

country could not engage in a work of such gigantic magnitude without seriously injuring the financial position of the country—that, under those circumstances, he must decline to hold himself responsible for the engagement into which his predecessors had entered. The hon. gentleman had that course open to him, because Parliament, having declared that the work should only be constructed, provided a company could be found, aided to the extent before stated, to accomplish it as a private undertaking, and the effort to obtain the construction of the work under the terms sanctioned by Parliament having failed, it was open to him, I say, frankly to state to the House, that he was unable to carry out the policy to which his predecessors had committed the country. The hon. gentleman did not adopt that course. Soon after his accession to power he visited his constituents for the purpose of declaring, as Prime Minister, what the policy of his Government was in relation to this great question. Well, Sir, the hon. gentleman, much to the surprise of many of his friends, and greatly to the astonishment of those with whom he had formerly been in controversy upon the question, committed himself in the most unqualified manner to the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway. He said, and I am quoting from the organ of his party in this city :

“ I have always thought that speedy means of communication across the continent were necessary for settlement, and for the purpose of opening up the district where we have great riches undeveloped in the bosom of the earth. Without that communication their development cannot take place, and emigration cannot be expected.”

Now, with the Great North-West in our possession to be peopled, and a declaration that the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway was essential to the development of the great resources of Canada—referring, undoubtedly, to the mineral resources of British Columbia—a declaration that emigration to this country could not be hoped for, unless that work was undertaken, committed, on the grounds of the broadest considerations of public policy, the hon. gentleman, to the construction of that work. But he went much further. He stated, in that address, that it was his intention to proceed with this great work in an entirely different manner from that which his

predecessors had propounded, and which Parliament had authorised, and that was as a Government work. He gave, on that occasion, the very substantial reason that, if it was constructed as a Government work, the people would receive the profit instead of the contractors. The hon. gentleman, consistent with that declaration, came down to Parliament with a measure for the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway. He has frequently referred to the fact that one of the first clauses of that Act provided that it must not increase the existing rate of taxation ; that he had adhered to the policy propounded by the previous Government and sanctioned by Parliament ; that there must be no increase of taxation connected with the undertaking. But he did not recount that which Parliament had committed itself to and sanctioned, and that was the declaration that it should not be done by the Government, a declaration that the hon. gentleman himself had voted for, and that his friends and supporters had supported, but that it must be done by a private company, aided by a grant of lands and money. That provision was swept away. It is true, however, that he provided in his Bill for the prosecution of the work in very much the same manner as that propounded by his predecessors, provided the parties could be found to take it up. I think those who have not recently read that Act, will be a little surprised to learn that he went further than his predecessors in the means which he provided from the public resources for the purpose of prosecuting the work. The hon. gentleman covered the whole ground in his Bill. He said :

“ 1. A railway, to be called the ‘ Canadian Pacific Railway,’ shall be made from some point near to and south of Lake Nipissing to some point in British Columbia, on the Pacific Ocean ; both the said points to be determined, and the course and line of the said railway to be approved of by the Governor-in-Council.”

Even the sanction of Parliament was not necessary to the adoption of a line, and that line was to extend from a point on Lake Nipissing to a point in British Columbia, on the Pacific Coast. The hon. gentleman then went on to provide what should be given to the Company undertaking it. He provided in section four :

“ 4. That a quantity of land, not exceeding