

ada is concerned. Leaving out, for the moment, every other consideration, I say that this attack found on page 12 of the commissioners' report is absolutely unwarranted and may be fraught with grave results to a great national undertaking, to a company now engaged in completing a great national enterprise, and that that result will indirectly reflect upon the business of Canada and upon the standing of Canadian enterprises in the financial markets of the world. This is the clause to which I refer:

We find that the Transcontinental Railway Commission, the Grand Trunk Pacific railway and those having charge of the construction of the railway did not consider it desirable or necessary to practise or encourage economy in the construction of this road.

What does that mean? It is charged that the Transcontinental Railway Commission was derelict in its duty—was extravagant, I dealt with that yesterday at some length, and I am not going to deal with it again; I think I answered that charge very well. Then, the commissioners imply that every man on the engineering staff, every individual connected with the construction of the road, did not consider it desirable or necessary to practise or encourage economy. Does any one imagine that the people of Canada will believe that sweeping assertion made against men who have spent the whole of their lives in the service of the public? I refer not to members of any particular party; I refer to eminent professional men. This assertion on the part of the commissioners means that every engineer on the line who was engaged in the supervision of construction did not find it necessary to be honest, and thought it wise to be extravagant. I am not going to take up and present to the House the names of these gentlemen, but I do say that there are on that staff men of as high ability as will be found anywhere on this continent; men whose honesty at least cannot be challenged by any living soul. Yet the commissioners make the sweeping assertion that all these men practically conspired to neglect their duty. I say that if we had nothing more, these words are in themselves a refutation of the reliability of this report. The judgment of the public is generally very well balanced, and when men go so far, be they commissioners or any other persons, as to make a sweeping charge, without one iota of foundation for it, against men whose reputation has hitherto been unimpeachable, they condemn their own utterance;

[Mr. Graham.]

the people will take no stock whatever in their assertion in that respect, and, not taking stock in that statement, will discount every other assertion such men may make.

I do not intend to defend the professional gentlemen who are engaged in this work; they are well known, but I come to another thing which I think is absolutely an outrage—and I use the word advisedly. It is found in these sentences:

We find that the Transcontinental Railway Commission, the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway, and those having charge of the construction of the railway, did not consider it desirable or necessary to practice or encourage economy in the construction of this road.

What does that mean? It means that the commission appointed by this Government publicly charge, in a document being circulated throughout Canada, that the Grand Trunk Pacific officials in Canada conspired to defraud the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway Company. Is there any substantiation for that charge, which is one of the gravest made in this country for many years? I say there is no substantiation, there is not the shadow of substantiation for that charge. Mr. Hays, who in his time was one of the ablest men at the head of any railway in this country, and Mr. Chamberlin, his successor, are, without any evidence, charged by Mr. Lynch-Staunton and Mr. Gutelius with not thinking it desirable to practise economy in the construction of a line which they were going to operate, and on the cost of which they were to pay interest. It is inconceivable; it is unthinkable that men should make such a charge and place it not only before the people of this country, but before the financiers of the old land as well, who are being asked for money to carry on this great project. I ask hon. gentlemen who are connected with companies of any magnitude what they would think if such a charge were made against them? They would demand absolute proof, and if this were not furnished, the men who made the charge would suffer the consequences. I say this matter will never be settled until the gentlemen who made this report are compelled to substantiate that charge against the Grand Trunk Pacific, or retract it on behalf of the Dominion of Canada. Is it an attack on the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway Company only? Not at all. Even that is serious enough. At the very time when the finan-