speedily and efficiently constructed; the works will be immediately carried on at both ends, and in the centre, of the road at the same time. As these works progress, the North-West will be developed and the whole Dominion enriched, and in ten years this great railway will be completed and opened to traffic from one end to the other. Then the obligations of the Government will cease, and we will no longer talk of this great undertaking, which will at length be realized, except to