

that the road would soon be opened and operated. In 1903, when the law incorporating the Transcontinental was passed, several members of this House stated that the Grand Trunk Pacific Company would never operate the road because it was against their interests. I said so myself; I could not find it possible for the Grand Trunk Pacific to lease that line and operate it when they had a short line to Portland. It was against their interest. Before the law was passed in 1903, Hon. Mr. Fielding, Minister of Finance in the Government, gave figures of what the expected cost of the National Transcontinental railway would be, seeing the Grand Trunk Pacific had agreed to pay interest at the rate of 3 per cent on the whole cost of the line, and then operate it? What has been the result? What did the government of business men, the men of the late Administration do? They appointed a commission of four members, and they had to spend millions and millions in the building of that railway. Everybody would be inclined to believe that the first duty of the Government in appointing these men would be to appoint men of experience in railway construction and operation. If they had appointed gentlemen of the experience of the hon. gentleman from de Lanaudière (Hon. Mr. Casgrain) do you believe we would have had the same results? Far from it.

Hon. Mr. CASGRAIN—They would have been worse.

Hon. Mr. BOLDUC—But the late Government thought that anybody was able to build a railway of that magnitude—a road having a length of 1,800 miles—that a man who had never seen railway construction, or had never seen a spike driven to attach a rail to a tie, would be a fit man to expend some hundreds of millions of dollars. Consequently the estimates of men of not the slightest experience in railway construction were taken, and what was the result? Instead of costing about \$33,000 a mile from Winnipeg to Moncton, what have we to pay? We have about one hundred and eighty millions to pay, about three times the amount stated in the House by Mr. Fielding. Right Hon. Sir Wilfrid Laurier went one better. He thought thirteen millions would build the whole line.

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND—In annual interest.

Hon. Mr. BOLDUC—He never said so.

Hon. Mr. BOLDUC.

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND—Oh, yes. It is most amusing to hear my hon. friend attribute such a statement to the late Prime Minister.

Hon. Mr. BOLDUC—How is it the road was cost so much—about three times what was proposed to be spent on that construction? I have stated that the reason was because of the estimates of men without any experience; and how have these men acted in the construction of that road? We would expect a private company to try to have many tenderers for the construction of a railway, but, instead of that, they divided the whole length of the railroad into about 21 sections, and they put such stringent conditions in the clauses given by them for the tenderers that it was impossible for any one to tender without exposing himself to complete ruin. Amongst the clauses mentioned were the following:

And we do hereby declare and agree that in case of refusal or failure to execute the said contract with the commissioners, and also to furnish the approved security required, to an amount not exceeding one third of the estimated total consideration of the contract, for the faithful performance of the said contract, within ten days after acceptance of this tender, the said cheque shall be forfeited to the said commissioners as liquidated damages for such refusal or failure, and that all contract rights acquired by the acceptance of this tender shall be forfeited.

So that the tenderer who is not on good terms with the commissioner was exposed to the risk of losing everything he had. The amount to be deposited was not mentioned. It was stated in the directions that this amount was not to exceed one-third of the whole contract. A man contracting for eight or ten million dollars, was liable to be called on, in the eight days following the awarding of the contract, to give an amount equal to a third of the amount of his tender. If he could not he would forfeit his deposit. We understand very well how few men were able to tender for the construction of that railway. But, happily for the large contractors, they could make some ten or fifteen million dollars of profit without touching a shovel or spike, and if it had been open to all the contractors—all those who were in a position to build the railway—the road would have cost at least twenty-five or thirty million less than it actually did cost. I have been informed that the railway now has been accepted by the Government; there may be some of those small difficulties still with regard to some extras.