

THE RAILWAY SUBSIDY CHARGES.

Then they say, the Government uses the railway subsidy system as a means to debauch and corrupt the electorate and also to put money into the pockets of their favorites. Let us analyze this matter. It is said by Mr. Blake and his followers that it is used by the Government as a means of corrupting the members of Parliament who seek to obtain a bonus or subsidy for a railway running through their county, and that such subsidies are chiefly given to the supporters of the Government. Such is not the case. Some of course, obtain subsidies, others do not. You could not grant all the subsidies asked in any one year. Mr. Blake says it causes the people to look more favorably towards those in power at Ottawa who grant the subsidies. That is true. Tell me anything that a Government does for the benefit of the people of Canada from the shortest postal route to the various sums given for the erection of public works that has not a tendency to create a favorable opinion to the Government in the minds of the community that gets these facilities, and which are naturally thankful for them. So it is with railroads and other improvements aided by the Government. The people will look more favorably on such a Government, of course, than on one which does not pursue such a policy. But I wish to show you that the Government by this system does not and cannot put money into the pockets of its favorites.

Suppose, for instance, you elect myself to go to Parliament and you say to me:—we want a railroad built in Kings Co. from any one point to another, and we shall look to you to urge this claim on the Government and lay the facts before them and see if a bonus cannot be granted for it. The time comes, an application is made and the subsidy is granted. Now how much is granted? \$3,200 per mile, that is the general bonus, it may be a little more, it is never less. That that is the amount arose from the fact that at a certain time a policy was introduced of lending or giving the rails for some roads when built, and later by granting \$3,200 it was considered about the same was given. Then suppose I built the road myself, is that \$3,200 put into my pocket? Can anyone say in Parliament "of course you will support the Government because you got \$3,200 for every mile of road built and you sit here with that in your pocket." Is the money in my pocket? I think you will say not, for every cent and much more has been taken to build the road. Before that \$3,200 per mile is paid there has to be a company formed, a location for the line has to be found and the surveys approved by the Government. Then a contract has to be entered into. 10 miles of the road must be built before a single dollar of that subsidy can be paid. How much does it cost to build? From ten to twenty thousand dollars a mile, and when I, if I am building the road, have expended that sum, it may be more, then I will get this \$3,200 per mile on the road being built in 10 mile sections. Then having paid for the building how much do I have or how much does the company have in pocket? Has not three or four times more been paid out in order to obtain that subsidy? You have the matter plainly before you and I ask you as honest men where in such a policy is the corruption to be found and where the possibility of putting into the pockets of those to whom the subsidy has been granted? (Applause.)

I have now answered the chief charges brought against the Government as a Government with reference to its being guilty of a dishonest or corrupt administration of the affairs of the country in its dealings with the public trusts of the country. (Applause.)

THE CHARGE OF WEAK ADMINISTRATION—RECIPROCITY.

The next criticism made is that ours is a weak and incapable Government. Now, ladies and gentlemen, what are the charges made against this Government in the endeavor to prove its being a weak or incapable administration? One of the first is that we have not obtained a reciprocity treaty. "If you had been a strong, if you had been a willing, if you had been a capable Government this country would have had what it needs, it would have had what it desires, a fair reciprocity treaty with the United States of America."

Let us examine that for a moment. Does it not strike you in the first place that the very idea of reciprocity supposes that there are two parties to the arrangement and, that the two parties must think that they get countervailing or equivalent advantages or else they will not enter into a reciprocity treaty? One party itself, however well disposed it may be to an arrangement for reciprocal trade, cannot make a reciprocity arrangement, it takes two parties to arrange such a thing and to carry it out. The reciprocity arrangement wanted is between the United States and the Dominion of Canada, and I say here, and I assert it most unhesitatingly, that the present Government and the preceding Government of Canada, has never shown by a single record, by a single utterance, or by a single action, anything else than a favorable desire to meet the United States fully half way and to arrange a fair and equivalent system of reciprocity between themselves and us, and if the United States does not wish it, it makes no difference what party is in power, it cannot be gained unless both parties agree to it. (Hear, hear.)

What has been the attitude of the United States on the question? It has been unfavorable to any reciprocity arrangement or system of equivalent advantages. We had a reciprocity treaty from 1854 to 1866. Why did it lapse in 1866? Because the United States authorities gave us notice that it must discontinue, that they would not allow it to continue. That they did