

who entered largely into the subject this afternoon, showed from a carefully prepared report made by an expert that this is an impracticable scheme. It is something like that other wild-cat scheme of a ship railway that is to carry ships across New Brunswick. Now, it has been said that many of the people in the North-West are living far away from railways. I grant it. I remember the time when there was not a railway in Ontario. Even after we had the Grand Trunk and the Northern many of our farmers had to team their grain forty or fifty miles, and I do not know but many of them made as much money then as they do now, perhaps more. Those men learned to take things as they found them, even though they did not move very fast: but they endeavoured to clear up the land and make improvements, and if some of them have done well it has only been by hard work. I do not pity the people of the North-West if they have to wait a few years before they get all the railways they want. I believe that both Liberals and Conservatives would be in favour of this road if they could be shown that any good purpose would be served by it. But everybody knows that in a town high taxes depreciate the value of property, and so when Dominion taxation is high, it is a drain on the people, and times are not so good that we can afford to be lavish in our expenditure. In the admirable speech which Mr. Hague delivered the other day at the annual meeting of the Merchants Bank he said that in no year had there been so much bankruptcy in the Dominion of Canada as there was last year, when the failures involved something like \$17,800,000 of liabilities. That does not show a condition of prosperity: it shows that too many people have been depending for their prosperity upon borrowed money. Now I hope this will not pass. I hope that this era of economy, of which we have heard so much lately, will begin in earnest, and I shall cheerfully support the Finance Minister in everything reasonable.

Mr. WELSH. As far as the navigation of the Hudson Bay route is concerned, there is no trouble about it. I believe a powerful wooden steamer of two thousand tons or a steel steamer adapted for the ice could make two round trips from England safely to the Hudson Bay every year. I have sold some ships to the Hudson Bay Company in London for that purpose, and have had many interviews with them about the navigation of the Bay, and I think there would be no difficulty in opening that route if the country could afford it. I would be the last to object to the Bill, but we have already expended a very large sum in opening up that country with different railways, and I do not think the financial affairs of the Dominion are in such a very prosperous condition that we can encumber ourselves with a few more millions. The Government ought to look around and see the aspect of affairs in other countries. There is the Argentine Republic, and Chili, and New Zealand, which have been going ahead with their boasted highfalutin prosperity, and have fallen in the money market to the depths we all know of to-day. Look at their stock in the English market to-day, and see where their extravagance has left them? Why, in New Zealand the officials have to work for half pay. I do not think our position is very bad, but I remember only last year the late lamented leader of

the Government said he thought it was high time we should call a halt in this railway expenditure, and I think it would be well for the Government to be cautious. I do not like to say anything against the scheme, because I think the members from the North-West ought to be the best judges of their requirements, but I would suggest that the Government should use caution. We had a speech yesterday from the member from Toronto (Mr. Cockburn), who gave us his view of the financial affairs of Prince Edward Island, of which he had evidently made a deep study; and as he appears to be a man of great information and deep thought, who has no doubt crossed the *pons asinorum* and understands a great many things, though there are many asses bridges he has not yet crossed, I would like him to give us a statement, from his point of view, of the state of affairs with regard to the North-West. I have no doubt that he is a useful member of this House, and that he makes a deep study of the financial standing of the different provinces. He gave us Prince Edward Island yesterday, and the least he should do is to give us his opinion concerning the expenditure of \$2,000,000 for the construction of this road.

Mr. COCKBURN. I do not think the hon. gentleman is exactly in order; and although I am willing to undertake, as I have undertaken in the earlier part of my life, to handle some pretty recalcitrant subjects, still there are limits, and I really could not undertake the instruction of the hon. gentleman. I must draw the line at my hon. friend.

Mr. DEWDNEY. The debate has taken a much wider range than I had anticipated. I did not anticipate that the Hudson Bay Railway scheme would be the leading question this afternoon. However, I think the promoters of this Bill will find no fault with the debate, which, so far as it has gone, will do them no injury, particularly as the feasibility of the Hudson Bay route has been ably supported by my hon. friend from Prince Edward Island (Mr. Welsh), whose maritime experience is so well known, not only in this House but in all parts of the Dominion. The hon. member for East Simcoe (Mr. Spohn) went very largely into the question of the Hudson Bay Railway. No doubt he has been preparing himself for some time, for we must recognize the fact that he was loaded up to the hilt with regard to this question. My impression is, however, that the hon. gentleman has never visited our western country; and it was very noticeable in this debate to see the difference between the views of those who have visited that country and those who have not. Both the hon. member for Guysborough (Mr. Fraser) and the hon. member for Bothwell (Mr. Mills) misunderstood the hon. member for West Assiniboia (Mr. Davin), because I am perfectly aware that hon. gentleman is of the same opinion with regard to the main question of the Hudson Bay Railway as its promoters, and is also, I believe, in favour of the road which the Government have now placed before the House for consideration. I was rather interested in the remarks of the hon. member for West Assiniboia in reference to the main line he spoke of from San Francisco to Hudson Bay, because that is the line which has been laid out on the maps ever since that scheme has been mentioned, and it is one which, if the Hudson Bay scheme proper is found to be feasible, will be constructed in the future, if not in