

the hon. member for Cardwell ought to withdraw his amendment, and then we can negative the propositions of the hon. member for North Norfolk, by passing to the Orders of the Day. I can vote for such a motion without difficulty. When, Sir, we remember that we have undertaken serious obligations, with respect to the settlement of that country, that the old Provinces are called upon to incur an enormous debt for the purpose of opening up a new and productive region, not only for the benefit of their own surplus population, but to provide farms for millions of Europeans and strangers, I think we are not in a position to say that all the lands in that country shall be given up to the new comers as a free gift, or that the Government ought not to secure a sufficient revenue to repay the old Provinces some portion, if not the whole, of that expenditure. I believe that a large majority of the people of this Dominion are disposed to lend their credit and run considerable risk for the purpose of opening up that great inheritance of ours in the North-West, but they expect indemnity in the future. I was glad, Sir, to hear an ex-officer of the Hudson's Bay Company (Mr. Smith) tell us, to-night, that we have a vast quantity of rich and cultivable land in that country. I was glad to hear that testimony from that quarter, for our ears are not accustomed to it. I believe we have in the North-West an enormous territory of good, arable land, better than any that remains in the old Provinces; and that the people of the old Provinces will, in large numbers, proceed there under the policy of this Government. I believe this policy, so far as it provides for the sale of alternate sections of these lands, for the purpose of producing a revenue to meet the expenditure in the construction of the Pacific Railway, is a wise and just policy, and will be approved by the people of this country. If any hon. member of this House were to go before the taxpayers of the country and propose that, after all we have expended, after all the debt we have incurred, after all the responsibilities we have undertaken, we should give up these rich lands for nothing, and thus compel the people of the old Provinces to pay for their development, I believe he would not find many persons to agree with him. The

course the Government has taken in the allotment of these lands is an experiment. It may prove successful, and the experience and practice of our American neighbours in that direction are encouraging. I would prefer to leave the Government untrammelled in matters of detail, and not say that this or that policy shall be pursued. The right hon. gentleman stated, in his opening remarks, that he did not desire to mix up the Pacific Railway question with this land question. I do not desire to commit myself to an approval of what appears to be the policy of the Government in respect to that Railway, but I desire to say that I concur with the principle the hon. member for North Norfolk has embodied in his resolutions, except in its application to that portion of the North-West which will be benefitted by, and therefore ought to bear the burden of, the Pacific Railway. Nearly twenty years ago, when Commissioner of Crown Lands for the old Province of Canada, I endeavoured to impress upon my colleagues the opinions I entertained that free grants to actual settlers was the true way to settle the public lands. Now lands are practically given away in Ontario and Quebec, on condition of settlement; and public opinion, I think, as far as Ontario and Quebec are concerned, is educated up to the point of the hon. gentleman's resolutions. We have had our Canada Companies, and our British American Land Companies. We have seen large tracts of good land remain in the hands of these companies for a generation; and we have seen that the country has not progressed under that system. In Ontario we discovered, many years ago, a means by which that evil could be rectified. We discovered that, under the system of local taxation large tracts of uncultivated land were brought into the market, and the evil which formerly existed has been removed. I think it will be found that land companies like those referred to will find no room in the North-West, and the evil of non-resident speculation will be rectified by the people themselves. The settlers on these alternate lots will find means, through municipal taxation, of compelling those who have purchased the adjacent lands to bring them into the market. Therefore, I have no great fear of the consequences of the system which