

as a matter of course, as a business necessity, and that instead of \$1,000,000 being spent, probably \$5,000,000 would be yearly expended in British Columbia. We knew, in fact, that if the road were to be completed at all, it would have to be proceeded with at a far faster rate than a million a year would insure. But there were those in British Columbia who thought that Canada would not undertake the work at all, and it was to satisfy their doubts, to secure their adhesion to the scheme, that the guarantee of the expenditure of the \$1,000,000 annually was asked. The Government, on conference with our delegation, at once expressed their readiness to commence at once the railroad to the Pacific, and to complete it as soon as it was practicable to do so; but the coach road was objected to as an unnecessary expense, in view of the immediate construction of a railroad. We from British Columbia were prepared to accept this amendment of the scheme, and we accordingly proceeded to calculate the time it would probably take to build the railroad, and we agreed upon an estimated period of ten years. If it had been put at twelve or fifteen years, British Columbia would have been just as well satisfied, and if the estimated period had been reduced to eight years she would scarcely have been better pleased; but some definite period for the completion of this work the British Columbia delegates insisted on as a necessary safeguard to our colony in entering into the proposed union. To argue that any other interpretation will be placed upon this railway engagement by British Columbia than that which I have given to you as my construction of it,—to argue that she expects it to be carried out in the exact interpretation of the words themselves, regardless of all consequences, is a fallacy which cannot bear the test of common sense. (Hear, hear.) The case stands thus: British Columbia is about to enter into a partnership with Canada, and one of the terms of the articles of partnership is that we are under the partnership to construct a railway upon certain conditions. Is British Columbia going to hold her partner to that which will bring ruin and bankruptcy upon the firm? Surely you would think us fools indeed if we adopted such a course. I would protest, and the whole of British Columbia would protest, if the government proposed to borrow \$100,000,000 or \$150,000,000 to construct this road; (hear, hear.) running the country into debt, and taxing the people of British Columbia as well as of the rest of the Dominion to pay the burden of such a debt. Why, sir, I heard it said the other evening that British Columbia had made a most Jewish bargain with you in these terms, but even Shylock himself would not exact his pound of flesh if a portion of it had to be cut from his own body. (Loud cheers and laughter.) I am sure that you will find that British Columbia is a pretty intelligent community, which will be apt to take a business view of this matter. She will expect that this railway shall be com-

menced in two years, for that is clearly practicable; and she will also expect that the financial ability of the Dominion will be exerted to its utmost, within the limits of reason, to complete it in the time named in the agreement; but you may rest assured that she will not regard this railway engagement as a "cast-iron contract," as it has been called, or desire that it should be carried out in any other way than as will secure the prosperity of the whole Dominion of which she is to be a part. (Cheers.) I have understood this railway engagement in this way from the first, and I still so understand it. I believed when we negotiated this clause in the terms of union last year, and I now believe, that it is not only practicable for this road to be built by a liberal land grant and a moderate money subsidy, but that it will be so built and completed within the estimated period of ten years. But if a mistake has been made in this estimate, do not think that British Columbia is going to put a strained interpretation upon the agreement, to her own material injury; that she is likely, as the saying is, to bite her own nose off to spite her face.

ESTIMATED COST OF THE RAILWAY.

I will enter into no estimate to-night of the cost of the section of the proposed road east of the Rocky Mountains. You have as good means of forming opinions on the probable expenditure that will be required on this portion of the line as I have. But I will speak of the probable cost of the line in British Columbia through a country with which I am personally acquainted. British Columbia, Sir, is not such an unknown, unexplored country as it has been supposed or represented to be. I may mention to you that in 1865 and 1866, in obedience to a despatch from the Secretary of State, asking for information regarding the facilities for the construction of a waggon road across the mountains, to connect with the Red River settlement, I instituted, under the Governor's direction, explorations of the country between Fraser River and the Rocky Mountain range, and the report of these explorations, together with a minute from myself thereon, summing up all the information then obtainable, were printed and have been made public. It is, I think, pretty certain that the choice for the line through the Rocky Mountains is between Leather Pass and Howse's Pass; but from the Western or let of either of those passes, there are several lines of route to the Pacific, and I do not pretend now to offer any opinion as to the relative merits of these several lines. I will speak only of that one which I am most acquainted with, having passed over nearly this whole line from the Pacific to the Rocky Mountains, on horseback or on foot, and over parts of it frequently. I mean a line from the mouth of the Fraser, following up the course of that river and of one of its tributaries, the Thompson, to the head waters of the south branch of