

need not remind hon. gentlemen that the circumstances of the country have very much changed since then. We have gone through a period of financial depression. We have arrived at a condition in our financial affairs which unfortunately was not anticipated at that time, and we are facing now a very large deficit in the revenue. I think, therefore, that as our position is very different at the present moment, it is the duty of Parliament to view with the greatest care and caution any fresh liability which we may be asked to assume. The Act of 1891 contemplated the construction of a colonization road. It was supported in this House strongly and chiefly on the ground that it was a colonization road, but it was very well understood that in case of the completion at any time of the larger project of the Hudson Bay Railway it would form the initial section of that line. It was in view of these facts that Parliament passed the Act of 1891. It is well known to hon. gentlemen that within the last year strenuous efforts have been made to get a further subsidy or further aid in some way, and if rumour be correct—and I think we have more than rumour to go on—we have in fact the utterances of the Finance Minister in another place—an Order in Council has been passed within the last year by which a subsidy or loan of \$10,000 per mile is to be given to the same section of the road provided for in the Act of 1891—more as a colonization road than as the initial section of a through Hudson Bay Railway, amounting in the whole to the sum of \$2,500,000. It is true the government have no power to appropriate the revenues of the country without the sanction of Parliament, and I take it for granted that that Order in Council was passed with the provision that it was subject to the approval of Parliament. I cannot suppose that the government has done anything else, and if Parliament does not see fit to ratify the position the government has assumed there will be no harm done. Now, I need not dilate to any extent upon the present financial condition of this country. We all know that a deficit of some millions will be upon us during the present year, and that we are imperatively required under the circumstances to be most careful in regard to the public expenditures. I am happy to perceive that the Finance Minister fully realizing his responsibility under the circum-

stances has very largely cut down the estimates for the present year, and we are told further that no supplementary estimates are to be introduced. Whether this is to be taken as conclusive that the government does not intend to recommend a large subsidy or loan of two millions and a half to this section of the Hudson Bay Railway or not, I do not know. There are so many ways in which the expressions from a Minister in either branch of Parliament can be explained away, that it might be just possible that the government intend to adhere to their policy as foreshadowed in this Order in Council. I hope, however, such is not the case, but should it unfortunately turn out to be true that in the present depressed condition of our finances this large liability is to be added to the public indebtedness, I hope that the fate which overtook the Short Line Railway Bill a few years ago—and which redounded so largely to the credit of the Senate—will be meted out to this new endeavour to saddle the country with a new and unnecessary burden. If my information is correct, the subsidy is altogether excessive for the work which is intended to be done. If the whole line from Winnipeg to York Factory on the Hudson Bay were under contract, \$10,000 per mile might not be too large a subsidy because the country from the Saskatchewan to the waters of the Hudson Bay is admitted to be a very difficult country for the construction of a railway, but the line from Winnipeg to the North Saskatchewan is admitted to go through a very fine agricultural country where the road can be built and equipped—it is said on good authority for seven or eight thousand dollars per mile. If this be the case, the House will perceive that the government must have committed itself to a very improvident bargain indeed. I shall await with interest the explanations I shall receive on this point, before commenting any further upon it, but I think it is necessary now that some expression of this House should have been had with regard to the policy of any further railway expenditure in the North-west at the present time at the expense of the Dominion. It must be admitted that having regard to the proportion of population, Manitoba and the North-west have railway communication and facilities greater than any other country perhaps in the world. Although I would be one of the first to do