

otherwise it might be well to go back to the period when the rails were purchased for the Intercolonial, as I think we can afford to have that period reviewed. However, I do not now intend seriously to make that suggestion. The information will of course be given, but I may tell the hon. gentleman that it will not establish the point which the hon. gentleman has in view—namely, that a great deal of consideration has been shown to the Company by allowing them to purchase a large quantity of steel rails when they could be purchased at a very low price. Of course, it is well known that the Government were fortunate enough to secure 50,000 tons of steel rails at exceptionally low prices—about 11,000 for the Intercolonial, and 39,000 for the Canadian Pacific. The rails were not all delivered, as it was not necessary to have them delivered promptly; they are not on this side of the Atlantic. The Government requiring between 7,000 and 8,000 tons in British Columbia, for the purpose of constructing the line there, directed that the rails remaining in England should be shipped to British Columbia, and there will be but a small quantity of rails, if any, which the Company would have an opportunity of receiving by paying the costs and charges. I may say, also, that there is a considerable amount of property which we shall require them to take over, as the Government would not require it, and we shall not expect to be dealt with too closely in that regard. I do not think that any real loss would have been incurred by the Company being allowed to pay the Government the amount which the rails cost, including interest and all other charges.

Mr. BLAKE. I have no objection to my hon. friend from Centre Huron, and my hon. friend from Niagara, obtaining the information which they desire, but if there is to be great delay in bringing down the return, encumbered by these amendments, if it involves so much labor as the Minister seems to expect, I trust he will, at any rate, expedite the preparation of my part of the return as much as possible. The information which is sought is not desirable merely for the purpose of political controversy, in which the member for Niagara (Mr. Plumb) is so fond of revelling, but it is germane to the question which is now occupying so largely the attention of the House and the country; it bears materially on one of the terms of the bargain we are asked to sanction, and that is the reason why I seek for the information. I trust the return will be brought down as speedily as possible.

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. I do not think it will occupy much time in preparation.

Mr. CAMERON (Victoria). My hon. friend from West Durham asks for information which is not in the possession of the Government, officially. The motion requires information as to the market value of steel rails in England, a matter upon which, I suppose, the Government have not any authentic information. Such information could only be in the form of facts or documents within the official cognizance of the Government; and, perhaps, in order to get it they may have to issue a Royal Commission or take some other official steps to make certain what is now uncertain.

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. I think we shall have to ask some gentleman to go to England to get accurate information.

Mr. BLAKE. I have no doubt the hon. member would go himself, if he thought for a moment what the market value of rails was in September or October.

Mr. CAMERON, (Victoria). But that would not be information within the power of the Government.

Mr. BLAKE. I know the hon. gentleman is more powerful than the Government, but I am surprised that the Government have not discovered the fact.

Sir CHARLES TUPPER.

Mr. PLUMB. I trust the information sought by the motion will be brought down as soon as possible. My hon. friend the member for West Durham (Mr. Blake) says that I revel in political controversy. My hon. friend might perhaps have taken a share of that remark to himself, and apportioned a great deal of it to the hon. gentleman beside him (Sir Richard J. Cartwright), who proposed the further amendment.

Motion, as amended, agreed to.

THE PACIFIC RAILWAY CONTRACT.

Mr. BLAKE moved for any statement or estimate which was made by or on behalf of the Government prior to the making of the Canadian Pacific Railway Contract, of,—(1) the value to the Company of the cession of the Government rails and fastenings at cost and interest; (2) the value to the Company of the right to admission free of duty of the materials required for the construction or equipment of the Railway and Telegraph Line; (3) the value to the Company of the perpetual exemption of the Railway and all stations, station-grounds, workshops, buildings, yards, and other property, rolling stock, and appurtenances required for the construction and working thereof, and of the Capital Stock of the Company, from taxation by the Dominion, new Provinces or Municipalities therein; (4) the value to the Company of the exemption from taxation of their lands in the North-West Territories until they are either sold or occupied for 20 years after the grant thereof from the Crown.

Motion agreed to.

FOOD SUPPLY OF INDIANS.

Mr. MILLS moved for a statement shewing in what parts of the North-West Territories there has been a total failure of the usual supply of the food on which the Indians subsist; what it is that has so failed; how many Indians in consequence of this total failure have been dependent upon the Indian Department for the means of subsistence; the kind of supplies furnished; from whom purchased; where purchased; whether by private contract or by public tender; the amount paid for each kind; the quantity; the amount paid for freight; to whom paid; from what places and to what places carried; and the amount paid for distribution. He said: My reason for asking for information is the very broad statement that has been put into the mouth of His Excellency, namely, that there has been an entire failure of the usual supply for Indians in the North-West Territory. As there are 30,000 Indians in that district, and as we know what it costs to feed them for a season, and as we have the broad statement that there has been an entire failure of the supply, it becomes a very serious matter. To furnish the means of subsistence for 30,000 people implies an expenditure that would absorb a very considerable portion of the revenue of Canada. I think that we are entitled to the fullest information on that subject. It may be that the expenditure has not been due so much to the failure of the supplies of the Indians over that large territory, as it is to a want of the facilities of transportation, or perhaps it may be to the want of capacity in those who are employed in that particular business. There is nothing, perhaps, connected with the Administration of the Government about which it is more important to have explicit information, for there is nothing that so largely depends upon the fidelity and energy of those who are charged with the administration of Indian affairs. I think myself that the probability is, that that statement was somewhat too general in its character. In many parts of the country the Indians are largely dependent upon fish for means of subsistence, and if that has failed it is rather an extraordinary state of things. In other parts they are dependent upon the chase, and we have been informed that the herds of buffaloes have returned, and