

ed the fringes of the more prominent evidences of its growth. This is the land which is calling upon us at the present moment for increased railway facilities. Shall we close our ears to its cry? Does not the enormous contribution of that fertile land to the wealth of our nation entitle it to consideration, at our hands? If, Sir, we are to bind the west to us; if we are to share with the west in the rich fruitfulness of that country, we must hasten to equip lines of communication and means of transportation. I believe, Sir, in fact I know, that such is the purpose and intention of this government.

I now pass to a moment's consideration of what is known as the transcontinental railway question. After the very full consideration given to this subject last session, but little need be said now. The House is already in possession of the proposed modifications of that contract, modifications and alterations that leave the contract of last year in the main untouched. It is not necessary for me to reopen the chief issue. It is the determination of the government to construct or to have constructed another transcontinental railway, and I think I may fairly say that this policy receives endorsement on all sides. West of Lake Superior there are no two opinions on the question and by common consent it would seem that the people of the west entirely disregard politics in their strongly expressed desire for the railway. I take it, too, that in the older provinces of the Dominion there are no two opinions on the main question. Our present needs and future possibilities demand increased transportation facilities. Our political future depends very largely on the solidarity of this confederation, and the unity and solidarity of confederation can be promoted no better, than by the construction of a railway highway from ocean to ocean, touching each province and traversing all Canada. It then comes down largely to a question of method and means. To that issue is the question narrowed down. I do not know that the purpose of the government with respect to the eastern portion of the railway needs any justification from me at this juncture. Already this House has voted its approval. I as a member of this House have endorsed the project by my vote, and I believe that my constituents approve of my action in that regard. But, Sir, there was a great deal said last session touching the wisdom of building through the newer or northern part of Ontario, and we heard much from gentlemen opposite reflecting upon the wisdom of that course. Let me say Sir, that in my humble opinion, lapse of time, and further inquiry have but confirmed and established the wisdom of that policy. More than that; it seems to me that there is no feature of the whole scheme which can so appeal to a resident of the province of Ontario, as the proposal to build this railroad from the Manitoba to the Quebec boundary, across new Ontario. We have heard

the familiar cry ring in our ears that there is nothing for Ontario in the project. Nothing for Ontario in this project? Is it nothing for Ontario, that our province shall have opened up and placed in the way of development, hundreds of miles of territory now an unsettled wilderness? Is it nothing for us that the mining, the timber, and the agricultural resources of that long unexplored land shall at length be exploited? Is it nothing for us, that the undoubted fertile belt of that great northern half of Ontario shall be thrown open to the settler? Is it nothing for Ontario that for a certainty along the line of the proposed new railway there shall spring up towns and villages where the forest and mineral wealth of the great region shall be converted into manufactured products? Nothing for Ontario! Surely, Sir, it is a narrow and contracted vision that can see nothing for Ontario in such a splendid prospect.

What, Sir, is the only inference to be drawn from such expressions? Must it not be this—that those from whom such expressions are heard have no abiding faith in their province? Must it not be that they doubt the wealth of that region, and practically say that one-half of the province of Ontario is worthless? If, Sir, we are really convinced that the great northern half of Ontario is a barren wild, an impenetrable waste, pledged for all time to the red deer and the moose, to be traversed only by the Indian or by some adventurous trader; if, Sir, we are of opinion that it is an unkind and inhospitable region unsuited for the habitation of man, then, in Heaven's name, let us admit the fact to each other, and let us sit down with folded arms and confess that we cannot extend settlement to the north, that so far as the province of Ontario is concerned, real progress and development are at an end. But if, on the other hand, we have a strong faith in the resources and possibilities of that region—if we believe, as those about me from Ontario and from other provinces do believe, that New Ontario may, by bold and wise measures, be made a greater Ontario—if we have enduring confidence in the heritage bestowed upon us by Providence, and in the skill and pluck of our people to use these splendid possessions, then, Sir, our duty is plain; our duty is to go ahead.

We are told of engineering difficulties, of insuperable natural barriers. Where and what they are, Sir, I have yet to learn. They are not to be found on the charts and maps of surveyors and explorers. I fear that they exist only in the mind of the doubting Thomas who lacks the courage to address himself to the problem of his country's development. We are told, too, that the proposed line through New Ontario and New Quebec will be snowbound for four months out of the twelve. How singularly astray is such a prediction, when we remember that this winter, which has been rather a severe one, the northerly railways