

been presented to the House by my hon. friend the Minister of Finance. In order, that I may do no injustice to the Postmaster General in that regard I will quote three passages from his speech. At page 9755 of 'Hansard' the hon. gentleman used the following language:—

Ours is a very modest one. At one time we had it attacked as being a scheme of great magnitude; but when compared with the proposition of the leader of the opposition, its dimensions are considerably lessened. It only contemplates the building of a railway from Moncton via Quebec to the coast, a part of which is to be operated by a railway company, and which will only cost the people of Canada \$13,000,000.

At page 9760, the hon. gentleman used the following language:—

Our scheme, limited to an investment with the exception of a few years at the commencement when we pay interest or forego rent, involves a cash outlay by this government, not to be recovered, of not exceeding \$13,000,000.

At page 9776, repeating practically the same language, he said:

I am ashamed of our modest scheme, involving an expenditure of only \$13,000,000.

There can be no doubt therefore, as to where we have the Postmaster General with regard to the figures which have been submitted to the House by the Minister of Finance. Further than that, it is to be observed, that by adopting the figures of the Minister of Finance, the Postmaster General has estimated the 400 miles from Moncton to Quebec at \$25,000 per mile, equal to \$10,000,000; and he has fixed the 1,475 miles from Quebec to Winnipeg at \$28,000 per mile, or equal to \$41,300,000.

My hon. friend the Postmaster General dealt one by one with the items of cost which in his judgment were included in my proposal, and I must take up a little time in also going over one by one the points in the argument of that hon. gentleman in that respect, in order that I may show to the House and to the country, the degree of fairness which the Postmaster General wished to import into this discussion.

In the first place, in estimating the cost of the Canada Atlantic Railway, extending from near Montreal to Depot Harbour on the Georgian bay, he stated—by what authority I do not know, and on what data he left the House in ignorance—that that railway would cost the people of Canada \$17,000,000. We have it on the authority of the ex-Minister of Railways and Canals (Hon. Mr. Blair), that that railway including steamships could have been acquired for \$12,000,000, and the hon. member for Weland (Mr. German) has stated (page 9718, 'Hansard') that that railway was offered only a very short time ago for \$11,000,000. I myself believe on good authority that the Canada Atlantic Railway could have been bought during the present year for \$12,000,000 in cash, and that that sum would have included the steamships as well. Now, the Postmaster General was not at first

inclined to touch at all on the alternative proposal I made with regard to the line from Montreal to the Georgian bay. It will be remembered that I distinctly stated, that as to this matter, as well as to all matters involved in the scheme which I proposed, I would act only on the best expert advice and assistance that could be procured in Canada, or on the whole of this continent. However, in the course of the speech of the Postmaster General, I interjected a remark which made it necessary for him to consider the cost of a railway from Montreal to the Georgian bay, and he then estimated such a line as costing no less a sum than \$15,000,000. That is to say, a railway 360 miles long from Montreal to the shores of the Georgian bay, would cost \$41,600 per mile according to the estimate of the Postmaster General; whereas, a railway, through an unknown and trackless country in the northern parts of Ontario and Quebec would cost, according to his estimate, only \$28,000 per mile. That will give to you, Mr. Speaker, and to any gentleman in this House and this country who desires to estimate at its proper value the argument of the Postmaster General in that regard, a true indication of the fairness and the businesslike manner in which he sought to approach the question of the comparative cost of these two projects. Let us look at the argument of the Postmaster General in another aspect.

This line, 360 miles in length through the settled part of Ontario, from Montreal to the shores of the Georgian bay, is to cost \$15,000,000, while 1,875 miles of railway from the city of Moncton to the city of Winnipeg are to cost in actual cash outlay, not to be recovered, \$8,853,000, and no more. Is there one hon. gentleman on the other side of the House, outside of the Postmaster General, who would dare to get up in this House or on any platform in this country and present that as a fair and accurate comparison of the cost of these two schemes? Further than that, according to the view of the expert put up by the government to answer the ex-Minister of Railways and Canals, this road is to be built for the purpose of transporting to the seaports of the St. Lawrence and of the Atlantic the whole grain trade of the west; and, according to that same expert, it can only accomplish that provided it is built in the most modern manner, is equipped by the most approved system, and has grades which do not exceed four-tenths of one per cent per mile; and it is suggested to the people of this country that a road of that character can be built through the northern parts of the provinces of Quebec and Ontario for \$28,000 per mile. Why, the capital expenditure on the Intercolonial Railway has run up to between \$50,000 and \$60,000 per mile; and the Postmaster General himself, estimated the cost of the road along the northern shore of Lake Superior now operated by the Canadian Pacific Rail-