

116 feet to the mile. Under Mr. Mackenzie's direction, I think, efforts were made to find a better route than that, and the grades were reduced, but they still remained very heavy and the curves remained very sharp, and the slightest accident there would entail destruction to a train and all its contents. Yet we have found further modifications which tend very largely to degrade the character of the road. Notwithstanding this, the road is to cost now, according to the lowest estimate, \$80,000,000; but if, as the hon. member for West Durham (Mr. Blake) argued some evenings ago, this system of degradation is to be carried out in the other sections which are not so difficult of construction as this, in the eastern section, and in what is now called the central section, the estimated cost would be found to be very much lower than \$80,000,000—how much lower it would be hard to calculate. Probably \$75,000,000 would be in the neighborhood of what the estimate should be. But even taking the amount at the \$80,000,000 stated by the hon. Minister, what do we find remains to be done? We find that the Government propose to give for a work which is only to cost \$80,000,000 an amount in works executed and being executed and paid for, equal to \$23,000,000; besides that we are to give \$25,000,000 in cash, making a total of \$53,000,000 in cash, not to speak at all of the interest account to which the hon. member for Richmond and Wolfe, speaking on the other side, attached so much importance. We are also paying a large amount of interest on the money already expended on that road, and that never appears in any compilation of the cost. However, putting the interest account altogether out of view, we are to pay \$53,000,000 in cash, besides 25,000,000 acres of land lying close to the railway, as far as lands can be found around the line of railway, and where they cannot be so found they may be selected where the Company please. Now, Sir, hon. gentlemen opposite say that the land is worth only \$1 per acre, and that the 25,000,000 acres at this rate, added to the sum of \$53,000,000 would make \$78,000,000 in cash as the very lowest estimate to be paid by this country. Taking it at this estimate, we pay \$78,000,000 in cash and land for a road which at the outside would cost only \$80,000,000. Now, Mr. Chairman, we were told that this whole country experienced an inexpressible sense of relief on finding that the Government intended to entrust the construction of a portion of this road to a Syndicate instead of conducting it themselves. Why, Sir, was that sense of relief experienced? Why should anybody experience a sense of relief when they are told that the Government is to pay \$78,000,000 for a work which was to have cost only \$80,000,000? Sir, if there is to be any doubt about the estimates, if the estimates are to be overrun anywhere, will they not be overrun in those sections which the Government have undertaken to complete? Not on the prairie section will it be at all necessary to overrun the estimates. On the prairie section it will be entirely for the Company themselves to determine what sort of road it will be to their interest to build. They can make the line as cheaply as they please along the prairie, but on the sections between Thunder Bay and Red River the works are heavy, and no matter what modifications are introduced I think this House will find, bye-and-by, that the cost will greatly exceed the estimate. So, when you come up into the Rocky Mountains, where you have to swing men in baskets over the sides of the canyons in order that they may get on the face of the cliff, and where you have to tunnel for miles, you will find, bye-and-by, that, notwithstanding the recently introduced modifications, the cost will greatly exceed the estimates; for, Sir, I think this country will feel that it is bound to carry out its side of the bargain, and bound not to slight the work, but bound to construct a fair and proper railway. Perhaps not what we would call a first-class railway, as we intended

it, perhaps not even a second-class railway, but still, a good substantial railway, that will cost the country a very large amount of money. But we agree to give them \$78,000,000 for what is not the but \$80,000,000. Now, Mr. Chairman, that is we are strangest part of the bargain. Why, or how is it we are to give for the construction of the line, land that is close along the line of the railway; land carefully selected, not swamps, or barrens, or hills or rocks, and how is it that this land is valued at no more than \$1 an acre. When, or how, or why is it that the value of the land in the North-West has depreciated in the minds of hon. gentlemen opposite. It is not nine months since the hon. leader of the Government brought down a formidable bill of calculations to this House, to show that the land was worth, in Belt A, five miles on each side of the railway, \$5 an acre; Belt B, 15 miles outside of the railway, \$4 an acre; that, in the next Belt C, was worth \$3, and that in the belt outside of that again, far, far away from the railway, was worth \$2 an acre; and now we are asked to take, as the basis of our calculation, that the very best and choicest lands in all the North-West is worth only \$1 an acre. If the choice land lying close to that line of railway will be worth but \$1 an acre, the sooner we abandon the idea of opening up the country, and of settling it, the better. The sooner we cease inviting our own people to go in there the better. One dollar an acre! prairie land, fertile, as we are told; rich, as we are told; the best wheat land in the world, as we are told; and worth but \$1 an acre! \$3.50 I find was the average price according to the Premier's calculation last year, in a belt of 220 miles wide, and now, within a few miles of the railway, we are asked to say that the land is worth but \$1 an acre. Now, Mr. Chairman, did the hon. Premier believe himself last Session when he submitted that calculation to this House? Did his hon. colleagues believe him when he submitted that calculation to this House? Did the large majority of hon. members who voted against the motion of the hon. member for West Durham, that we should proceed with this work only as our means would justify, did they, Sir, believe that that statement was correct? If they believed that statement last Session, what has occurred since to alter their views and opinions? If they believed the statement of their Premier, made solemnly from his place in the House last Session, why do they now say that it was inaccurate and misleading. If that statement, so carefully and elaborately prepared and submitted to this House last Session, was a correct statement, why was it hon. gentlemen opposite felt that there was a sense of relief when they got this contract out of their hands. If the country believed the statement made by the hon. gentleman, or half believed it, why was the sense of relief experienced, and how did hon. gentlemen opposite feel that there was a sense of relief when the whole country was anxious to get rid of the construction of a road which, last year, the Premier proved conclusively was not to cost this country a cent, but was to be abundantly paid for by the sales of those lands; and moreover, we were to receive many untold millions in future years from the sale of those same lands. Within 10 or 15 years we were to have money enough actually paid in to pay for that railway, and large sums yet due and secured by liens upon the land sold, besides millions of acres yet undisposed of. Now, the country would like to know more distinctly and clearly than is now known, why the value of those lands has depreciated in the hands of hon. gentlemen opposite. Looking at the old Allan contract of 1873, before that country was fairly opened up, or the value and character of the lands was fully ascertained, we find that the Government pledged themselves, solemnly, to say that not one acre of that land should be sold for less than \$2.50 without the express permission of the Company. If these lands were worth \$2.50 eight years ago, why is it that, after we have spent millions of dollars in opening up the country, settling diffi-