

the province of Quebec. In the city of Quebec and neighbourhood there is quite a feeling in favour of some assistance being given to a railway that was to travel over much this same route; and so far as that sentiment has been expressed it is entitled to consideration. I, myself, have been in sympathy with it, and I am going to state fully what my opinion is in that regard before I conclude my observations. But I do say that there has been no demand in the North-west for a grand transcontinental line from ocean to ocean; there has been none in the maritime provinces. I never heard of any, and I would have heard it if it existed. Nobody ever heard of this project, at all events, until this session of parliament was half way through; no one ever heard it mooted as a scheme that was under consideration by this government, or likely to be submitted to parliament for an extension of this line to Moncton. There has been no press agitation in favour of it during the last six months, no platform agitation, no discussion in parliament, nobody has risen in any numbers, or even in units, and said that we want another transcontinental railway, moving motions, urging the government to that course. Nobody has been calling for this, therefore it is a mistake, it is misleading, to say that there is a great cry in the country which impels this government to adopt the policy that has been determined upon. Moreover, Mr. Speaker, it is fair to add that when this matter did first come up for consideration, when the Grand Trunk Railway Company first moved in this direction, it was not for this scheme that they moved; they moved for a much more limited scheme, they moved for a scheme which involved aid to a railway to North Bay, as they told us publicly. That was their idea, these other features have been added since, and I suppose it was considered necessary by reason of the fact that these bonding privileges had been imperilled, and other direful consequences seemed to be imminent.

Now, Sir, when we consider all these facts, and other facts, it would seem to be almost incredible that, under such circumstances, no heed should be paid to an appeal that we should go slow, that we should see what we are doing, that we should carefully study the bearings of the question in all its aspects. I would have thought there is scarcely one minister in the government, burdened with all the duties which during a parliamentary session are cast upon members of the government, but would have hesitated to take a step of this magnitude during the present session. However, Sir we have the scheme before us, and we must deal with it as it is. I think that a different scheme might have been with greater advantage to the country devised. If we were to consider the interests of the country as being paramount to any desires or any wishes of any railway company, I think a different scheme

from this could have been and would have been devised. The whole proposal strikes me as ill-considered. There are facts which should have been ascertained and which when ascertained would have sufficed to show us whether the step to which we were committing ourselves was one which we could safely take. The fact when available which would have given us confidence in either not moving at all or in moving forward in the direction we are now asked to take. But we are in the dark. We cannot say that things are not so, because we do not know; we cannot say they are so because we have not any information which would justify us in saying it. We may find, if this thing goes on, that it is a huge blunder, that is it a grave mistake. We may find when it is too late, that the best interests of this country would have been better served by waiting, by putting off till to-morrow, by delaying long enough to make a proper investigation and inquiries.

Now, we have this session—and I think that ought to be borne in mind—made large provisions for a western railway extending through almost the whole of the fertile belt, to Edmonton at all events. We are providing this year a guarantee of bonds for 600 miles, and another additional 100 miles in another direction. Now, that is a considerable thing for parliament to have done in one session, seeing, if I am not incorrectly informed, that the country through which that railway passes is not settled, that it remains to be settled, and we hope to invite settlement by means of it. That railway 600 miles long, benefiting a tract of country 15 to 20 miles on each side of it, will ultimately be settled, but it will take a great many people and it will take some time to settle it, even with all the railways to the south of it. It will be some time before you need to make a new railway to the north. I think the case is abundantly clear that we have done amply well this year, at all events, in the way of giving a guarantee amounting to \$9,000,000 towards the construction of the Canadian Northern. We have done that after two years of consideration, and only came to a final conclusion during the present session of parliament. Now, my own view would be that if we wanted to pass railway legislation, if we wanted to do something of advantage for the transportation of the country, if we wanted to secure to our Canadian sea-ports the transportation of western products, we would have extended the Intercolonial to Georgian bay by acquiring the Canada Atlantic. Of course, Mr. Speaker, that involves a continuation of the principle of government ownership, a principle to which I know a great many people are hostile. It would involve the government doing something to which many people are not well disposed. I regret, I am sure, as much as any man can, that unfortunate visit which the right hon. gentleman paid to Depot Harbour on the oc-