

dustries of the country, and I am happy to know that one of the largest of them—the lumbering trade—though I do not say this arises from the adoption of the National Policy—has vastly improved, largely owing to the returning prosperity in the United States, which, reflecting on us, has benefitted this industry in the most extraordinary manner. I trust that the prosperity which is now enjoyed throughout the country will be continued and increased in the future. But the most important question that will be submitted for your consideration is that which relates to the construction of the Pacific Railway, and is couched in the language of the succeeding sections, upon which I will speak for a moment or two. His Excellency informs us :

“ During the recess my advisers thought the time opportune for making another attempt to carry out the declared preference of Parliament for the construction and operation of the Canadian Pacific Railway by means of an incorporated company, aided by grants of money and land, rather than by the direct action of the Government.”

I take it there is but one opinion upon the propriety of adopting the course recommended in the section which I have just read and the two or three others which immediately succeed it. I believe there is a fixed determination in the minds of the people of this country, and, I doubt not, in the minds of the members of this Parliament, that, if possible, the construction of this railway shall be executed in the way indicated. The propriety of doing so has been conceded not only by the members of one party, but by both political parties in this country. Parliament has adopted resolutions embodying that principle on more than one occasion, and I am sure that you will be glad to learn that this great enterprise is to be built by an incorporated company. It would be idle for me now to discuss the merits of a question not yet placed in the hands of hon. gentlemen. I am myself as much in the dark as any member of this House can possibly be (outside of the Government) with reference to the terms of this contract. I only know what it is supposed to contain from the public prints, but I should not be at all surprised if, when the contract is placed on the table, the salient points of the agreement for the construction of this road

*Hon. Mr. Gibbs.*

(entered into with certain parties in Europe, the United States and Canada) have by some means or other found their way into the public press, and that the main facts have been correctly stated. However, as we are yet in doubt and uncertainty on the subject, I do not think it will be wise or becoming to discuss terms which have not yet been made known officially, or to say whether it is wise, prudent or advisable to enter into that contract. One thing, however, I think I may say, and, I believe, hon. gentlemen, you will entirely concur with me, that whatever number of millions of acres of lands, whatever number of millions of dollars in money, may be granted to any incorporated company as a subsidy to aid in the construction of this great public undertaking, Parliament will see to it that such safeguards surround this contract, and such guarantees shall be given for its performance, that by no possibility shall it return into the hands of the Government incomplete; or, if completed, that the parties shall faithfully adhere to its terms and operate it for the time during which, under that contract, they have agreed so to do. I believe that we can have but one feeling with reference to that point. Having considered the principles laid down for the construction of this work—and I believe scarcely anyone will be found to object to them—Parliament will see to it that all necessary precautions shall be taken to insure the faithful fulfilment of the contract by those who have undertaken to construct this gigantic work. I am happy to know, and this House will also be glad to know, that the parties who are reported to have entered into this contract are not only residents of the Dominion, but also of the United States and the Continent of Europe, and I presume by the use of the words “financial standing in Europe” we are to infer that gentlemen of high financial character in England and France, and perhaps Germany and Belgium, have become parties to this great contract, and that having brought them into it—having made them parties to it—we shall have organized by those who have undertaken to build this important work, a system of immigration into the North-West Territories, which will