

the propriety of the change of which he still approves. The hon. gentleman took that report to the Council, where it remained.

MR. MACKENZIE: The hon. gentleman is a little overstating the fact. I agreed that the road would be much better built that way than the former way; but I did not concur in the wisdom of making the change just then.

SIR CHARLES TUPPER: The hon. gentleman ought to have done one thing or the other. The Chief Engineer having gone the next day to England, after discussing the matter with the hon. gentleman, and having left his report in favour of the change, with the assurance of that hon. gentleman that he agreed with it, he ought to have either obtained the decision of the Council for the proposition or against it, or, at all events, should have taken care to know that the change was not made under the assumption that that which the Chief Engineer had recommended, and which met with the approval of the hon. the Minister of Public Works—

MR. MACKENZIE: No.

SIR CHARLES TUPPER: Was not to be pursued. That was the position in which I found the work. Notwithstanding the increased cost, I have no hesitation in saying that the change was a wise one; and I recommended it to the present Government, especially when I found that the contract had been carried on by the Engineer under the impression that the change had been adopted, and that the contractor had expended over \$100,000 for plant that would not have been required if there had been no intention of a change. We were careful, under these circumstances, that no more contracts should be let in the loose, irregular, and improper manner prevailing up to that time. We required a full statement of all the work that was required on the sections of the Railway, before we would commit ourselves to their construction, and I postponed action twice upon the advertisement which the hon. member for Lambton had himself put into the papers for the 185 miles, because the Department was not ready with the careful calculations based upon surveys and examinations and cross-sections which had been prepared to enable us to know

exactly what the amount of the work would be. I am happy to say that we have changed the mode of letting the contracts, instead of basing them on mere guess work, we based them on maximum quantities that cannot be exceeded; the contracts require the amount of work should be done, if required, but that it may be reduced to any extent. I am happy to be able to tell the hon. gentleman that I have already reduced the distance, or rather that Mr. Caddy, the Engineer in charge of Section 41, has been enabled, since that contract was let, to reduce the distance on forty-seven miles of it by three and three-fourths miles, a saving to the country of \$319,000 by that reduction, and by lessening the amount of work to be done on that forty-seven miles. The same process is going on on Section 42, and these two contracts will be completed within the time stated in the contract—a great novelty—the hon. gentleman will admit, considering the inordinate time he has taken in similar cases. Under that system we shall not only be enabled to construct these works within the time stated in the contract, but by a reduction of the cost by over half a million dollars. I give this to the hon. gentleman as an evidence of the value of having a careful examination of the work before the contracts are let, instead of rushing into it blindly. That was our first duty; and finding that this expenditure had been made, we had no alternative but to go forward and carry it out. Moreover, we had the responsibility thrown upon us of dealing with the question of the construction of the Railway as a whole; we did not find it left a legacy to us as the hon. gentleman found it left to him. It was open to him, in the position in which we left the question, as I have already stated, to say he was not prepared to adopt the policy of the construction of the Railway, at all events, in the manner that was indicated. He adopted a different course; he not only provided for the construction of the work directly by the Government, but he entered into a binding treaty and obligation with Lord Carnarvon, on behalf of the Imperial Government and British Columbia, that this work should be completed by 1890 from the shores of Lake Superior to the Pacific Ocean. That was the legacy we inherited from the hon.