

to build the railway with land, money, and a guarantee. They advertised for tenders during a long time, and the result was that no offer came—none, at all events, that I am aware of, or that was laid before Parliament. Therefore, the Government of that day with the Parliament at their back, concluded that the only means of building the railway was for the Government to undertake it themselves, taking care that it should be done without increasing unduly the taxation of the country. Two portions of that railway were begun by the hon. gentlemen, that is to say, the portion from Thunder Bay westward and the portion from Winnipeg eastward, leaving between the two a gap of about 185 miles to be constructed afterwards. These were put under contract, and the contracts were being executed, some portions of them being nearly built, when the Government—the second Government of my right hon. friend—came back to office. Previous to that time, the hon. gentleman, who was then leader of the Opposition Government—I mean the member for Lambton—had asked for tenders for a part of the railway now covered by a portion of the contracts in British Columbia. This is the condition in which we found the question of the Pacific Railway when we came into office in the month of October, 1878. Considering the matter with great anxiety, we came to this conclusion: that, unless the gap between the two portions of the railway, from Thunder Bay westward and from Red River eastward, was filled up by building the railway between those two points, we would not derive any revenue or other advantage from the railway under construction; and, therefore, my hon. friend the Minister of Railways, with the consent of the Governor in Council, called for tenders for the construction of that portion of the road. We thought that even after having contracted for these 185 miles, it was due to British Columbia—it was our duty to British Columbia—and we were bound by good faith to perform that duty—to see that the work of construction was begun in that Province without losing a single hour, if possible; and, therefore, tenders were asked for the construction of four sections of the railway from Yale westward. Tenders were accepted and the contracts awarded. This policy was the policy; this action was the action, which was submitted to Parliament last Session. 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 feeling in the country, as well as in Parliament, 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. A great many, remembering the first years of working the Intercolonial, were frightened at the prospects of working the Pacific Railway. They thought that the deficit on the working of that road would be such, that it would be a great burden on the revenues of the country for years and years to come. The Government was not blind to this. They thought they should try to meet the public mind, and dispel the apprehensions which were felt; they should try to put this great undertaking on such a footing that it would be accepted with confidence by Parliament and by the people. This is the reason why they matured the present scheme during the recess, and why they now submit that scheme to Parliament—one which, I hope, will commend itself to the support of a majority of this House. Last year, Mr. Chairman, when we presented to the House the results of our action during the 12 months, we were met by the present leader of the Opposition with these words:

"If it be true, as your High Commissioner said on the same occasion that 'it is impossible for us, with our limited means, to undertake alone the settlement of the North-West; that we have neither the people nor

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the money to do it;' if this be true, how much less are we able to add to that intolerable task, the Columbia section of the railway? Is this indeed the way to develop even such a poor and attenuated national spirit as is attainable by a people who are not permitted, who, perhaps, do not even aspire to their legitimate participation in the management of the concerns of the great family of nations? Is this, indeed, the way to infuse among us the spirit of unity and brotherly love, to make us one and a contented people? You may, perhaps, partly satisfy the 12,000 souls in British Columbia, but only because your action is the pledge and hostage to them for the completion of this gigantic work, to the ruin of the whole."

I am sorry to see that the hon. gentleman, even at so late a period as this, should raise the question of the small population of British Columbia. This was not a question of whether British Columbia had 10,000 or 12,000 people, but one regarding a great undertaking for a great nation and a great people. True, British Columbia is only a Province, but that Province will be filled with a large population in a few years, and that population will be composed of Canadians as we are, and will form a portion of a great nation, which, of course, must grow as other nations have grown. And when we see that our neighbors on the other side of the line, who had only a population of 4,000,000 when they separated from Great Britain, have now a population of nearly 50,000,000, we have no reason for despairing, or for believing that, with the same energy and determination, and with as good a climate as any other country, we should not increase as rapidly as the United States. The hon. gentleman goes on to say:

"Such is your reckless, your inconsistent, your vacillating, your impractical policy."

Having so characterized our policy, he goes on:

"Do you ask for mine? I will tell it. Set free the springs of legitimate revenue, by removing the obstacles designed to choke them. Open the avenues of legitimate trade, by lowering the legislative bars designed to close them. Free the people as soon as may be from the extortionate taxation by which you oppress them."

One would think the hon. gentleman had forgotten the five years of office of his friends, when they increased the taxation year after year, to the extent of five millions a year, and yet ended their Administration with a deficit of eight or ten millions of dollars. The hon. gentleman continues:

"Return to a moderate revenue Tariff, the only practicable plan in our circumstances, and a necessary incident in whose operation is to give some of the so-called advantages of protection to some of your native industries. By an earnest and searching plan of economy and retrenchment, directed to every branch of the public service, help to redress the balance between revenue and expenditure, while you lighten the people's burdens."

Why did they not do that themselves during the five years they were in office, and when they had the opportunity?

"But if you will do none of these things; if you will, in all else, persist in your mad career, at any rate in this be wise. If, in all else you be rash, in this, at any rate, be discreet. Learn that our position is grave and serious, and that our future is dependent on present prudence. Complete the railway to Red River."

Well, that will be completed within eighteen months.

"Go on with the prairie section as fast as settlement demands. For that, risk something; since, as I have said, the die is cast. But, in order to succeed in that, in order that you may have a chance later to do more, deal with that alone now. Bend to that great effort your undivided energies, your whole available resources. Postpone, meanwhile, the western work, and do not, by your present action, based on airy dreams and vain imaginations, risk the ruin of your country."

Well, I hope it will not be the ruin of the country. It is exactly to avoid the ruin of the country that we have come down with this scheme. It is to dispel the misapprehensions of the public and of Parliament that we have submitted it, and I hope, when the vote is taken, that hon. gentlemen on the other side will see that we interpreted rightly the sentiment of Parliament and that a large majority of this House will sanction this great measure. This was the way the hon. leader of the Opposition met us last year. Let us see how he meets us this year. According to the contract, the amount of money to be given to the Syndicate is \$25,000,000, and the amount of land 25,000,000 acres, worth,