

which my hon. friend (Mr. Scott) has thought proper to discuss at such great length, I shall not trouble the House with many remarks at the present time, because I think a more suitable opportunity will be presented on other occasions to discuss it, but one thing I cannot help observing: my hon. friend denies so emphatically that the National Policy has done anything to promote the prevailing prosperity of the country. My hon. friend denies it, but the facts are before us to speak for themselves, and there is one thing which he cannot deny: that there is, at least, between the National Policy and the return of prosperity to the country a marvellous coincidence, a coincidence which cannot be altogether accounted for by the general improvement in trade and commerce on this continent. With regard to the main question, which has brought us here so early in the season, for my own part I should have greatly preferred, had the Government, in their wisdom seen proper to delay the session a little longer, but we must all admit that the important interests with which they had to deal—the most important which, perhaps, this country has ever had under its consideration—fully justified the extraordinary course which has been adopted. I think the House and the country will be perfectly satisfied with the full and fair explanation given by the hon. Postmaster General as to the reason why Parliament has been summoned so early. I believe the House, and the country too, will fully endorse the remarks of my hon. friend in regard to the propriety of first submitting the result of the important negotiations which have taken place during the recess to Parliament before giving them to the public. It has been said, if it was necessary for ministers to proceed to London to negotiate an agreement which has resulted in a contract with a Syndicate for the construction of the Pacific Railway, they must have accomplished that before they left London, and therefore that Parliament should have been called together on their return and the terms of the agreement given to the public at an earlier date. I think an answer has been afforded to that objection through the public press—that while the leading features of the agree-

*Hon. Mr. Miller.*

ment with the Syndicate may have been decided upon in England, still the details could not be definitely settled on the other side of the Atlantic, and until those details were agreed upon as they have been on this side of the water, it was impossible for the Government to have called Parliament together. Having arranged those details, they have done so as soon as possible. I have no doubt this explanation is correct, and the Government have, I believe, immediately after the final conclusion of the negotiations which have fixed all the details, immediately summoned Parliament for the consideration of the whole scheme. For my own part, I must say that I feel no ordinary degree of satisfaction that this negotiation has resulted successfully. From the time when, on the floor of this House, I gave my support to the union of British Columbia and the construction of the Pacific Railway, I have always considered that the method and manner in which this road should be built was that which has now been adopted. It was the expectation of those who at that time agreed to the terms of the union, and the construction of the Pacific Railway as one of these terms, that it was not to saddle the country with a debt of one hundred or one hundred and twenty millions, but that the responsibility of the Dominion was to be limited to a grant of money limited at thirty millions of dollars, and a grant of land fixed at fifty millions of acres. This was the understanding on which Parliament agreed to the union with British Columbia, and it was an understanding and arrangement that were perfectly within the resources and means of this country, and would have been, I have no doubt, faithfully adhered to, as it has now been gone back to by the present Administration, if these gentlemen had not been driven from power in 1873. After the change, the late Government inaugurated a new policy in contradiction to the sentiments of the leading men of the party who had placed on the records of the House of Commons a resolution, when these terms were before the Legislature, that this road should only be built with subsidies of land and money. The late Government departed altogether from their pledge made on that question, and seemingly