

Lake Superior, before we knew what difficulties would be encountered in passing the Rocky Mountains and the Cascade Range, the hon. gentleman endeavoured to persuade the people that the previous Government had bound the Dominion to construct that work within ten years *coute que coute*. Sir, there was no such condition. It was never contemplated that that work should be completed within that time, unless an easy line could be found, and unless the circumstances and revenues of the country would permit it. It was so understood in this House. I was sitting on the Opposition side of the House at the time, and associated with Sir Alexander T. Galt and other independent members, insisted, in order to make the point clear, upon a Resolution of Parliament that this work should be proceeded with, provided it could be done without increasing the then rate of taxation. The right hon. gentleman, then leader of the Government, being absent in Washington, Sir George E. Cartier, who, in his absence led the House, found so many of his own supporters concurring with us, that he consented to adopt that Resolution, and it was passed while the delegates from British Columbia were sitting beside the Speaker's Chair. Now, with these facts in view, what course did the hon. gentleman opposite take when he came into office? He complained of this ten years' limit, yet he assumed the responsibility of constructing the Railway as a public or Government work, and he sent to England and invoked the interference of Lord Carnarvon, then Secretary of State for the Colonies.

MR. MACKENZIE: No.

MR. MACDOUGALL: What did you do?

MR. MACKENZIE: I invoked the assistance of no one.

MR. MACDOUGALL: Who invoked the interference of Lord Carnarvon?

MR. MACKENZIE: The British Columbia people.

MR. MACDOUGALL: Then the British Columbia people proceeded to England. I happened to be there myself at the time. Mr. Walkem came to London to complain of bad faith on the part of the Canadian Government, and the result was that Lord Carnarvon was invited to offer his services, and the hon. gentle-

men opposite consented to accept his services, and agreed to abide by his arbitration as to the millions which were to be expended yearly by Canada up to 1890. Mr. Walkem talked over the matter with me, and I endeavoured to persuade him that he would not be serving the interests of British Columbia in taking any such ground as he proposed; that Canada would proceed, under any Administration, to open up the great North-West, and then the necessity of crossing the mountains to a Pacific terminus in British Columbia would be admitted by all parties, and he would get his Railway as soon as it was possible to obtain it, under any circumstances; that to quarrel with Canada, and attempt to enforce a literal fulfilment of these rigid terms, would result in failure. Lord Carnarvon did me the honour to confer, informally, with me upon the matter. I felt it my duty as a Canadian, and as a public man, to warn him against burning his fingers by undertaking to arbitrate between Canada and British Columbia in that matter. But that nobleman, being anxious to remove all obstacles to the consolidation of British North America, because he was the Minister under whose authority the scheme of Confederation was planned, undertook the difficult and, as I think, ill-advised office of Arbitrator, and the hon. gentleman opposite, the great Reformer, the great constitutionalist, abdicated his functions as a responsible Minister, and placed this Parliament and the people of this country in a false position, when he left it to a person in no way responsible to us, to say that we should spend \$2,000,000 a year in the construction of a Railway in British Columbia. That was a highly unconstitutional act in my view. It was a destructive blow aimed at the most essential principle upon which our constitutional system is founded. If the Government of the day can hand over the purse-strings of the nation to any one, even to the sovereign herself, to fix the amount and to specify the objects of expenditure, without, in the first place, consulting the representatives of the people in Parliament assembled, it has ceased to be the Government of a free country. The bargain was struck, the reference made, and the award of \$2,000,000 a year in favour of British