

with an unbiassed mind to be convinced, that the right hon. gentleman has made out a case for the eastern part of this road. To a certain extent, I have been disposed to fear from the discussion that this road might fairly be designated a political railway—or, rather not a railway but a railway project. I have always suspected that it was a railway project of a decidedly political character. And, listening to the speeches made by some hon. gentlemen from the maritime provinces, I could not be unaware of the fact that they were exceedingly anxious to impress me with the idea that there was great danger in any man from the maritime provinces opposing the construction of this road. And why? Because, these hon. gentlemen assume and assert, without proof but with a great deal of confidence and glibness, that the right hon. gentleman is going to bring to the ports of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia enormous quantities of the products of the west. If my hon. friends could prove these things, they need scarcely hesitate for a moment to believe that I should be found supporting them.

Because while I think we owe everything in the way of work and construction to the west, I cannot consent to the idea that we do not owe everything as well to the east. If we are to do all we can to make the citizens prosperous in the west, we ought to do all we can that is likely to make them prosperous in the east.

But what reasonable ground is there for believing that the construction of this road from Fort Simpson to Moncton is going to divert anything like a large part of the grain traffic of the west to the ports of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia? For my part, I cannot make myself believe that it is possible. We have direct rail communication now with these ports over two lines of railway, over the Canadian Pacific Railway and the Intercolonial to St. John, and over the Intercolonial to Halifax; and yet we know that grain is not carried to these ports in such quantities as to make it of much value to the merchants of those ports or to the citizens of those cities. I need not proceed to prove that the grain has not gone there. My right hon. friend knows that the administration of which he is head constructed an elevator in St. John and there are other private elevators. To what extent has the government elevator in St. John been of use in handling the crops of Canada? Then this government constructed the large elevator in the city of Halifax, it has been there for years available, a modern elevator, but to what extent has that elevator handled the crops of the west? If it is going to be possible in the future to send this grain from the west into Halifax and St. John in such large quantities as the right hon. gentleman and his supporters would make us believe, how is it that this grain has not gone into those elevators in the past? We have had railway connec-

tions, we have the Intercolonial, this year not limited in its operations by the usual business considerations, a line which has developed those ports, and which can carry grain and heavy products to them at rates which no private road could undertake to meet. For instance, in the course of last year we know that the Intercolonial, for nine-hundredths of a cent per ton per mile, one-eleventh of a cent per mile, has carried grain from Montreal to Halifax. That experiment has not continued. A certain amount of grain did go at that price, but it has not continued, and why? Because the government would not carry any more at the same price? Probably not. Very probably the government would go on carrying grain at the same price, and that price is so low that it is very evident no company road could compete with it. But the fact of the matter is, that the grain so far has been delivered in some other direction in such a way as to make it more advantageous to the men whose business it is to market the grain products of this country than it would be to send them to these ports.

Now, when the right hon. gentleman and his friends assert that by the construction of a new line of road 1,900 miles in length, which will run through a territory which must be, in the first place, absolutely unproductive, that it is going to carry grain to Halifax and St. John which he cannot at this moment carry by the government line, then he is asking me to believe something which, to my mind, is incapable of belief. What company road operated under the usual conditions, what road operated as the property of private persons who must receive some return for their investment, could possibly carry freight at the prices the Intercolonial carries it for? It is clear that no company could do it. We have the evidence given by Mr. Wainwright, of the Grand Trunk, a road which is to have control of the policy of this new road who in giving evidence before a committee of this House, asserted that a profitable rate at which companies could carry freight was one-half cent per ton per mile. He said that under certain circumstances in carrying freight by train loads, and not by car loads, a rate of four-tenths of a cent per ton per mile might be given, and even leave a small margin of profit. But what relation has a rate of four-tenths of a cent per ton per mile, which Mr. Wainwright says is the practical cost of carrying freight over the Grand Trunk, what relation does that bear to a rate of nine-hundredths of a cent per ton per mile? Why, it is more than four times, it is four and a-half times as much. The Grand Trunk management says it is necessary to get a rate four and a-half times as great in order to clear themselves and to avoid loss, as has been received by the government road, and yet this government road has not succeeded in diverting any large amount of grain to the port of Halifax. But the right hon. gentleman would ask us