

pose to occupy one-fourth of the time that has been occupied by my hon. friend from South Renfrew (Mr. Graham) in defending the policy of the late Administration and in attacking the report of the Commission now before the House. If I recollect aright, in commencing his speech he said that this report bore upon its face the imprint of partiality and unfairness, and that any one who read the report would come to the conclusion that it was a partisan one from beginning to end. He even went so far as to say that the report was so partisan and unfair that even members of the Administration and other hon. members on this side did not believe in that report themselves after perusing it. If that is the case, I can only say that I cannot comprehend for one minute why it has been necessary for the hon. gentleman to devote eight hours to attacking the report and to attempting to defend the late Administration. I venture to say that the hon. member for South Renfrew has never devoted the same amount of time, study and energy to any other speech in his political career that he has devoted to the speech he has just delivered. I want to congratulate him upon the physical energy he has displayed in delivering that speech. I do not know that I can congratulate him upon the contents thereof. His speech, from its length, in my opinion, was not intended to elucidate the question before the people of this country, but was intended to befuddle their minds. What the people want to know is this: First of all, what was the object of this railway; secondly, what were the promises and representations made at that time by the Government as to its cost; thirdly, what has been the cost of that railway; fourthly, what has been the reason of the excessive cost of the railway; and lastly, has the railway accomplished the purposes for which it was intended? If we can answer these five questions, we shall have solved the questions as to whether or not the report is a fair and impartial one, and as to whether or not the promises of the late Administration have been carried out.

Let us see what was the object of the railway. Sir Wilfrid Laurier, in introducing the measure into the House of Commons, stated that the primary object of the Bill for the construction of the National Transcontinental railway was to convey freight from East to West and from West to East at a reasonable cost; in other words, to make the cost so low that this railway

would relieve the freight situation in the West; that it would facilitate the handling of traffic, and that it would do so at the least possible cost; that is, that this road would act as a regulator of freight rates from east to west. It was upon that assumption and principle that the people of this country approved the construction of a National Transcontinental railway. The Conservative party never opposed the construction of a National Transcontinental railway. They opposed the means and methods by which it was proposed to construct that railway, but they agreed that there was a need for a second national transcontinental railway.

I want to take up this question from two aspects. In the first place I will take up the representations made at that time by the Liberal Administration that this railway could be built for \$13,000,000. I understand quite well that that statement was made by the then Prime Minister upon the understanding that what we would pay out over what we would take in would amount to only \$13,000,000. It is upon that basis that I propose to discuss the first branch of this case. In discussing that, as it is ten years ago since these representations were made, I intend to give the quotations from 'Hansard' to show the representations upon which the people of this country ratified the Bill for the construction of the National Transcontinental railway.

On the 30th of July, 1903, Sir Wilfrid Laurier, at page 7676 of 'Hansard,' spoke as follows:

Therefore let our friends on the other side of the House take note of this fact: That, with the exception of a few years' interest, to which I shall allude later on, we shall have this portion of the railway built by the Government from Moncton to Winnipeg without the cost of one dollar to the Canadian people. We shall receive interest upon the money advanced at the same rate, whatever we give with the one hand we shall receive back with the other.

I am fair to admit that the then Prime Minister meant by that statement, that we would receive 3 per cent upon the cost of construction of the eastern section of this railway and that we would receive 3 per cent rental in return after the interest for the first seven years, but that the interest for the first seven years which we would lose would be \$13,000,000. Therefore he told the people of this country that \$13,000,000 was all that it would cost for the construction of the National Transcontinental railway.

On page 7691 of 'Hansard' Sir Wilfrid Laurier spoke as follows: