

at the same rate for their half, 160 acres, will pay at the highest \$522.40, principal and interest. But apart from these errors of calculation, reducing so largely the fund upon which we were to depend for building the Columbia section of the Canada Pacific Railway, there are other considerations which wholly vitiate the estimates of the hon. gentleman. The average price to be realised largely depends upon the sale of lands in the nearer belts, and if anything occurs to disturb the sales in them, it is quite clear that even the smaller average I have stated cannot be realised. Then, not merely the average price, but the whole sales depend upon the character of the country. My hon. friend from Lambton will kindly relieve me from discussing in detail this important point, as having looked at all the reports on that subject, he will undertake the task of pointing out what, according to our official information, is the character of the country in the railway belt. It will be found that the map which the hon. gentleman brought down last night, and in which he depicted the barren spots as brown, is not at all "brown" enough with reference to the North-West. It does not by any means accurately represent the extent of the bad and inferior land in that country. The hon. gentleman stated that he estimated there were 150,000,000 acres of good land in the North-West; but he did not state that all that was arable or wheat land; and I understand from him in conversation that he does not mean any such thing. It will be found that the number of acres of wheat land are not to be measured by anything like those figures. In fact, Mr. Fleming, in a late paper, places the wheat land at 80,000,000 acres, and the pasture land at a like quantity. All estimates on this subject are at present conjectural; but, doubtless, there is a vast expanse of fertile land, though broken by intervening spaces of barren and inferior soils. There is there good land enough to support a very large population. It will be found, however, that circumstances will prevent much of the high-priced lands close to the railway belt being taken up. There is bad land close to the Railway, in many places, barren, swamp and inferior land. These and other considerations show that, both with reference to the smaller average,

which is obtainable only by assuming that the lands near the Railway are all good lands, and with reference to the general rate of prices, which is reached on an exaggerated view as to the quantity of first-class land, the expectation of the hon. gentleman is not likely to be realised. It is obvious that if there be bad lands close to the Railway the settlers will not pay \$5 an acre for them. There is no object in being near the Railway, if you can raise nothing which you can send away by it. You would rather be fifty miles away, on land capable of producing a crop, than close to the line on a desert or a swamp. Another circumstance which vitiates this estimate is, that settlers will not buy railway lands as long as free grants are obtainable. I speak in the large. Of course there will be instances in which a settler will buy railway lands; and the capitalist who wants more than 320 acres, will, doubtless, buy railway lands adjoining his free grant. But, speaking generally, you will find that settlers will not purchase railway lands so long as free grants are obtainable. There is a good reason why they should not. They get 160 acres free, and the remainder on more favourable terms than the purchaser of railway lands, and, therefore, there will be, in these earlier years, fewer settlers on railway lands than the hon. gentleman calculates. Another reason why there will be fewer purchases, by settlers, of railway lands, is that the hon. gentleman has placed a barrier in the way of such purchases by opening the railway lands to speculators. Speculators are following day by day, and hour by hour in the track of the surveyors, finding out the best sections of railway lands, particularly in the cheap outside belts, and their entries are in the land office before the report comes in; not with the view of settlement, but with the view or taking what people on the English stock market call "a long shot"—with the view of investing ten cents an acre in dollar lands, or twenty cents an acre in two dollar lands, in the expectation that after an interval of years the development of the country will enable them to exact enormously higher terms from the settlers coming in. The hon. gentleman may delude this House by a return, this year or the next, into the notion that he

**MR. BLAKE.**