

For completing the works, for rolling stock and furnishings (the last having added \$1,200,000 to the value of the road, that valuation having been accepted by the Pacific company.)

THE SALE OF THE RAILWAY.

Mr. Speaker—The cabinet of which I was head has been blamed for having sold the railroad, and the hon. member for West Durham has said that the Quebec government had robbed the road between Quebec and Montreal of its character as part of the Pacific Railroad by selling it to another company. Moreover, I have been accused of having sold the road on terms disadvantageous to the province.

MOTIVE FOR CONSTRUCTING RAILWAYS.

Let us first discuss the former charge. I must say, Mr. Speaker, that from the very beginning of my parliamentary career, since my earliest utterances in the Legislative Assembly, I have had two objects in view: I made up my mind that the Province of Quebec should be a manufacturing as well as an agricultural community. A country which for five months in the year is covered with snow can not be exclusively agricultural. Agriculture should always have the first place, for the returns of the soil are the surest and the most considerable, and their abundance or their scarcity determines whether the year shall be one of prosperity or of general crisis. But I always said that in the province of Quebec the efforts of legislation should be turned towards the development of its industrial and manufacturing wealth. We have a country of splendid water powers. In the advantages which it thus offers for industrial operations, it is second to none. All that it needed was railways, and these it behooved us to give it at any cost. Another object that I had in view was that the region north of the St. Lawrence, even as far as the Laurentides, a region which if ever evil days should come again, may be the bulwark of our liberties, should be developed and connected with the great centres of population. For that end it was necessary to build a railway from Quebec to Ottawa, along the north shore of the great rivers St. Lawrence and Ottawa, with branches towards the interior. I differed, however, from those who thought that the Government of Quebec should undertake that work.

POLICY OF GOVERNMENT OWNING RAILWAYS.

When in 1875 the Hon. Mr. DeBoucherville undertook the construction of the Quebec, Montreal, Ottawa and Occidental Railway, I thought, with one of the companies that commenced that enterprise, that the Quebec government ought not to assume charge of it. At the time I wrote an article, which I have since had occasion to quote in the house, asking that the construction of the road should be left to the Northern Colonization Railroad Company, of which Sir Hugh Allan was president. The Hon. Louis Beaubien, who has changed his mind, was then of the same opinion as I was. We asked the government to give an additional subsidy of \$1,000,000 to each company rather than undertake the construction of the road itself. I do not mention this to exonerate myself from the responsibility resting on the De Boucherville and succeeding government. My advice was not followed, and then, seeing the generous effort made for the construction of the road, I supported the De Boucherville administration, and to-day I take, as I took then, upon me, both by vote and utterance, all the responsibility of the construction of the line. When the question of the advisability of keeping and operating the road came before my government, I said, as I still say, that it was better to sell it. I declared that a government could not administer a road so as to make the income proportionate to the capital spent in its construction. In the general elections of 1888 I enunciated these views, saying that the road should be sold, and that the government should sell it. I described the method by which I thought the sale should be effected, and stated what price I would accept. As soon as the legislature met I submitted my plan for the sale, and a discussion arose in the press which is not yet ended, and on which more of passion than of reason is brought to bear in the argument against my policy. I will not go back to those struggles of the past. It is not my desire to recriminate against those who have wrongly interpreted my policy, my words and my acts. Nor will I weary this house with the recital of all the charges, more or less malevolent, of which I have been the aim. Jealousy and animosity bore their natural fruit, but I would forget all that. A statesman who would serve his country must not bear rancour for the contests of yesterday. A politician who cannot