

to be taken into account entirely. Let me use his very words so as to avoid the possibility of misquoting him. The right hon. gentleman said :

But before I proceed any further, let me say that the conception which we have of this work which we are now contemplating is very different from the conception entertained of it by some of our critics. Most of our critics look upon the scheme simply as a commercial venture to be judged by the only rule of profit and loss. We look upon it as a work of a national character necessitated by the status of Canada in the year 1903.

The right hon. gentleman here announces that most of his critics look upon this scheme as a commercial adventure, and are judging it differently from the way in which the government are judging it, as the government look upon it from a national point of view. The right hon. gentleman dismisses to a very great extent, if not entirely, the commercial idea from consideration altogether. Let me tell the right hon. gentleman that it is absolutely impossible for him to dismiss the commercial idea from the consideration of this measure. If it is not to be founded upon business principles and on a commercial basis it will not stand at all. If it is not to be tested as to the results of profit and loss, how is it going to work out successfully? Are not the people who are going to use it going to judge on the question of profit and loss? Are not the western people going to judge whether or not they can use this road to advantage by the question of cost? Are they not told by the declaration in this contract and in this Bill and by the assurance already given in the declaration of the hon. gentleman, that it is not only an all-Canadian route, but the speediest and the cheapest route? If it is, then the question of dollars and cents, the question of profit and loss is necessarily bound up in the enterprise. If the government wanted to spend \$15,000,000—and this portion of the road will cost that much, as I will show before I conclude—as a set-off to the maritime provinces against the enormous expenditures which are to be made in other provinces, I could suggest to my hon. friends ways and directions in which the money could be expended to some advantage to the maritime provinces directly, and indirectly to the whole of Canada. I could have pointed out to my hon. friend that he could have taken a portion of that money and improved one or two of the grades on the Intercolonial Railway, which would have made some difference in the matter of time, and would have made it somewhat easier than it is now for that railway to carry heavy loads. He could have taken a portion of that money to the harbours of Halifax and St. John and could have equipped those harbours so that they could have handled the traffic coming there for ocean shipment. He would have done

some good with the money in that way. He will do no good with it now, except the temporary good that may be done while the money is in the course of expenditure. I say it was the bounden duty of the government, if they were impressed with the idea that \$15,000,000 or any lesser sum should be expended in the maritime provinces, to take council as to how the people would most desire that money to be laid out, and as to the best results to be achieved by the expenditure. We know that in the port of St. John, and perhaps to a less extent in the port of Halifax, though to that port the same remark can be applied, the people have expended of their own means, have imposed obligations upon themselves, have contracted debts through their city councils for the purpose of making those ports suitable for the handling of ocean freights and the transaction of ocean business. They ought not to have been compelled to do it, but they had to do it or go without the business and the progress they were anticipating or desiring. But the government do not make that proposition; therefore, they fail, it seems to me, in grasping the needs of the situation, and are giving the people something they have not asked for, and something they do not need and do not want, and are denying to them what they could with advantage receive and the improvements which they could make with that money if it were at their disposal.

I come now to the financial aspects of this scheme. On these I will not dwell at great length; but I would like to present to the House what my view of that branch of the question is. First, I take the question of the cost of the line from Lévis to Moncton. I make that mileage 425 miles. If the road is ever built, which I very much doubt, that mileage will not be found to be excessive, but a reasonable estimate. The government estimate is made that it will cost \$30,000 per mile. From what I can learn, the cost of building the line through a considerable section of the province of Quebec, before it reaches Edmundston, will be very great. For a portion of the distance it will have to cross mountains, gulleys and rivers, and I believe it will cost more than \$30,000 per mile; I would not be surprised if it cost \$40,000 to construct that portion of the railway. But I am going to take an average between the two, and I think I am on safe ground when I calculate on \$35,000 per mile. That will represent an expenditure of \$15,000,000.

I next take the section between Quebec and Winnipeg. We are told that it is 1,400 miles, some say 1,500 miles. I will take the lesser mileage. The estimate is that that will cost \$30,000 per mile. I have made some inquiry as to what the cost of that portion of the Canadian Pacific Railway north of Lake Superior was. That portion of the railway, as everybody knows, is