

Then, hon. gentlemen, another objection has been taken, that there is an immunity from customs duties. The immunity from customs sounded very badly at first, apparently. There was a good deal said about it, and our friends were very anxious about it, while the opponents of the measure were highly elated to think they had found such a strong point, as they thought, against the scheme itself. But when it comes to be debated it does not seem to be a serious thing at all, and certainly not one which has attracted latterly as much attention as it did at first. I have had a statement prepared of the probable amount of exemptions from duty under the Syndicate contract. In the first place we have had the steel rails mentioned, but steel rails are free from duty now, and will be for two years; then there is the duty on fish-plates, they are also free. The Minister of Finance, who introduced that measure which took off the duty, said last year that the exemption on rails and fish-plates would be maintained until the country is able to produce its own steel rails, but if it had been for two years certain what would be the result! The company could and would probably have imported all the steel rails required for the construction of the Pacific Railway during the next two years, and they could have at once obtained an advance from the Government for the purpose of paying for them. The result of this measure may be the construction of steel rails in the North-West. It is very likely, indeed, that with this enormous enterprise before them the company may find it to their advantage to utilize the iron and coal of the North-West and construct their own steel rails. The duty on the steel rails for the whole distance would be \$362,934, and on spikes \$17,438, but the whole of the duties which are affected by this clause will not, under any circumstances, amount to over \$120,000; and it has been announced in another place that part of the project which will yet be submitted to Parliament will include the making of an allowance to manufacturers in this country to balance this exemption from duty, and put them in the same position of advantage which they now hold towards foreign manufacturers as regards those items that may be imported duty free; so that those who manufacture

similar articles in Canada, going into the construction of the Pacific Railway, will have the same relative advantage over those who are importing into this country as they have now. I have now gone over, I think, the principal objections. I did not intend to refer to every objection, nor do I intend to bring under the notice of the House the second offer which was made and which was referred to just now, in a remark made by my hon. friend from Richmond. I do not propose to discuss that offer, or to draw the attention of the House to it at present. It does not seem to me to be an offer necessarily involved in the discussion of the scheme on the table, so far as I am concerned, and so far as the duty I am now discharging is concerned, and I desire to present the present scheme without reference to it. Nor do I desire to go further into the other objections which have been raised. I am content to have endeavored to place before the House a clear statement of the project itself, and to have answered the more serious objections which have been taken to it. Let us pause one moment to reflect what will probably follow if this contract should go into execution, as I hope and trust it will; what a stimulus it will give to all the industries and trade of the country; what ships it will bring to our ports with immigrants; what stimulus it will give to our manufacturers by the expenditure of enormous sums of money for the construction of the railway, involving all kinds of articles of trade, supplies and imports; what a stimulus it will give to trade, commerce and manufactures of every description! What a stimulus it will give to immigration and the settlement of the country; how it will increase the population of the North-West; what advantages it will afford to those of our fellow subjects in England, Ireland and Scotland who may be anxious to leave their native land and still settle under the British flag! I do not wish to draw invidious comparisons. I did not refer to what was done by the late Government in any spirit of party warfare, but I adverted to it for the legitimate purpose of drawing a comparison between the efforts put forth by the two Governments, and, I think, I have established that the effort we are now making is one far more entitled to

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