

make it imperative that immediate action should be taken for the purpose of carrying out the principle of the greater good to the greater number, for the purpose of promoting the interests of the whole country, then I say that the Government should not hesitate to take such action. We know perfectly well that some of the best things that are accomplished in business are accomplished by men who have pluck and boldness in their natures, and the same thing applies to the government of a country. A government that is bold and plucky in doing what they think is best will satisfy the people of the country better than a government destitute of courage, and which is afraid to act promptly. I agree also, that in the case of any large contract, it is a most important thing that we should advertise for tenders. That, I think, is fair and right. It is a sound principle, and the question which this House has to consider is, whether the Government was justified under the present circumstances in letting a contract without calling for tenders, and doing that without consulting Parliament. We will have to come to a conclusion on these questions in accordance with the facts and in accordance with what we think to be best in the interests of the country at large. There is one thing in connection with the letting of that contract which I think is unprecedented. There may be some members of this House who know to the contrary, but I am not aware of tenders ever having been asked for the construction of any railway or any great work, on the basis that no money was to be paid for that work. There are few contractors indeed who would feel inclined to tender on any large work with the understanding that they were to be paid in something that it was difficult to attach a monetary value to. I therefore say that this extraordinary and unprecedented circumstance had to be taken into consideration. It may perhaps be said that the Government should have given a liberal cash bonus for the construction of that road, and should have retained the land, but I believe the principle laid down by the Government in this respect will be supported by the country at large. That principle is, that that great and inaccessible region which is fit for nothing else than mining, should itself be responsible for the cost required to develop it. After all, we must remember that the building of a railroad into that country is not like building through agricultural lands, where for years there would be permanent sources of revenue to such a road. We may build this railway into the Klondike and something may happen which would render it to be of less value afterwards. It is therefore a most important thing that that country itself should be made to pay the expenses of building a railroad through it. That being the case, I believe the great mass of the people of this country will agree, that

Mr. BERTRAM.

the action taken by the Government was proper. I am inclined to think that if the Government had called for public tenders on the same basis that they have arranged for this contract, there being no money payment, there would be few tenderers indeed. I am sure that the business men of this country will recognize that the Government would have had very little chance of receiving tenders and of providing for the immediate construction of this railway on such a basis. What would have been the effect of the Government advertising for public tenders for the construction of this railway on the basis that no money should be paid, but that it should be paid for in mineral lands? It would look very much as if the Government of Canada themselves had no faith in that country, because they were not disposed to put any of their own money into the work. Therefore, I claim that such a course would have been fraught with great risk and danger. More than that; had the Government failed to obtain a satisfactory tender for the building of the railway on that basis, it would have been ten times more difficult for them afterwards to negotiate a contract for its construction than if such a course had not been pursued. The arranging of a contract on such a basis, with no money payment, had to be a matter of negotiation, from the necessities of the case; and therefore, I believe that the action of the Government in endeavouring to ascertain by negotiation whether a satisfactory arrangement could be arrived at for the construction of the railway will meet with the approval of the people of this country. I maintain that the circumstances of the case called for immediate action. We could not afford to lose one year's trade of that country, which certainly would have been lost if the Government had gone about the matter in the usual way, by calling for public tenders; and for such a loss the people of this country would have held the Government responsible. I know that when you look at the number of millions of acres of land given to the contractors for the building of the railway, the figures look large.

Some hon. MEMBERS. Oh, oh.

Mr. BERTRAM. But when you look at the map, and see the quantity of land granted, compared with the size of the whole country, it does not look so large after all. Moreover, what does that grant of land to a company mean? In my judgment, it means simply the adding of so much to the mineral development of the country at large. We know that the company, to be able to get anything at all out of the lands, will require to develop them; or, if they sell them to another company, that company will have to develop them; and I maintain that the de-