

within a year the question was to construct 500 miles of railway within a year, I say that the true interest of the public requires that no step be taken before an investigation should be had into the charges proffered by the hon. member for King's (Mr. Woodworth), and as I observe, sustained by the hon. member for Northumberland (Mr. Mitchell) and ascertain whether this was a case of the kind or not.

Mr. McLELAN. The hon. member who has just spoken has, I suspect, created the impression, by his utterances, that I had some knowledge—that there were some papers lodged with me that gave me the information that the gentlemen holding this charter had it for sale and were endeavoring to sell it—that they were trafficking in the charter of the company. I desire in that sense to say that there were no such papers lodged with me, that I never had any information, any suspicion, that they were trying to sell that charter, but I had the most direct information that I could receive from the gentlemen themselves, from the delegates from Rapid City, from Winnipeg, from the Manitoba Government, and from various other localities, that they were most anxious that these gentlemen—that this company—should receive the same terms in respect to the grant of land as had been given to other companies. This company, if I understand it, had a charter before that policy was adopted by the Government. They had a charter at the time when it was proposed by the Government to give 6,400 acres of land per mile at \$1.06 per acre. That policy was subsequently changed, and changed, I know, with the assent and approval of gentlemen opposite and their organs, and the policy was adopted of giving the land as a free grant. After that policy was adopted, and while I was acting for the then Minister of the Interior, application was made that they should be treated on the same terms as we had treated other companies, and given that land grant free. The hon. member for Marquette (Mr. Watson), I think, interviewed me several times in respect to that matter, and urged that we should treat this company the same as others had been treated; and, as I said before, the delegates from the Manitoba Government and from Rapid City and other localities, waited upon me and urged most strongly that the same policy should be adopted towards this company as had been adopted towards others, that we should give them the land grant free, in order to enable that company to construct the railway. That is my knowledge of the position of affairs. That I do know. From the letters which my friend (Mr. Woodworth) gave me, I believed from them that he and Mr. Beaty had mutually promoted that company; that they had obtained a charter for that company, and had been equally interested in promoting it and in endeavoring to raise the means in order to construct the railway. That is all I know about it, and I have no knowledge whatever, and never had any knowledge, that they were endeavoring to traffic in that charter, in the sense that they were selling it for their own personal interest, and without constructing the railway. They gave me the impression, from the communications from Mr. Beaty and those connected with him, that they were most anxious to have the railway constructed, as were all those in the section of country through which the road was to pass.

Mr. SPROULE. It may seem a little out of place for me to occupy the time of the House in the discussion of this question, but I deem it my duty to say a few words, seeing that I have received a number of letters from residents of the locality interested, urging a rapid building of the road, and also other letters from many of those who are creditors of this road, through the company having assumed the liabilities of the Souris and Rocky Mountain road for work done on that line. One crowd are urging on me to assist in

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every way in securing the early building of the road, the other crowd are urging that their rights should be secured and that the money should be forthcoming to the poor unfortunate laborers who put their labor into the old road some time ago, in hopes of an early return from it no matter what company should build the road. There are, I think, under these circumstances, two questions in connection with this matter which we should not lose sight of. The first is how can we best, in the interests of the settlers, accomplish the early building of the road, and the second is in accomplishing that, how shall we secure payment of this large amount of money with which this road is handicapped, that has been spent in building the first fifty miles of the Souris and Rocky Mountain road. Now, hon. gentlemen, including the last hon. gentleman who spoke, have contended that there is a very important question in connection with this case—the question whether it is right to allow members of Parliament to be presidents or stockholders of railways that are bonused by the Government of Canada. In reference to that, I think I need say very little, because I apprehend that the arguments of hon. gentlemen who have already dealt with that question have been strong and conclusive. If I could lead myself to believe that this company got any better terms, any more land mile for mile, or any greater advantages of any sort, because they were connected with this Parliament, then I would hold that to be a wrong; but until I can bring myself to believe that, I must assume that there is nothing wrong being done in supporting hon. members who are pushing this Bill through the House, seeing the important objects they have in view. We all remember that a few years ago a great many petitions were sent to this House from settlers along the line of this road, urging in the strongest language that this Government should assist any company that would promise to build that road at an early date. Both sides of the House joined in that effort; both agreed that the land grant should be free instead of being placed at \$1.06 an acre; and in answer to the prayer of the petitioners, this Government decided to adopt the policy of giving free grants of lands to railways in the North-West Territories, and this road received only what was given to other companies. Consequently, I apprehend that no advantage was given to them, notwithstanding that they happened to be members of this Parliament. We had also petitions just as urgent from those poor unfortunate laborers, who claimed that they had forfeited a year's labor, for which they had received no return, in connection with the Souris and Rocky Mountain Railway. We were then anxious to see any company come forward and assume the liabilities of the Souris and Rocky Mountain Company, and give some assurance that the road would be built at an early date. Unfortunately, handicapped as the company was with a claim of about \$100,000 standing against it, the promoters of the scheme have been unable to organise a company and go on and build the railway; and we cannot wonder at it when we know that it is so difficult to raise money for building railways in that country, notwithstanding all the advantages it offers. When the liabilities of the old company were assumed by the present company, we were in hopes that those unfortunate laborers would be paid; and when an extension of time was asked for the charter, we supported it, with the understanding that the claims these men had upon the old company should not be prejudiced. That condition has been maintained up to the present time, and I am credibly informed by legal gentlemen that there is nothing in this Bill to prejudice their claims; and it gives the strongest assurance that that road will be built by this company, that the wages of these men will be paid at an early date. What is the position of this question today? I have said that the object is the early construction of the road. If the Government took the charter out of the hands of the company, what would be the result? This