

the west of Ontario a large deputation to wait on the late First Minister and the Minister of Finance, and to press upon them that, under the changed condition of things in this country, after the Dominion Parliament had decided to subsidize short lines in the different provinces and had taken under its control almost the whole railway system of this Dominion, and was yearly granting aid to other lines, as a matter of justice and right they should be recouped to a certain extent for the money they had expended on their local lines. The reply they received was that the Government would seriously consider the question, while they held out no expectation to that deputation that these municipalities would receive any relief, because the First Minister stated that the drain upon the Dominion treasury now was so great that they could not hold out any hope that any relief would be granted. If that is the case, and these municipalities and counties are to be treated in that way, how can these men be expected to consent to granting \$80,000 a year for a road of this kind, which means \$2,000,000 added to the debt of this country, capitalizing it at 4 per cent. The claims of these municipalities would be settled by \$2,500,000 or \$3,000,000. I intend, and I wish hon. gentlemen to understand this fact, if this Bill is pressed upon the House, to present a resolution that no guarantee of any kind whatever towards the construction of this line shall be given until those municipalities to which nothing has been given in the way of a refund of the amounts they have expended on their lines have had their claims settled. I wish every hon. member from the west of Ontario to understand that he will have to face an amendment of this kind on this Bill, because I consider that these municipalities should be settled with before the Dominion Parliament is asked to give any guarantee in aid of this wild-cat scheme, for I can call it nothing else. The speech of the hon. member for Selkirk (Mr. Daly) would have satisfied me, if nothing else did, that it is unwise and imprudent to give this guarantee. He said that the products of Manitoba and the North-West could not be sent out by the Hudson Bay Railway in the same year in which they were raised.

Mr. DALY. It is nothing of the kind.

Mr. McMULLEN. He stated that the farmers of Manitoba and the North-West required to devote their attention to ploughing their ground for the next year's crops from the moment their harvest came off until the last moment they could plough, and that their threshing was not done till some time in November, and that, as a result, this line could not possibly be used till the following spring. Now, when we consider the fact that the wheat, according to the hon. gentleman's argument, has got to be not less than nine months in transit before it reaches the market of Liverpool, I say the proposition is absurd, unless they are going to have in Europe the experience that Joseph had in Egypt, when they will have to lay up grain for seven years. It is a fallacy to think of using this road to transport the surplus produce of the North-West to the markets of Liverpool. It is nonsense, when you come to consider the rapid transit of the produce of all sections of the world by steamships and railways; and the idea of hoarding up at one point on the Hudson Bay a large portion of the output of the North-West and leaving it in storage for six or

seven months before you can ship it to the markets of the world is absurd and a fallacy. I base my arguments on the statements of the hon. member for Selkirk (Mr. Daly,) and if his statements are true, as I have no doubt they are, in my humble opinion, to use a common phrase, they knock the bottom out of the whole scheme. I wish, by these remarks, to indicate the position I am going to take upon this important question. When we come to consider the indebtedness of this Dominion, when we realize that we have an acknowledged indebtedness of 237 millions, as stated by the Finance Minister the other night, and when we consider that we are subject to an annual interest charge within a few dollars of ten millions, as shown by the Auditor General's account, although the Finance Minister says it is less, I say that it is going a step altogether beyond the abilities of the people of this country to consent to a grant of \$80,000 a year for twenty years to construct this line. Let us wait patiently till our North-West is filled up. Let us utilize the lines we have already produced at a very large cost to this Dominion, let us utilize the magnificent line of the Canadian Pacific Railway, and the water-stretches that we have in this Dominion and that are an undoubted advantage to us; and when Manitoba and the North-West get a population of four or five millions, then, if we find the carrying capacity of those lines are insufficient to meet the requirements it will be quite time enough to consider the propriety of staking the resources of the Dominion to produce other lines. Let us lie quietly by, doing everything we can to increase our population and to fill up the lands in the North-West that are still lying unoccupied. It would be very much better to take a small proportion of that money and devote it to an active and energetic immigration policy, that would bring into the older provinces men from the old country who would take up lands that are now for sale at a reasonable price, and allow those who are struggling under financial embarrassments to go and take up new land in the North-West. Let us fill up our country with a population first, let us put ourselves in the position to produce a great deal more than we are producing at the present moment, and when the necessity arises, if further export accommodation should be necessary then we can furnish it; but in my opinion it is unwise and imprudent to ask our consent in the meantime for such a large outlay when it is not necessary. Let me say that if any one argument would be necessary to convince me that this outlay is unnecessary it is the fact that the produce of the country that goes by the Hudson Bay route has got to lie in transit for from eight to nine months before it reaches the market of Liverpool, for that is the statement of the hon. member for Selkirk. If any one thing beyond another was necessary completely to squelch out any prospects of the undertaking commending itself to this country, it is that statement of the hon. gentleman regarding the time that it will take to carry produce over that route. For these reasons I shall oppose the scheme, and if the resolution is carried, when the Bill is introduced, I shall from time to time present resolutions declaring that until such time as the municipalities of western Ontario, which have built their own roads and never received a single dollar, have been recouped for their outlay, not a dollar shall go towards the construction of this road.