

to build that section as part and parcel of the so-called Trans-Continental Railway. Besides, in the years 1874-75, a construction survey was made of the line between Esquimalt and Nanaimo, but no further step was taken towards its construction. A feeling of intense and widespread dissatisfaction with the Dominion of Canada was created in the Province, which resulted, in 1878, in the election of a Provincial Legislature, the majority of the members of which were pledged to support the construction of that Island Railway, and urged upon the Dominion Government the carrying out of the Carnarvon Terms, or separation. That dissatisfaction has now almost died out; but the fact still remains that there was either a legal, an expressed, or an implied obligation on the part of the Dominion of Canada to build that section of railway. Now, the point I am arriving at is, that the matter of the construction of a railway between Esquimalt and Nanaimo is not a consideration of to-day. The belief has existed, not only in the minds of the Dominion Government, but in the hearts of the people of British Columbia, that the Dominion Government would, as soon as practicable, build that railway as part of the Terms of Confederation. The Legislature of British Columbia, before the close of the year 1878, in the full belief that the Carnarvon settlement would be carried out, adjourned without taking any more definite action. All that has transpired lately between the Dominion Government and the Province of British Columbia is embodied in the Report of the Minister of Justice, and the Resolutions now before us, which have been placed in the hands of every member; and, therefore, I need not occupy the time of the House in recapitulating it now. The lands which were to be conveyed by the Settlement Bill to the Company for building this railway are described as:

"Commencing at the southern boundary, and extending to a line running east and west, half way between Comox and Seymour Narrows; and also a further portion of the lands conveyed by the said Act to the northward of, and contiguous to, that portion of the said lands last hereinbefore specified, equal in extent to the lands within the limits thereof which may have been alienated from the Crown by Crown grants, pre-emption, or otherwise."

Now, the Minister of Justice, in his Report, with reference to the railway belt on the Mainland, says:

"The change in the route of the Canadian Pacific Railway to the more southerly pass, which it is now intended to occupy, rendered it expedient to effect a change of the location of the railway belt. The Government of British Columbia had not admitted that there was any obligation on their part to assent to such a change, and had contended that they had performed their whole obligation in granting the belt along the line as originally proposed. We were happily able, however, in view of what we were mutually ready to concede in respect of other parts of the general arrangement, to arrive at an understanding by which the railway belt was transferred to the new line and the grant made absolute in its terms, the Government of the Dominion undertaking, through me, to place the land thus acquired in the market, for sale to actual settlers at an early day."

Now, in view of all these facts, I do not think the hon. member for Westminster (Mr. Homer), or the hon. member for Vancouver (Mr. Gordon), has really any ground of complaint. These lands have remained idle for a very long time, and nobody has offered to build the railway, notwithstanding that the desire to have it built has been pretty well known, although I must say I should have preferred to have seen the Island Railway built by previously calling for tenders. However, the two Governments, in their wisdom, thought that to be unnecessary. Now, there are a few points in this Bill that I do not exactly understand. It says:

"The Government of British Columbia shall obtain the authority of the Legislature to convey to the Government of Canada 3,500,000 acres of land in the Peace River district of British Columbia, in one rectangular block, east of the Rocky Mountains and adjoining the North-West Territory of Canada."

Now, I think it will be very difficult to find out exactly where that rectangular block is going to be. The boundaries of British Columbia are, to say the least, badly undefined; and I should like to know from the hon. Minister of Railways what kind of rectangular block this is going to be. It may be a

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square, which is a figure having all its sides equal and all its angles right-angles; it may be a parallelogram, with only its opposite sides equal and parallel, and all its angles right angles; or it may be made up of a series of rectangles. I should therefore like to know which of these kinds of rectangular blocks the two Governments have agreed upon, also who has the right of selection, and where is this rectangular block to be? I mention these facts because they may not have occurred to the Government in the light in which I have put them. The eastern boundary of British Columbia is understood to follow the summit or watershed line of the Rocky Mountains from the 49th parallel north-westward till it strikes the 120th meridian; then runs north on this meridian to the 60th parallel; then west to the Alaska Line. There is a contention also, and, I believe, a very just one, that the eastern boundary of the Province is, or ought to be, the eastern base of the Rocky Mountains. The northern and western boundary is defined, by the original Treaty with Russia, I believe, to follow the outer or coast range of mountains where this range is not more than 30 nautical miles from the coast, to follow a line parallel to the coast at 30 miles inland. As a matter of fact, the boundary has been assumed at 30 miles from the coast, or thereabouts, being the worst possible interpretation for British Columbia; while, if strictly defined, it might follow the western range to the coast, never more than a mile or two from the shore, in view of these facts, it appears to me that it is rather a puzzle for both Governments to hit upon that eastern boundary line, and incident to that decision the precise location of the block, and it is consequently very desirable this should be settled before disputes arise. I will not take up the attention of the House further upon the point, although I have plenty of material here. I think it is desirable that other members from British Columbia—there are two of them yet to speak—should have an opportunity of expressing their opinions on this most important matter to our Province. There are one or two subjects, however, to which I would like to refer before sitting down. In regard to the value of our coal lands, Mr. Richardson, of the Geological Survey, calculated the workable coal underlying a square mile near the Union mining location, at Comox, at 16,000,000 tons. This, of course, was not meant to apply to the whole district, but gives some idea of what its best parts may be worth. The value, I believe, of Comox coal lands, estimating them at \$10 an acre, is \$1,920,000, and of Nanaimo coal lands, estimating them at the same figure, \$960,000; making a total of \$2,880,000. Deducting 25 per cent. from this for the land already granted, would leave a net value of \$2,160,000. The value of 2,800 square miles, or 1,794,800 acres of railway settlement grant, as timber lands, at \$1 per acre, would amount to \$1,794,800, deducting from which 25 per cent. for alienated lands, leaves a net value, as timber lands, of \$1,346,100. The value of say 300,000 acres agricultural lands in the settlement belt, at \$5 per acre, would amount to \$1,500,000; deducting, as before, 25 per cent. for the alienated land, you have a net value of \$1,125,000. This, when analysed, gives the following synopsis of the value of land granted to the Railway Company:

Net value of coal lands.....	\$2,160,000
“ “ timber lands.....	1,346,100
“ “ agricultural lands.....	1,125,000
Total.....	\$4,631,100

Estimating the proposed railway at 70 miles long, that gives 40 square miles of territory per mile, or 25,600 acres, included in which, however, is the alienated lands; so that the Railway Company are really getting something in the neighbourhood of \$61,000 per mile for building that railway, taking it from their point of view. But it remains to be seen whether the coal which will come out of these very