

how stringent the terms of the charter are, and how the carriage is absolutely under the control of the Government of the day, whose duty it will be—and they will be liable to the censure of Parliament if they fail in it—to see that the tariff is such, that while affording a reasonable profit to the company it will, at the same time, afford a cheap and efficient mode of transport for the riches of the North-West seeking the markets of the world. The hon. gentleman speaks of the original policy introduced by the Government of which he was a member. We remember that not long ago the hon. member for East York (Mr. Mackenzie) said, in Parliament, that he had merely laid before the House an experimental, a tentative proposition, to see how it would be taken. I am quite sure about that, and I have no doubt that *Hansard* will confirm the truth of my statement. But that Bill of the hon. gentleman was objectionable, upon the ground that it gave any number of people the right to build any number of railways anywhere, with a very remarkable limit, however. Any persons applying for a charter—I forget the number, but fifteen, I think—could come and get a charter, and they would have a claim for 6,400 acres per mile for nothing, to a certain meridian, and then 7,000 acres a little further off, and then 12,000 acres per mile when they got up to the Peace River district. There was a remarkable limit in that Bill, especially when we remember the charges which were brought against the Government, and against the Parliament that sanctioned it, for granting a monopoly of railway occupation in that country to the Canadian Pacific Railway, that other lines of railway were prevented from being established and were to be disallowed. Now, about the question of disallowance, Mr. Speaker, whether it was right or whether it was wrong to put in that provision. It is quite clear that no railway would have been built, for the railways which have got their charters there from the Government, which have got large grants of land at what was considered a nominal price, have been unable to build their roads; and the disallowing 100 paper charters would not have prevented the building of a single road, because, charter or no charter, not one such road would be built. But with respect to the policy of the Government in preventing rivals being built to the Canadian Pacific Railway, at the time that that railway was just chartered, and endeavoring to get the necessary funds to build the road—at the time the company was attempting to induce capitalists from Europe to invest in it, if charters were granted for the purpose of building rival roads in the same direction alongside of it, it would effectually destroy all hope of ever building the main line; and if the main line could not be built as a semi-Government line, supported with the treasure and the lands belonging to the Government, what chance would there be of other roads being built? And that idea was so completely before the mind of the hon. member for Bothwell, and the Government of which he was a member, that one of the clauses in their Bill is this: "That no company shall be chartered under the provisions of this Act for the construction of any railway having the same general direction as the Canadian Pacific Railway." No railway, whatever, if running in the same direction as the Canadian Pacific Railway, could get any grant of land—having the same general direction of the Canadian Pacific Railway, or any branch thereof. So that no company could get a charter if the company offered to build a railway in the same general direction, east or west, as the main line, or north or south, in the same general direction as any branch; and it was provided further that it must be at a mean distance of forty miles from either the railway or or any branch of it; so that that was a sanction of the general policy adopted by the Government, to prevent the infant enterprise from being strangled shortly after its birth by a number of paper charters. The hon. gentleman has stated, among some of the objections he took—and they were quite well put, they were plausible, and they have considerable force—one objec-

tion he made to these companies in committee was, that there was no condition about the sale of land to the actual settler. Well, you cannot effect the two things. You have the object of selling the lands at a low price, or the present policy, of giving them at no price—that is, for one purpose: to give the company sufficient credit to raise money on those lands, in the first place, by the pledging of those lands, and afterwards by the selling of them, to enable them to generate sufficient capital to build the road. But to limit it, to keep it at a low price, is giving with one hand and taking away with the other. It is the prospect of these lands being largely increased in value, by the construction of the road, that makes the granting of the land of any value; and by attempting to limit that, so much do you diminish the value of the grant and the chances of the company utilising those lands in the money markets of the world. Then it must be remembered that according to the system which has obtained for some time, under the policy of the Government, the even-numbered sections are homestead sections, and the odd-numbered sections are for sale. They are given to the different railways, but there are always the even-numbered sections, which contain two homesteads and two pre-emptions, lying side by side with the land granted to the different railways. So that, in that vast country there is plenty of land, and the best of land in the world, along the different lines of railway, that cannot be taken away from the settlers; and the first actual settler making an entry can have his land, no matter what value that land may attain by the fact of a railway running alongside of it. Therefore, there has been no lock-up in any way whatever, and there cannot be, so long as the even-numbered sections are kept open to the settlers. The hon. gentleman is quite right, however, in saying that there has been a large quantity of land locked up in the North-West. That was principally owing to the scrip system, which we need not discuss now, but which we all know was forced on Parliament by the circumstances of the country at the time it was first obtained. The half-breeds who settled in Manitoba along the Red and Assiniboine Rivers had obtained certain possessory rights from the Hudson Bay Company which had to be acknowledged, and which were acknowledged and paid for by scrip, in the majority of cases; and this scrip got into the hands of land speculators, in their legitimate business. Of course, it is an honest business; but those land purchasers did as every man does, with respect to his property, whether it is personal or real; they held it until they found a market in which they could get their price. That, of course, was perfectly legitimate on their part, but when it assumed the large proportions it did in Manitoba, a large quantity of land scrip being thrown into the market, and that being utilised by the persons who purchased it in paying for land in and around Winnipeg, and at places where there was likely to be a fixed settlement or town, of course greatly retarded the growth of some of those localities, and kept large tracts of land unsettled, which would have been occupied long before if they had been kept open. That has been a disadvantage; but the answer is this, that the immigrant going to the North-West has as good a chance of selection of good soil and climate in one place as in another; and actual settlers going to a country where all is strange to them, if they find the land and climate to suit them, can have no great preference for one place over another, unless they have a relative who has gone before them. So that, taking the country as a whole, there never has been any want of land for any settler from old Canada, Europe or the United States. This is all that occurs to me just now. The hon. gentleman says he will discuss the grants to the various railways in committee, which will be a very proper way of dealing with them, and we shall be exceedingly glad to give him any information in our power on the subject.