

country two of its best provinces, some of the members protested against the clauses of that treaty. And what was the language of the French Government in reply? It was exactly the same as used to-day by our Administration: accept the terms, they are the best we could get. France had been defeated in war and lay crushed under the iron heel of the victor; our Government had not been defeated, but were bound in the shackles of their own vicious policy. After having spoken the language which I have just quoted the hon. Minister of Public Works went on to say: "I believe it is to the advantage of the country that we should save the money of the country by adopting these resolutions, and I hope the answer will be 'yes' from all our friends." This is the crowning consequence, and the followers of the Government are this time asked to give the final "yes" which will plunge this country into an unknown expenditure. Yet I am free to confess, since the Government are determined to go on with the construction of this railway at once until completion, the idea that it should be built by a company is one which has a great deal in it to commend itself to the people of this country. But for the very reason given by the hon. Minister in the early part of his speech, there were difficulties in the way. He said:

"But although the country stood by us, and a large majority of the members of this House sanctioned the action of the Government, nevertheless, it would be childish to conceal that there was a possibility of apprehension for the future. The feeling was this, that the uncertainty about the amount of money that would be required to build the railway was disturbing the public mind. Nobody could say positively what would be the liabilities of the country, or how many millions would be required, not merely to build the road but to work it, and to work it for all time to come."

The hon. Minister might have added that the public mind was also disturbed by the necessity of the Government having still to go on letting out contracts, and seeing that contracts already made were carried out. Such were, Mr. Chairman, the reasons why the country favored the policy of handing this work over to a company. But have these expectations been fulfilled by this contract? This contract is a policy which does not meet any of the reasons advanced in its favor by the hon. Minister. The country expected that by this contract the Government would be relieved of the necessity of letting out new contracts, and of seeing that old contracts were carried out. Instead of that the Government have still to let out new contracts and see that old ones are carried out. For ten years to come they have to pursue the same system which they pursued in the past, and which caused anxiety in the public mind. The people of this country expected that their liabilities for constructing this road would be settled. But this, I believe, also is denied. That cannot be settled for this very reason that the Government must pursue the same course which it pursued before. For ten years to come it must go on letting out contracts, and the liability will be settled only when ten years hence the work has been completed. So that this is a hybrid engagement which fulfils none of the engagements it was expected to fulfil. It would in fact so appear, as it were, a sort of partnership between the Government and the Company. There are four sections of the road to build, the Company build two sections, and the Government two sections, and those the most difficult. The Company completes in ten years, and the Government completes in ten years, and at the end of the ten years the whole is to be handed over to the Company. Not only that, but while the Government is doing the work of the Company, the Company is to have all the privileges of the Government. The Company can import as free as the Government can. The Company is exempted from taxation as the Government is. The Company has the further privilege of fixing its own tolls almost without the possibility of hindrance or interference on the part of the Government. I say almost the possibility of interference,

Mr. LAURENCE.

for I confess that under the letter of the contract there is a possibility of interference. But when is the Government to interfere? Only when the Company has realized ten per cent. on the cost of constructing the road, which cost is estimated on the other side at \$78,000,000. As to the privilege given to the Company of importing their materials free, that has perhaps more the nature of a family quarrel among hon. gentlemen on the other side of the House, and, therefore, I shall have nothing to say upon it. As to the exemption from taxation, that is a far more serious matter, and one which should engage the attention of this House. It has been contended on this side of the House that this exemption from taxation, coupled with the other advantages and privileges given to the Company, will give almost a monopoly of the North-West Territories into the hands of this Company. This assertion has been replied to by gentlemen on the other side. But under this contract the road-bed, the station grounds, rolling stock, capital of the Company, are to be for all time, for all generations to come, exempted from all sorts of taxation. From federal taxation, if ever such a contingency should happen, from local taxation when Local Governments are organized, from municipal taxation when municipalities are established. If we consider that this Company is thereby given an unfair advantage over every other Company who try to compete with them, it will be seen that it will be difficult to secure competition with them. Thus the Company have, therefore, the privilege to hold these lands, and, like the dog in the manger, to prevent anyone using them except themselves; and they have also the privilege of fixing their own tolls so as to obtain extortionate profits out of the settlers of the North-West. It must be evident, Mr. Chairman, to every dispassionate observer, that this is a monstrous monopoly, and one that will make the Company landlords of the North-West. I use that term advisedly. It is true that it is not in the power of this Company to establish such institutions as would amount to feudalism, in the sense in which it exists in Europe, and which it needs almost a convulsion to get rid of; but feudalism is not the only mode by which populations can be enslaved by a combination, it is not the only mode by which the many can be made the toy of the few. Nor can it be contended that, on this continent where we claim to be free, where we claim to have got rid of feudalism, no large combinations can be attempted whereby men can get dishonest terms out of the toils of others. We have the fact already before us; we were told the other day by the hon. leader of the Opposition, that at this very day, the railway magnates of the North-West extort such enormous profits from the settlers of the country for carrying their goods to market that it practically amounts to their having proprietary interests in their farms, and the settlers are thereby deprived of the best part of their profits. This may not be feudalism in name, but is it not feudalism in substance and in fact. Then, Sir, here is another feature of the vicious policy which has been followed hitherto. Without venturing any expression of positive opinion, it may be a question, whether, if the road, instead of being built, as it is now contended it must be built, had been gradually and step by step constructed, as the necessities of the country might require, it might not have been a consideration whether it should be built by a subsidy of lands and money, or whether the Government of Canada should proclaim to the world that the needy and poor of the whole world could find free lands and free soil throughout the whole of the North-West, and that they should be enabled to obtain the best market prices for their products. Perhaps, if that system had been followed, there might, in a few years, have been a few less millionaires in this country, but there would have been a much greater number of happy and contented homes. But another system has been followed. Twenty-five million acres of land are to be given to this Company, and are to be locked up at the option of the Company. The result of that policy must be