

definitely fix the value of these lands at \$1.50 an acre, as on several occasions, they have expressed their opinion on this point, in the desire to compel the House to declare the Pacific Railway lands were worth over \$2 an acre. The leader of the Opposition himself has taken much trouble to prove that they ought to be valued at more than \$2 an acre. Here is what he said, on the 15th of December, 1880 :

"Then, what about these lands? These lands are to be within twenty-four miles of the railway. According to the estimate of the Government made by them in the recess before the last Session of Parliament, and which they published to the world as the terms of sale of railway land; confirmed by them during the last Session of Parliament, when they brought it down and declared it to be a moderate estimate; confirmed and re-confirmed by them when they asked Parliament to sanction their going on on those regulations and principles, and still further confirmed, in this sense, at any rate, when they announced, as they have repeatedly announced, that the prospects of selling lands in the North-West are infinitely brighter to-day, and that land is worth more to-day than it was a year ago. According to this view, which we may take as a minimum estimate established for lands there to be found within twenty-four miles of the railway, it gives an average price of \$4.04 an acre."

"I think, Sir, it may not be useless for me to prove, by a public document, something of the value of such a privilege. I have before me the prospectus of the Manitoba and South-Western Colonization Railway Company, which is placing on the London market its bonds, and the statement it makes is :

"And the statement is there made that the length of this railway is 295 miles, of which the first section of 119 miles is under contract, and at least 50 miles are to be opened by the 1st of September, 1881. It is further stated that the Governor General has approved of a report of the Privy Council of Canada, recommending a grant to the company at the nominal rate—mark you, the nominal rate—of \$1 an acre, of an area of land equal to 840 acres per mile, commencing at the south-west of the boundary of the Province, so that it is outside of the Province of Manitoba that this land lies. The prospectus further states that it is estimated that a judicious realisation of the land would produce to the company the sum of £2,000,000 sterling, or \$ 0,000,000, and that the company has refused offers made to them for large portions of that lands at \$5 per acre. In another part it is stated that this line is to be constructed for £3,000 sterling or \$15,000 a mile, and the calculation is that the fortunate stockholders—and if there are members of Parliament among them, I hope they will share among us all—will have an admirable commercial railway constructed free of cost, and probably four or five millions besides from the sale of their lands."

"Well, Sir, you thus find that there are lands of very great value to be had, outside of Manitoba, beyond the range of twenty-four miles of the Canadian Pacific Railway, which can be opened up and made saleable at \$4 or more per acre, by railways which shall be, as this railway is declared to be, good paying commercial enterprises."

The Opposition, unreservedly accepted these views and calculations, and took advantage of them to stamp as extravagant the conditions of the contract of 1881 with the Syndicate of the Pacific. And the hon. member for South Huron, therefore, on the 26th of January 1881, proposed :

"That the contract respecting the Canadian Pacific Railway involves a total expenditure by the country in connexion with that work of about \$80,000,000 exclusive of interest, and the cession of 25,000,000 acres of choice lands, worth, at the estimate of the Government last year, at least \$79,500,000, making a total consideration of about \$140,000,000, while the railroad itself is estimated by Government to cost not more than \$84,000,000, and that the consideration proposed to be given is excessive, and that the contract is in the highest respect objectionable."

I need not say that all the hon. members forming Her Majesty's loyal Opposition voted in favor of this amendment. It will be claimed to-day that, by this speech as well as by this vote, the Opposition meant nothing but to offset the Government valuation; but such an attempt would be childish, since the opposition do not only quote it, but adopt it; and their hon. chief declares it, when he says :

"According to this estimate which we will take as the minimum value of these lands, we can fix their average value at \$4.04 an acre. There are lands, then, of very great value outside of Manitoba. And the amendment itself implies the assent of the Opposition to this valuation when it says 'exclusive of the cession of 25,000,000 acres of choice lands, worth at least, \$79,000,000.'"

The added words: at the estimate of the Government, are there only as an argument to strengthen the affirmation that the lands have a great value. Otherwise, why should the Opposition have declared that sum excessive, if they had not believed it was real? Why should their hon. chief

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have declared that he was taking a minimum valuation if he had not believed this minimum well founded. It will be claimed that we have no use for these 21,000,000 acres of land, because we possess a territory of 300,000 square miles, or 200,000,000 acres. But when we have deducted from this the lakes, rivers and impracticable marshes, we are left with only 160,000,000 acres already, half of which is unfit for anything but cattle ranches. Not more than 80,000,000 will ever be under cultivation, and can yield a profitable return, and these figures soon lose their fantastic and embarrassing appearance, when we consider that 13,500 immigrants, taking yearly 320 acres each, would swallow up the whole of these lands in twenty years. The distance between Winnipeg and the foot of the Rocky Mountains is 900 miles. These 900 miles give, consequently, 45 sections of blocks of 20 miles on each side of the railway, or 90 sections in all. In other words, there are but 23,000,000 acres of land lying alongside of the railway in the prairie district; this gives at once quite a different aspect to the land question, and these lands acquire at once a value far superior to that of those lying elsewhere. The Pacific Company cannot receive more than 45 sections, although they have a right to 98 blocks of 256,000 acres. They will have, therefore, to take 13,568,000 acres, either outside of the prairie section or in a belt removed from the railway; and if they choose to raise the price of the land alongside of their road, in order to get rid of those less favorably situated, they can do so now. It was exactly one of the inconveniences felt at the time. But as the question was to give, not an apparent, but an efficient assistance to the company constructing the railway, the lands had to be given without restriction, or else money had to be substituted. To impose obligations in the disposal of the lands was to make it an impossibility, because no moneyed man would have advanced funds on a property held conditionally. The whole or nothing was wanted. I cannot do better than quote the 8th and 9th resolutions which the Government caused to be adopted on the 12th May, 1879 to show how well they understood the inconvenience of such a system. Here they are :

"8. Resolved, That the withdrawal for sale and settlement of the lands for twenty miles on each side of the located line of the Pacific Railway has, in part, had the effect of throwing settlement south and west of Lake Manitoba."

"9. Resolved, That in the existing state of things, it is desirable to combine the promotion of colonisation with railway construction on the Canadian Pacific Railway west of Red River."

It being six o'clock, the Speaker left the Chair.

### After Recess.

Mr. CHAPLEAU. When the House rose I was about to say that if necessity forced the Government, in 1881, to abandon this line of conduct, it is because it was not deemed prudent to engage deeper in money disbursements without knowing exactly what were the resources of the company, the means and disposition of the directors, and their ability to construct the railway; but the Government always watched for an opportunity to resume a policy more favorable to colonisation, and that is what we are doing in taking back the control of the sale of lands, and in forcing their sale under certain conditions. The Opposition must be unanimous in the approval of a plan which they unanimously proclaimed on the 27th of January, 1881, when Mr. Rinfret moved, in amendment :

"That the said resolutions be not now read a second time, but that it be resolved that the contract respecting the Canadian Pacific Railway contains provision for ceding to the company 25,000,000 acres of choice lands in the North-West, but it does not, as it should, embrace any provision that such lands shall be open to sale to actual settlers at any maximum price; that the absence of such provision will enable the company to lock up the lands at their pleasure for a long time, and so be injurious to the progress of the country, and add to the labors and difficulties of the early settlers, and that the said contract is, in this respect, objectionable."