

MR. BLAKE: To judge from the number of gentlemen who are continually interrupting, one would think there must be a great many men in British Columbia; the only one who at all observes the proprieties of debate is the senior member for Victoria (Sir John A. Macdonald). I have said, Sir, and in that I am happy to agree with my hon. friend from Victoria (Mr. DeCosmos), that I do not find that the resources of the country in question are likely to make the proposed work profitable. There is indeed some chance that the line will not be required to be kept open after it is built, and we shall thus save the running expenses. The running expenses depend upon the traffic. If the traffic is heavy, then, of course, we shall have adequate returns, but if it be light, we shall have heavy running expenses without returns, for there must be in that isolated region, machine shops; all arrangements for making, or at any rate for repairing locomotives and cars, a staff and so forth, if the road is to be run at all. The engineers, taking the Intercolonial Railway as a guide, have estimated the running expenses of working the 125 miles at \$295,000. If there is hardly any traffic it will not cost so much. But we cannot hope to escape altogether from running expenses, which will, of course, include renewals and repairs, though I fancy the item of renewals to rails will not be a heavy one. Our annual payments therefore, in respect of that railway after construction, will be considerable. The interest on the cost of construction at \$10,000,000 will be an annual burden of \$500,000, or if the line costs \$12,000,000, \$600,000, to which may be added a loss in running expenses of perhaps \$150,000 a year, or more, making a total annual charge of from \$750,000 to \$850,000 a year. But that is not all, nor the chief part of the burden, because this line is proposed to be constructed, not as an isolated transaction—not as a complete thing in itself—not as the end of the expenditure in British Columbia, but only as the commencement. It is but a pledge; it is but a hostage for the many other millions to be expended there. We hear, indeed, nothing now of an Island Railway, except the suggestion of the Minister of Railways to-night, that a line eight miles long might be necessary to get beyond the reach of the guns of St.

Juan. But apart from this we hear nothing, and I think the judgment of the country has so far condemned that project as to render its revival impossible. But for the mainland we are to deal with a proposal to build a long and very costly line. We have a new set of estimates brought down to-night. This is not the first or second set—it is at any rate the third set. Before I deal with them in the gross, I wish to refer to one fact which proves, plainly, that they are the second set brought down this Session. The other side had a sort of preliminary skirmish on this question on the motion of the hon. member for North Norfolk, on the land policy of the Government. The hon. First Minister then said it was inconvenient to discuss the Pacific Railway policy of the Government on that occasion; that this should be postponed, till the general debate now going on; but you will have noticed that he immediately proceeded to discuss and expound it. The hon. gentleman declared that the expenditure in connection with the Pacific Railway, up the 30th June next, would be about \$15,000,000. We know that the expenditure up to December last, largely exceeded \$14,000,000, and I think the estimate of \$15,000,000, up to the 30th June, is perfectly fair. It will be in the memory of the House that he stated that from 30th June next, the expenditure would be \$10,000,000 a year for the next two years, and \$5,000,000 a year for the following eight years. This will make a total expenditure of \$60,000,000 to be made after the thirtieth of June next, or of \$75,000,000 adding the \$15,000,000 already spent. This statement was not made recklessly. It was made after due deliberation, of set purpose, as a deliberate declaration of the policy of the Government, on the highest authority; and the hon. Finance Minister on the following day confirmed it, declaring that it was based on Mr. Fleming's figures. To-day, the hon. Minister of Railways states that the whole expenditure, including the past \$15,000,000, will be under \$65,000,000. He has seen the First Minister, or those behind him, and goes ten millions better. There is a change of over \$10,000,000 between the deliberate estimate of last week and the final estimate of this week. I would like to know

MR. BLAKE.