

of the Pacific Railway, pursuant to public advertisement, dated the sixth day of November, said he deemed it proper that he should give his reason for doing so, which was, that he in common with others, both inside and outside the Legislature, was at a loss to know the reason why the Government should undertake the construction of the line of railway referred to, at this particular time. In moving in relation to the subject, on the present occasion, he wished to be understood, as not actuated by any motives of opposition to the Government, but looking at the grave responsibility resting upon that House, as a co-ordinate branch of the Legislature, he felt that hon. members were bound to use all their influence, and see that the public expenditure was prudently and carefully carried out. Upon the introduction of the bill into the House last session, he was surprised to find this branch included in the bill. The measure had been introduced at the last moment, when there was not sufficient time for the discussion of its merits, and when the greater number of members of that House had left for their homes, and many of those present at the time protested against any further action in the matter at that late period of the session. Whatever the circumstances may have been he was certainly surprised, and would ask the hon. members of the Government what could justify them at this time, in entering upon the large expenditure for this branch railway? Was the treasury at present in such an overflowing condition as to justify the throwing away of so many millions? When it was known that our financial obligations were so great, why further increase the burden of the people for an object prematurely entered upon? We should not forget that we shall soon have to meet the interest on the amount of the recent expenditure connected with the Intercolonial Railway, amounting to \$20,000,000. Then again, we had, in connection with the construction, enlargement and improvement of our canals, the amount of \$6,000,000, and the revenues arising from these canals had never been by any means proportionate to the expenditure. He understood, further, that the Govern-

ment was under obligation to spend \$2,000,000 in British Columbia for railroad construction. With such serious financial obligations resting upon us, it was not a moment for us to enter into an expenditure which would not be calculated to bring a corresponding return or increase of development and commerce. Hon. members no doubt remembered the charges preferred against the late Administration of undue expenditure, arising from the selection of the route of the Intercolonial Railway; but when the present party came into power, it was hoped that they would endeavor to administer the Government on the abstract principle of right and justice, and resist all outside pressure. (Hear, hear.) He (Hon. Mr. Alexander) assumed a position in which he felt he would be supported by hon. members from other parts of the Dominion; that nothing would justify a further increase of the burdens of the people. It would have been a prudent action on the part of the Government to have announced at the opening of Parliament their intention to remove a portion of the burdens imposed upon the people during last session—a remission of the duty of two and a half per cent. imposed last session would have been a graceful act upon their part. With regard to the public expenditure in connection with railways and other public works of importance, he felt assured that hon. members would agree with him that the time had arrived when some guiding principle should be laid down, so that no public work of importance should be undertaken unless there was some reasonable prospect of increase of population, commerce, and revenue. He (Hon. Mr. Alexander) would be extremely desirous that the resources of every portion of the Dominion should be developed in every possible way, but there was no population in the direction through which this line of railroad would pass, nor any immediate prospect of that portion of the country being utilized. He was really of opinion that, with the heavy and serious obligations resting upon us,—if we wish to improve and enlarge our canals—if we are really desirous of developing the resources of our vast territory,