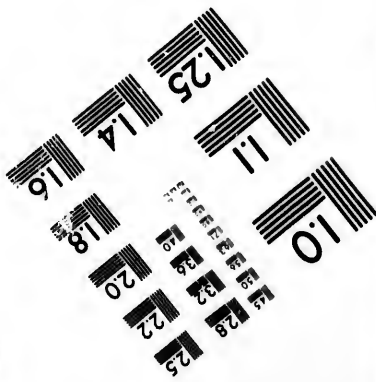
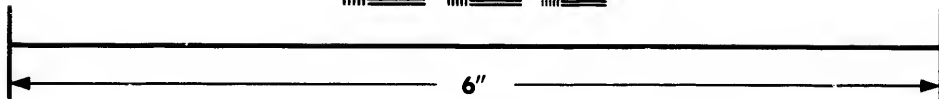
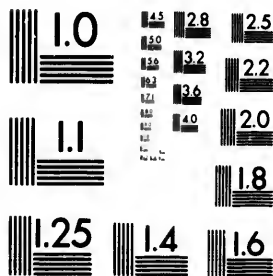


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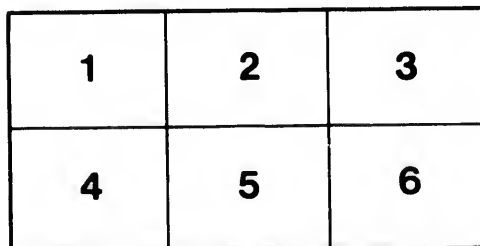
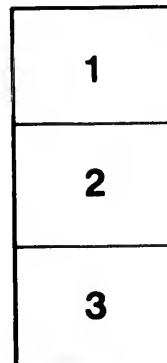
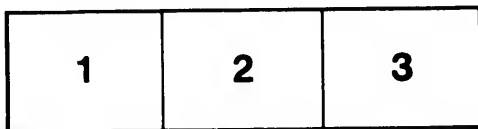
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Receipts of
Hon. Clifford Sifton SPEECH

ON THE

CANADIAN YUKON RAILWAY

BY

HON. CLIFFORD SIFTON, M.P.

HOUSE OF COMMONS, OTTAWA, 15TH AND 16TH FEBRUARY, 1898

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House of Commons Debates

THIRD SESSION—EIGHTH PARLIAMENT

SPEECH

OF

HON. CLIFFORD SIFTON, M.P.

ON THE

CANADIAN YUKON RAILWAY

OTTAWA, 15TH AND 16TH FEBRUARY, 1898

TUESDAY, 15th February, 1898.

The MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR. (Mr. Sifton.) Inasmuch as the administration of the Yukon district, of which so much has been said, has fallen largely to the charge of the department of which I am the head, it has been thought well that I should make some observations explanatory of the position of the Government and of the facts and circumstances leading up to the introduction of this Bill, although such explanation might possibly have come more properly, under other circumstances, from an older and more experienced member of the Government. The hon. gentleman (Sir Charles Tupper), who has just sat down, has been a long time in public life. He has told us a great many times, in the very short time I have been a member of the House, that he has been Minister of Railways and Canals, and that he has been High Commissioner. He has been at intervals Finance Minister and High Commissioner—in fact, we hardly knew, those who were not in the confidence of the Government, whether the hon. gentleman was inside or outside of the Government. Then he was for a very brief and much regretted period Premier of Canada. And now he occupies the responsible position of leader of the Opposition—at least, Mr. Speaker, he is the titular leader of the Opposition; but after the address to which we have listened to-night, coupled with

what we have heard and seen during the last month or so there remains a very serious and grave doubt as to whether he is the leader of the Opposition or whether, to use a vernacular expression, the tail wags the dog or the dog wags the tail. The hon. gentleman I hope will not take offence if I make use of an old adage, and suggest that I may be permitted to quote Phillip sober against Phillip drunk, and to indicate to the hon. gentleman that it requires a much more lucid and coherent explanation than he has favoured us with to-night to explain the radical change in the views he entertained in regard to the contract which is now before this House. The hon. gentleman has favoured us with several expressions of this kind since I have been in the House—that he had never in the course of his parliamentary experience seen such an exhibition as this, that or the other. Will he say if he ever, in the whole course of his parliamentary experience, saw an old and experienced leader of a party dragged in the light of day by the rag end of his party into abandoning his position upon a public question? I do not want the hon. gentleman to take offence at what I say, for the expression is only used because it is an adage and I do not coin it myself—but we heard Phillip drunk to-night and now I ask the members to listen to Phillip sober. The hon. leader of the Opposition was Phillip sober when he was interviewed, and when he expressed his opinion in the "Mail

and Empire" of January 28th—I suppose that is the date, as the interview is dated the 27th January. The authenticity of this interview is vouched for by my hon. friend from East York (Mr. Maclean), the gentleman who in the Conservative party fills the role of private detective and regulator of the party leader. It appears that Sir Charles Tupper was asked by the correspondent of the "Mail and Empire" to state his view regarding the arrangements the Government had made. This is what he said:

He stated that the route chosen is the best that could have been selected. "When I was in the west," he said, "I made inquiries, and I reached the conclusion that Canada ought at the earliest possible moment to have communication with the Yukon. I impressed it upon the British Columbia Government that it should co-operate with the Dominion Government to insure the construction of a link between the Stikine River and Teslin Lake. At Winnipeg I declared that the undertaking was a necessity, and when I returned to Ottawa I went immediately to Mr. Sifton. I impressed upon him the absolute necessity of opening up the route to secure Canadian trade. I said to him: 'You heard my arguments against Government construction on the Crow's Nest Pass Railway. I am willing to withdraw all that if you will go ahead and give that country a railroad. As a matter of principle, I am opposed to Government construction, but here is a case in which I quite concede the country ought to be prepared, if necessary, to build the road in order to secure an all-Canadian route and to secure the trade of the Yukon for Canada.'"

The hon. gentleman was willing to change his opinion in the course of twelve months. I have no doubt he thought then that that was a rapid change, but it is nothing to the change that has taken place since then. He is acquiring greater rapidity in changing his opinions as time goes on, and if he does not get better control of the hon. member for East York, I fear he will be obliged to change more rapidly still.

As to the arrangements made with Messrs. Mackenzie & Mann, Sir Charles Tupper said that they were men who had the capital, resources and energy to carry it out. They were probably the only men in Canada who could put the undertaking through in the time that it was specified.

The same hon. gentleman to-night stood up and held his hands up high and declared that this Government should have given to all the contractors in Canada an opportunity to tender for this work, and he demanded of the Minister of Railways and Canals and of the Government why it was that we did not give to every contractor in Canada such an opportunity. Yet he himself had declared on the 27th of last month that these contractors were the only ones who could do the work within the time. It is surely not necessary to follow in detail an address composed of criticisms of that kind. I will not weary the House by following the hon. gentleman's incoherent abuse of my hon. friend the Minister of Railways and

Canals, but I may be allowed to refer to a few of the eccentricities of his address. Now, Sir, he considers that the Government ought to have acted with more promptness. But so many of his followers—if he has any, if they can be considered his followers, but at any rate some hon. gentlemen on the other side—think we have gone too fast. But the leader of the Opposition thinks the Government ought to have acted more promptly. This interview is a very valuable document, and it is very desirable that it shall very fully and completely be embalmed in "Hansard" immediately after the speech of the hon. gentleman.

Sir Charles considers that the Government ought to have acted with more promptness. That much valuable time had been lost, and if his suggestions had been acted upon, the project would be in an advanced state by now.

Of course, we know that if the hon. gentleman's suggestions were acted upon in all cases there would be no blot upon the Administration, everything would be done exactly as it ought to be done.

The fact that a trail was to be put through in six weeks, so that the distance between the Stikine River and Teslin Lake may be covered in three days, is in his judgment of great importance. He thinks shelters should be erected at suitable places for the accommodation of the flood of traffic that will go in.

The contract provides for them.

The completion of the road by September is slower work than might have been done had the question been grappled with earlier. Still, it will be of the utmost importance to Canadian interest.

It is difficult to understand how we could have gotten the ice out of the Stikine River by making the contract earlier, but the hon. gentleman seems to think so, and I am giving his opinion.

Sir Charles gives the Government credit for acting with such vigour as it has shown, and asserts that the opening of the Canadian route was strongly urged by him upon both Governments interested as the proper course to pursue. He does not anticipate any trouble with the United States in transferring cargoes from the ocean boats to river boats at Wrangell.

Neither did my hon. friend the Minister of Railways, and yet the hon. gentleman (Sir Charles Tupper) spent nearly an hour in abusing the Minister of Railways and Canals for using an expression almost precisely similar to that used by himself in this interview.

If, however, such should happen, Canada has Fort Simpson to fall back upon which will be equally serviceable.

That will be interesting in the light of the criticism the hon. gentleman has addressed to this House to-night on the subject of this contract.

The hon. gentleman, when he rose this afternoon, evidently addressed himself to

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the task of getting out of the difficulty he was in, of turning his back upon this question, and of explaining the extraordinary change of attitude. He evidently felt very much oppressed by that task. But I notice that he addressed himself much more cheerfully to it this evening. Possibly the idea had just occurred to him that he could draw a red herring across the trail by indulging in an hour's abuse of the Minister of Railways and Canals, an idea which, apparently had not occurred to him in the afternoon. So, as the main reason why he changed his attitude upon this question, he said, that further light had come to him. And, as one of the other great authorities which had changed its opinion on account of the new light that had come, he quotes that very reputable and well known paper the Montreal "Witness." At least, he quotes part of it. I suppose it would not be kind for me to refer to the fact that sometimes the hon. gentleman does not quote the whole of a document which he submits to this House. In this particular case he has not quoted the whole, or even the material part, of the document which he was reading for the purpose of explaining the position he took before this House. Now let me read it:

The details of the bargain of the Mackenzie-Mann syndicate reveal objectionable features that do not appear in the information which came to light before the presentation of the contract to Parliament. It was not then known that the railway was to be a very narrow gauge one. It was not then realized, as it seems to be admitted, that the Stikine is not navigable for sea craft, and that bulk must be broken in American waters, and there are, as we have pointed out, possibilities connected with the parcelling of the land grant which are interesting to contemplate.

Will the hon. gentleman say that these were the reasons that caused him to change his opinion, and that the "Daily Witness," of Montreal, is in the same position as he is upon that question?

An hon. MEMBER. Read on.

The MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR. Well, we will read the balance of it:

We doubt, however, if a business man acting in his own interest would, even with all considerations fully before him, recall the bargain as a whole, if he could, much as he might wish he could alter many of its details. We doubt if any of the Government's critics would, were the case their own, recall the bargain.

The hon. gentleman quotes as a reason for changing his opinion, an article which approves of the contract, and states that it would not be recalled if it could be. Now let me—

MR. DAVIN. Read all the article.

The MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR. I trust that the hon. member for Assinibola (Mr. Davin) will not allow this debate to terminate without addressing the House on

the subject, and he will have an opportunity of reading the article himself when he comes to speak. Another thing which the hon. gentleman did, and which I thought was somewhat beneath the dignity of a gentleman of his age, and position, and experience, was to make an attack upon my hon. friend the Minister of Railways which was totally unjustified by anything that was said by my hon. friend. He alleged, again and again, that the Minister of Railways had attacked the engineer of the Government, Mr. Jennings. Now, I listened to my hon. friend when he was speaking, and I think I know an attack when I hear it, and I think I can recognize whether a gentleman speaking of an engineer's report, is speaking in a hostile tone and attacking it; and I assert most positively, and there is no man who listened to my hon. friend who will not assert with me, that there was nothing whatever in the words of the Minister of Railways to justify the statement that he made an attack upon the engineer's report, nothing whatever. Mr. Jennings made an estimate of the cost of a railway. If the hon. gentleman will read that estimate he will come to the same conclusion, in the light of his great railway experience of which we are so constantly reminded, as my hon. friend the Minister of Railways came to, as I come to, as anybody will come to who reads that report, and who endeavours to get any knowledge whatever of the actual cost of the work. He will come to the conclusion that that estimate was based on normal prices and normal conditions, and that abnormal prices and abnormal conditions such as will prevail in the execution of this contract, must be taken into account when the cost of the work which is going to be done by these contractors, is taken into consideration. That, it appears to me, is a fairly intelligible proposition, and it is a proposition which no intelligent man reading that report, can fail to grasp. That is the proposition which the Minister of Railways made this afternoon; I make that proposition now, and I am not attacking Mr. Jennings, the engineer, who was employed by me for the purpose of making that report, and who has my complete confidence, and the complete confidence of every member of the Government. If the hon. gentleman will take the trouble to look at the report and see the prices that are figured on there, he will see that ordinary prices and ordinary cost of material are all that is figured on; and extraordinary conditions, the extraordinary difficulties of getting freight up the Stikine River, the large number of special steamers that have to be purchased and employed by them for that purpose, all the difficulties that crowd upon contractors when they are forced to do their work much more rapidly than in ordinary course—all these circumstances have to be taken into account; and I am satisfied myself that

one-half more at least than the price Mr. Jennings has placed there would not more than satisfy the increased cost that will be brought upon these contractors by reason of the extreme haste with which the work has to be pushed along. I have thought it necessary to mention that fact simply because of the unreasonable and, to my mind, the ridiculous attack that was made by the leader of the Opposition upon the Minister of Railways and Canals in connection with that phase of the question. Then my hon. friend spent a large portion of his time in endeavouring to play upon words, to attach a meaning to a casual sentence in my hon. friend's opening statement in connection with this Bill, that nobody had the slightest idea was intended to be conveyed by that sentence. There is no necessity for misrepresentation, there is no necessity for trying to twist things into what they do not mean, and what everybody knows they do not mean. We all know exactly what we knew last session about the Yukon country; there is no dispute about it. If I recollect aright, the printed report was not brought down before the House prorogued, but at the request of some hon. members I had some copies made of the most interesting portion of Mr. Ogilvie's report, and my hon. friend the member for Lambton (Mr. Lister) particularly asked for a copy, and copies were given to him and given to others, and we know perfectly well what information was in our possession. We had the information of Mr. Ogilvie's report in which he says that there had been some extraordinarily rich finds of gold made, and that there was likely to be an influx of people. An influx of people would be understood by any intelligent man at that time, reading that report about a far-off and almost unknown district, a district that had attracted no attention whatever, a district that had not attracted the attention of the late Government sufficiently to induce them to provide the most ordinary facilities for the administration of law, until a change of Government took place, and this proper provision was made—I say that what any person would have understood by that, what I understood by it; what the hon. member for Lambton understood by it, what all the members who discussed the British Yukon Railway Bill understood by it, what the leader of the Opposition himself understood by it, was that there would probably be a few more hundreds of people going in, a few more hundreds of miners going into that district, than had gone in the previous year. This mining had been going on since 1886. In that year the Stewart River was prospected and worked, and ever since that time odd companies of miners have been working there. But will anybody in his senses undertake to say that when this Parliament prorogued we had any information whatever which led to the supposition that tens of thousands of people

were going to the Klondike district last fall and the coming year? Why, nobody dreamed of such a thing. It is easy to be wise after the event, and if the hon. gentleman can prove events backwards, and hold people responsible for not knowing what is going to happen in the future, then he can hold his political opponents responsible for a great deal, and it would be a very convenient method of political argument. But I assert, Mr. Speaker, that there has not been one moment of delay in connection with any of the work devolving upon the Government of this country by the development of the Yukon district. I assert that the hon. gentleman can take the records of his party, he can look back over the history of the development of the great west, and he can find, time after time, when prompt action was required, no action was taken by the late Government, as a result of which they had two rebellions on their hands, and millions of dollars of the people's money were lost. Why, Sir, at the very earliest moment we could get any definite information, we acted; and I say no one in his sense would have been justified in taking the opinion of Mr. Ogilvie—who for two years had been in the Yukon district and totally shut out of the civilized world—as to there being likely to be an influx of people into that country, to mean that there would be a general and an unprecedented rush to that country. No one respects Mr. Ogilvie more than I do, but he would be the last man to expect a Minister of the Crown, in charge of the department in which he was employed, to take a cursory statement of that kind as an intimation that people from the whole world would flow into the Yukon district. How could he know? He had no communication with the outside world. The only people to whom he could be referring would be the few miners in the immediate neighbourhood of the Yukon on the Alaskan side, whom he might expect to come over and stake claims on the rich creek which he had reported as having been discovered, and in respect to which he reported that a couple of men had taken out gold to the value of so many dollars to a single pan. The report was very short. I read it over several times and discussed it with several members of the House, and we were in doubt as to whether it was even likely at that time that the discoveries would amount to anything or not. Yet it has been urged to-day that a responsible Minister of the Crown should have come down to Parliament and recommended an expenditure of hundreds of thousands of dollars on such a statement. It is the craziest thing a man ever dreamed of, and the leader of the Opposition would have been the first man to have denounced me for making such a recommendation and asking an appropriation before I knew exactly the purpose for which it was required. Even after the district became known as a gold-bearing region—and

It did not become so known until the arrival of the first steambot from Alaska, bearing a large quantity of gold, the arrival of which created great excitement—nothing definite was before the Government as to the richness of the discoveries or as to the discoveries being so extensive as to warrant any large or exorbitant expenditure in connection with the Yukon district. But prior to that time, some steps had been taken. I did not leave the matter in the same shape as it was left by hon. gentlemen opposite, who year after year neglected, so far as I know, to even read the reports of the officers they sent into that country. Prior to that time, I had taken steps to send there a gold commissioner, instructed and authorized to transact the business that would arise in connection with mining claims, with two assistants, this force being deemed amply sufficient for the work so far as we had any idea of it at that time. As the excitement increased, we took such further steps as seemed to be necessary. We adopted measures to increase the number of the mounted police and to have them selected and all necessary supplies forwarded as quickly as possible. But we did not realize, and I do not think the House will blame us for not realizing until the summer had nearly passed that there was going to be anything like the rush to that country which materialized last fall. We only saw what was going on around us, and what we could gather from our reading of the newspapers from day to day; and, not being desirous of taking steps of importance not justified by the facts, and not being desirous of making expenditures we could not justify, we only took the steps that were absolutely necessary at that time. Later on we found, on account of the totally unprecedented circumstances which had arisen, and which were likely to arise, we had to take further and much more extensive steps in connection with the protection and provisioning of that country, as to which I will take the liberty of giving some facts in a few moments. I have spoken only of this particular phase of the question for the purpose of showing that the hon. leader of the Opposition, in his utter desperation, in his desire to conceal from the House and the public the fact that he has been switched into line by the hon. member for East York (Mr. Maclean), has endeavoured to put a meaning on the words of the Minister of Railways which they do not bear, and to make an attack on the Government's position, in which they are impregnable and not open to attack. Then, the hon. gentleman proceeded to make an attack upon myself; and I do not know whether I like the hon. gentleman better when he attacks me or commends me, but, on the whole, I think I prefer the attack. My hon. friends around me are rather suspicious when the hon. gentleman commends me. The hon. gentleman said: "Why were steps not taken in regard to pushing forward

this work when Mr. Jennings met the Minister of the Interior and came down with him on the "Quadra" from Wrangell to Vancouver. Will any man believe that Mr. Jennings did not communicate all the necessary information in regard to this route to the Minister of the Interior when they travelled together on the steamer?" Does any member believe that a Minister in his senses would take steps to have a railway constructed from Stikine River to Teslin Lake to get into the Yukon River by the Hootalinqua River, when he did not know whether that river was navigable or not? That, I presume, is the way in which the Minister of Railways, in the plenitude of his experience, would have proceeded.

Some hon. MEMBERS. Oh, oh.

THE MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR. The ex-Minister of Railways and Canals (Sir Charles Tupper), I mean. The hon. leader of the Opposition has given great attention to some parts of Mr. Jennings's report, and I recommend him to give some attention to some other portions. If the hon. gentleman will look at page 13, he will find a report dated January 6th, by Mr. Arthur St. Cyr. This report Mr. Jennings did not receive until a few days later, and I do not think I received Mr. Jennings's report until the 13th or 14th of the month. I could not have called for tenders for the construction of the work on Mr. Jennings's report because the report to which I have alluded, as necessary, was the report to be made by Mr. St. Cyr, who was sent by Mr. Jennings, under my special instructions, to ascertain whether Teslin Lake and Hootalinqua River were navigable or not. So, when we commenced our proceedings, we had an intelligent plan in our minds, and when we got our reports completed, we knew certain facts beyond a doubt, and that the route we selected was a route which would be a proper one for Parliament to adopt for the purpose of getting passengers and supplies into that country. We could not have known anything about it from Mr. Jennings's report, if there had been no report made as to the navigability of the waters below. This report was dated 6th January; it was sent to Mr. Jennings a day or two later, and it got into my hands about January 13th. The contract was signed on January 25th; and I think the House will agree with me, without any further discussion, that no additional answer whatever is required to the strictures of the hon. gentleman on the Government for not having proceeded with more speed. I do not know that it is necessary for me to make any more detailed reference to the remarks of the hon. gentleman (Sir Charles Tupper) except to say that among the principal reasons, or alleged reasons, which he gave this afternoon for his change of mind, was that another offer had been made to construct a line of railway from Pyramid Harbour by way of Chilkat Pass and Port

Selkirk, for 5,000 acres a mile. That alleged offer, that mythical offer, seems to have had an extremely disturbing effect upon the mind of the hon. gentleman (Sir Charles Tupper). Well, it will probably have the effect of relieving the hon. gentleman's mind when I tell him that this alleged offer is a figment of the imagination of some of our newspaper friends, and that no such offer was ever made to this Government or to any member of the Government. Therefore, the comparison which has been made in the press, and to some extent in the House, between the project we are now discussing, and the offer alleged to have been made, is not at all in point, for as I have said no such offer was ever made. I desire to make that statement very clear, because in the most extraordinary way, a way that seem to me is not at all creditable to some of the newspapers which have taken it up, it was at once taken for granted that this offer had been made. When the Minister of Railways made his statement and nothing was said about any such offer having been made, it might have at least been taken for granted that the Government ought to have been interrogated on the subject, and some definite information secured, before it was assumed that such an offer had been made and refused.

Mr. FOSTER. May I ask my hon. friend a question?

The MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR. Certainly.

Mr. FOSTER. The Minister of Railways when speaking stated definitely that other persons were conferred with, that other contractors, or companies, or corporations were mentioned; several of them. Now, my hon. friend (Mr. Sifton) is no doubt perfectly acquainted with all the steps in the negotiations. They appear to have been carried on by word of mouth, but at the same time I think he will agree that it is the right of the House to have a full explanation from him, as to all such parties who conferred, and what was the purport of their propositions, and what was the purport of the conferences that went on. It would be very gratifying to the House to have that knowledge.

The MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR. It is perfectly correct to say that there were verbal discussions, but it is not in any sense of the word correct to say that any offer was ever made to the Government for the construction of any railway on any of the routes mentioned, except what are described and set out in the papers laid on the Table this afternoon.

I would like to repeat that statement for the purpose of making it more definite if I can. I repeat that the papers which were laid on the Table this afternoon, contain all the offers of any kind whatever that were ever made to the Government in connection

with the building of railways to the Yukon, so far as I am aware. I may say upon that point—not in material qualification of it, but simply for the purpose of avoiding even the slightest possible inaccuracy, that as the House will perfectly well understand, there were conferences and informal drafts of memoranda discussed between the Government and Messrs. Mackenzie & Mann when the negotiations were going on; but there was nothing even then in the shape of a formal offer and from time to time these drafts were amended and changed until eventually the contract was agreed upon between the Government and these gentlemen. The proposals that were submitted, were made in the terms set forth in the letters, of which copies were laid on the Table of the House this afternoon, and the House is therefore in possession of the fullest information on the whole subject.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to say just a few words in regard—not to the railway project—but to some circumstances leading up to an intelligent understanding of the subject with which the Government has had to deal. I said, and I repeat: that I do not think it can be laid to the charge of the Government that there was one moment's delay in connection with the administration of the affairs of the Yukon district that could possibly be avoided. Every step was taken just as promptly as it could be taken; and it was taken under the very greatest difficulties and under the most disturbing and harassing circumstances. When it first became evident to the Government that special measures had to be taken in connection with this district, the House will understand that there was no officer in the Department of the Interior—with the exception possibly of Dr. Dawson who some years before had made a geological exploration trip through that district—there was no officer in the Department of the Interior available for the purpose of consultation who had a personal and accurate knowledge of that district. And, in the steps that were in the first instance taken and everything that was done until I met Mr. Ogilvie at Vancouver on the 1st of October, until that time, we had to depend upon the vaguest and most indefinite information. We had the survey, we had Mr. Ogilvie's report, but I can tell hon. gentlemen opposite, that as to information which would enable us to intelligently do the work which we had to do, these reports were not of very much assistance to us. For instance, we found it was absolutely impossible to find out definitely and positively at what time and at what period the lakes and the rivers in the lower part of the district were frozen. We found it was impossible to discover what the state of the Passes was likely to be at that time of the year, and all we could do was to send on our mounted police, let them take their supplies, send them over the Passes and let us know the result of their efforts.

Reference was made by some hon. gentleman, whom I do not now remember, to the appointment of Major Walsh; and with reference to that I may say that, although Major Walsh was appointed somewhere about the middle of August, he only accepted the post upon the express condition that he should not be asked to leave before the 15th of September. It is not a light thing for a man to accept a post involving the imminent risk of his life, involving the entire uprooting of all his business and social relations; but Major Walsh loyally accepted the position which was tendered him by the Government. He has loyally done the work, done it in a manner beyond all praise, and for which this country will ever owe Major Walsh a debt of gratitude; but he was justified in making the condition that he should not be asked to take his departure for the Yukon until the 15th of September. When the 15th of September came, we had reports to the mounted police officials here, showing that the officers who had consented to go through the White Pass with their supplies had been struggling in that pass amidst the rain and the mud and all the frightful difficulties which accumulated around them there; and they had almost utterly failed to get the supplies necessary for them across that pass. All they could think of doing was to get twenty men through, with the supplies necessary to take them to Dawson City. The remainder of the men were stuck in the pass. The Government approved of the suggestion that I should go out with Major Walsh, and take such steps as were necessary to overcome the difficulties. I went with Major Walsh; no time was lost; and from that time to this, without cessation, Major Walsh and his men have been labouring under difficulties of which the members of this House can have no possible conception, for the purpose of provisioning and keeping up the posts in the task of saving the lives of the unfortunate men who are constantly going out. While my hon. friend treats this question with that jocularity which he can assume so well, and with that fierce abusiveness which he can assume equally well, but neither of which was particularly adapted to the discussion of such important public business, I think the Dominion of Canada can afford to look with some degree of pride at the fact that from the summit of the mountains, where the provisional boundary line is marked, to the 141st meridian, there is no starvation, and that there is just as good law and order as there is upon the streets of the city of Ottawa—that the word of an officer of the Canadian Government in that district is law, even if it is sent by letter by a dog-driver to a man a hundred or a hundred and fifty miles away. That has not been done without some self-sacrifice and some effort. I take no credit for it, but I claim credit for the men who have overcome difficulties that have not been over-

come, so far as I am aware, by any other men connected with the administration of the affairs of the Government of Canada. I believe, Sir, that our American friends are in a state of total helplessness in regard to their territory. General Alger, the Secretary of War, being sick, and unable to come here for the purpose of getting information, the War Department expressed themselves as almost totally without the requisite information to deal with the question they had to deal with—because they had almost the same state of affairs in their territory that we had in ours. General Alger telegraphed asking me to go to Washington for the purpose of giving them information, because he was lying sick in bed. My hon. friend taunts me with wanting to go to Washington. I saw nothing wrong in going to Washington to give United States officers information which would enable them to extend relief to starving people of the United States, and I would be willing again to go to Washington for that purpose if I thought it possible to effect thereby the saving of even one life in that district. Even the American press, particularly on the Pacific Coast, not too friendly to ourselves or even to myself, because they credit me, not altogether wrongly, with making pretty strong efforts to assist our friends in Victoria and Vancouver, and incidentally and indirectly the merchants and manufacturers of Canada generally in getting their share—and their share ought to be the whole—of the Klondike trade; the newspapers published on the Puget Sound, at Tacoma, at Seattle and at other places in the United States, without a single exception, give the strongest testimony to the fact that our officers, from Major Walsh's camp down to the summit of the mountains, where for the present the Canadian jurisdiction ceases, have been indefatigable and most successful in preventing starvation; and up to this time, so far as my information goes, not one single man has died of starvation on that terrible route. Somebody the other night—I think it was the hon. member for West York (Mr. Wallace)—in a sarcastic tone, wanted to know why Major Walsh was camped far from Dawson City. In the name of common sense, what would he be doing at Dawson City? We have forty mounted policemen and a sufficient staff of officers there to do the work. Major Walsh is at the place where he was told to stay, attending to the business he was sent to attend to; and when in his good judgment every provision has been made there for the purpose of meeting emergencies, then, and not till then, he will go on to Dawson City to do the work which is intended to be done there. I would not like to be here to have to explain that Major Walsh and his men had gone on and locked themselves up at Dawson City, and left the people to get out as they could, and perhaps starve on

the way. Major Walsh is doing the work he was sent to do, and he is doing it, as I said before, in a manner beyond all praise; and, Sir, it is a pleasure to me, in the heat of a political discussion to be able to say one word here in commendation of the efforts of a man who, not impelled thereto by any financial necessity or by any desire for emolument, has thus sacrificed his own peace of mind, his safety and his convenience for the sake of doing what he believed to be his duty to his country.

Perhaps I have said enough on that subject. I want now to say just a few words to indicate what my conclusion was upon the possibilities of that country. I will not burden the House very long with it. The report which Mr. Ogilvie has made, and which embraces the results of the more recent discoveries of that district, is now in the hands of the members. In case the members of the House have not all had opportunity to follow its pages through, I will take the liberty of reading a short extract from it which gives a fairly comprehensive résumé of what may be expected, and what opinion ought to be held in regard to the future possibilities of that district. I read this because I think it is well that we should try to get an intelligent idea of what this country is, and I read it particularly for the benefit of the members of the Opposition; because the discussions which some of them have given us upon the possibilities of that region and the ease with which gold mines may be found indicate that they not only have not read this report, but that they have never read any account of any gold-bearing country in the world; and even if the members on this side of the House find it a little tiresome, I will request our hon. friends on the other side of the House to give it attention. Mr. Ogilvie says:

With these facts before us we may confidently assert that we have here a region situated in the North-west Territories upwards of 300 miles in length and 500 or more miles wide along the southern boundary, for this zone extends south-eastwards into British Columbia, and we may reasonably assume westward to and across the 141st meridian, for some of the streams heading on and near it, discharging into the Pacific Ocean west of Mount St. Elias, yield gold on their lower stretches, and we may reasonably assume the upper parts are gold-bearing, too. Farther inland gold has been found on the upper waters of the Tanana, near the head waters of the Forty-mile, and in 1873 and 1874 Harper and Harto found some gold on the south branch of White River, in the vicinity of the boundary line, all of which is a justification for this assumption. Thus we may conclude with reason that all that portion of the North-west Territory westward from the easterly limit of the Yukon water system to the 141st meridian, will prove more or less gold-bearing.

The westerly boundary of this region—the 141st meridian, or international boundary—is upwards of 300 miles in length; the southern boundary—the 60th parallel of latitude—is about 500 miles long, and the north-east boundary, and irregular

line from the 60th parallel to the 141st meridian, in latitude 65° approximately, is upwards of 600 miles long. These three lines bound an area of about 125,000 square miles, over which gold is scattered more or less profusely.

At many of the points mentioned it will pay well for working even under present conditions, and at many others it will pay well when we have such facilities as we expect to have during the next year for entering and developing that region. Attention may be directed to the fact that the whole of that vast district owes its now world-wide reputation to the richness of 140 claims in the Klondike division. One hundred of these are on Bonanza Creek, and about 40 on Eldorado. To use a mining term, many of those claims are "world-beaters," and if the indications now known are worth anything at all they are worth from sixty to seventy millions of dollars in those two creeks.

Taking this division as a whole, including the three creeks named, affluent to Indian Creek, a district some 35 miles in length and 25 or more miles in width, if the indications can be relied on, there are one hundred million dollars in sight in that area. No one can guarantee this amount, but the prospects so far developed point to that sum pretty conclusively. This district is exceptionally rich.

I commend that to the attention of the hon. leader of the Opposition, who seems to think that these contractors will be able to walk in there and find these tracts lying around every mile or two.

Nothing has ever been found like it heretofore in that country, in fact, in very few countries has anything been found like it, and while we cannot confidently assert that other finds as valuable as it will be made, it is altogether improbable that gold is scattered over such a vast extent, and only rich at a point which is less than the 140th part of the total area.

Some hon. MEMBERS. Hear, hear.

The MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR. Quite correct. The hon. gentlemen opposite, if they think they are easily found, will have the first chance.

Some hon. MEMBERS. No, they have not.

The MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR. They can engage their prospectors and send them out there. There is nothing in this world to prevent these hon. gentlemen locating their claims right now, and they will have from now until the 15th of June to get their claims located before the railway company will have the privilege of making one location. I will talk to these hon. gentlemen about mining claims after a little while.

If we add to this part of the northern area of British Columbia, we increase it nearly two-fold, and the comparative area of the Klondike district is much lessened.

Thus says Mr. Ogilvie. Now, here is the opinion of a man who has been there for years, and who talks as a reasonable man should:

Taken all together, we have a vast field with fair prospects, as fair, it may be claimed, as any other equally extensive region in the world. The

natural conditions are not as favourable as in many other parts, but time and enterprise will no doubt agreeably modify many of them, and the reward may be great.

That is a fair statement of the conclusion of Mr. Ogilvie and of the conclusion which anybody would come to who went into the matter carefully and endeavoured to collect the information that is now available.

Let me point out to the House now some of the difficulties of a territorial character under which the Government labour in dealing with this problem. I was somewhat surprised to hear the remarks which were made on this subject by the leader of the party which, we are told by the erudite and scholarly member for West Assiniboia (Mr. Davin) so often, has the instinct of Government, whatever that may be, and which, he says, is possessed exclusively by hon. gentlemen on that side. One of the great proofs of that instinct, I should think, would be unanimity and loyalty. And when you see a party which displays so much harmony as that perfect accord which exists between the ex-Minister of Railways (Mr. Haggart) and his leader, and between another of its leading lights, the hon. member for West York (Mr. Wallace) and his leader—when you find a party whose leading spirits are so intimate and perfectly united in brotherly love—when you find this perfect loyalty among them to one another, with no such thing, for instance, as setting a private detective on their leader's track to find out when he is interviewed by a newspaper reporter, you find a party undoubtedly possessed of the instinct of government. I do not pretend that this is altogether germane to the question; but the remarks of the hon. member for West Assiniboia about the instinct of government are really so amusing that it is difficult to refrain from advertizing to them. I was somewhat surprised to find an hon. gentleman who leads the party that has this instinct of government to such an intense degree, proceeding to-night, in a manner which would not do credit to the most obscure stump-speaker that ever addressed a backwoods audience, to discuss, in the most unqualified terms, the most delicate international relations existing between the Government of this country and the Government of the United States. Why, I am astonished, Mr. Speaker, that an hon. gentleman who has been years in the public service of the country, does not seem to realize that speeches of that kind are calculated to lead to the direst calamities and difficulties between nations—speeches which inflame the public mind and the sentiments of people who do not know better, who do not know the responsibilities which rest upon members of the Government in difficulties of that kind. The United States Government are, upon the Pacific Coast, met with very great difficulties. They have a population there which is very much excited over the possibilities of the Klondike trade, and who, perhaps, are not too

careful as to what the results may be from the measures which they are urging on their government. I should say, from the conversations I have had with members of the United States Government, that they realize the responsibilities that rest upon them as the government of a civilized country, and we, on our part, recognize the responsibilities that we are under as the Government of a civilized country, dealing with another civilized country in a civilized, decent and courteous way. So far as the Government of the United States is concerned, there has been no cause for complaint on the part of this Government with regard to the methods they have seen fit to adopt in connection with the affairs of this district. We have met with every courtesy at their hands, and, although they have difficulties—for political difficulties do not exist alone in our country—and cannot always do what they would like to do, I would venture to say, that the common sense of hon. members, not only on this side, but on the other side, will agree with me when I say that it was an act of the greatest possible friendliness on the part of the Secretary of the Treasury of the United States to amend their regulations and provide such regulations at Dyea and Skagway as are calculated to facilitate and promote Canadian trade. I venture to say that this is one of the things which the Canadian people will remember, and which the dominant political party that represents our people will remember, with gratitude when discussing questions of this kind.

These regulations were changed, and our friends at the Coast now tell us that they are perfectly satisfactory with the additional arrangements that were made by the Minister of Customs (Mr. Paterson) for the purpose of more effectually carrying them out and more effectually promoting their object. In addition to that, our mounted police have gone through United States waters and through United States territory without question. Every facility that could be given has been given to us; and, while at present, there remains some business to be done in connection with the Stikine River and the navigation thereof—as to which I shall speak at a later period—I say that we have had up to the present time, so far as the United States Cabinet is concerned, the most fair and reasonable and courteous treatment. It would not be a proper thing for me as a member of this Government to listen to the blatant statements made in this House to-night without making this statement in justice and fairness to the Government of the United States.

Now, it is easy for gentlemen, especially for hon. gentlemen who write letters to newspapers over signatures other than their own, to minimize difficulties. But let me explain to the House the difficult position we were placed in with regard to this territory. If hon. gentlemen will refer to the

map, they will see that Dyea and Skagway, at the entrance to this Yukon district, are nearly a thousand miles from Vancouver, and we could not send in an officer, we could not send a rifle or a revolver or a single charge of ammunition or a pound of provisions without the leave of the United States. It would have been an act of war for us to send our people and our officials with their arms and ammunition without at least the tacit leave of the United States. It certainly would have been such if we had gone through their territory or their waters after we had been forbidden to do so. We were in the position of having to provide for a vast territory a thousand miles from the nearest of our cities, and we could not get into it without going through the waters or the territories of the United States. And our hon. friend who leads the party with the instinct of government would have had us wave the bloody shirt and say we would have nothing to do with these grasping Yankees. He would have found that he did not own the territory in six months or so if he had followed that policy. His officers would have been starved to death. He would not have been able to assert his jurisdiction or to carry on the administration of the territory for six months. All that the authorities of the United States needed to do was to say they could not see their way clear to allow us to send troops or police through their territory, and we could not have complained much at that. We might say it was unkind or unfriendly, but that is all. And those who wished might have gone to the Yukon country, but we could not have got there to provide them with the benefits of government or to enforce any regulations. There would have been no trouble about mining regulations then. Whoever liked could have gone in; there would have been no law or order; the good name and the fair name of the Dominion of Canada would have been disgraced.

This was one of the difficulties we had to contend with; I say again that we have been treated, with regard to that point, with the utmost friendliness by the Government of the United States. I want my hon. friend from Victoria (Mr. Prior) with whom I think I have had some communication, and who, I think, has probably been influenced to some extent by the natural excitement in regard to the questions of trade upon the Coast, to understand that, while there is the strongest possible feeling in the Pacific Coast towns in regard to this question of trade, we have had no cause of complaint against the United States Government, because of their dealings with us upon this question. As my hon. friend from Pictou (Sir Charles Hibbert Tupper) said in his remarks upon the Address, there was something to explain in regard to issuing the regulations at Dyea and Skagway which I had promised would be forth-

coming in a short time. It is quite true there was a delay, which delay has not been very fully explained. I do not know that I have any particular right to demand an explanation from the Secretary of the Treasury of the United States. When I was there he said that the regulations would be issued in such a way as to facilitate our trade in any reasonable way that we had a right to expect and that he thought he would be able to get them out in a short time. He was not able to get them out just as soon as he expected, but I have not felt that I was entitled to demand any explanation from him in connection with the matter. I did get a telegram from the Assistant Secretary of the Treasury to the effect that the delay was caused by the fact that he wished to consult the collector of customs in Alaska and get some information with regard to local matters which he thought he ought to understand before he issued the regulations.

Sir CHARLES HIBBERT TUPPER. Since the hon. gentleman has been good enough to refer to some remarks that I made, I would like to ask him what I suggested in my remarks should be answered, and which is not altogether what he seems to think. The question I wish him to have explained is, why he sent a telegram on the 3rd of January to the effect that regulations had been decided upon between the United States Government and himself by which these odious exactions would be removed.

The MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR. They have been removed.

Sir CHARLES HIBBERT TUPPER. But this telegram on the 3rd of January was not a promise but a positive assurance to the people of the Coast that these regulations had been amended and changed.

The MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR. The Secretary of the Treasury did assure me that he would at once issue regulations which would have the effect of doing away with the necessity of paying these fees, and I so telegraphed to the Board of Trade of Victoria, and, I think, that of Vancouver. The regulations were to have been drafted and issued at once. I had no doubt, when I sent that telegram, that they would be drafted and issued in a day or two, but it was put off from time to time. But, as I said, I did not feel that I had the right to demand an explanation, because the Washington authorities have treated us most courteously, and I presume that the delay was because the Secretary of the Treasury wanted to consult the collector of customs of Alaska before he had them sent up. That was a reasonable explanation, and I do not feel that I was justified in complaining. But from time to time, I did communicate with Washington for the purpose of inducing the issue of the regulations as fast as possible.

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Sir CHARLES HIBBERT TUPPER. With the permission of the hon. gentleman, I would like to ask him a question. I do not do it for a factious purpose. What I wished to reach was, if possible, a more definite explanation of that point. I never challenged the good faith of the hon. gentleman, but I did refer to the positive assurance which he made, undoubtedly on the assurance given to him at Washington on the 3rd of January. Then I asked an explanation, which I do not think the hon. gentleman has yet given, how it was that this positive assurance which he conveyed to the people of the Coast, was not observed. The hon. gentleman said the United States authorities observed the utmost good faith. I would venture to differ with him there. If his telegram was founded upon facts, they had given him a positive assurance that these exactions would be at once removed.

The MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR. I think the hon. gentleman is drawing it very fine. I think if he were a member of a government and a member of another government stated that he would do a certain thing, and, finding that, as a matter of prudence, it would be necessary for him to get a little more information from some of his officials, he did not do it for a few days after the time he said he would, he would not consider that it was a violation of his promise, that it was an act of bad faith. I think the explanation is perfectly clear. Now I was adverting to the enormous difficulties under which the Government laboured in dealing with this question, and I had just referred to the difficulty which arose from the fact that in order to get into the country we had to go through United States territory.

Mr. PRIOR. Will the hon. gentleman allow me to ask him a question? Does he say that there is no other route by which he can get into the Yukon country than by going through American territory?

The MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR. I said we could not get in by any other way at that time. When I make a statement of that kind I assume that the hon. gentleman would make the qualification which any person would make in the light of the ordinary knowledge of geography which everybody has. We can get across by way of Edmonton. I started a party of police that way before I went west myself, and they just got across the summit of the mountains the other day. We could have started a party by way of Ashcroft or Kamloops, and they might possibly get through with their lives. But for all practical purposes, and that was the sense in which I was making the statement, the only way that we could get in was by going through American territory. **Mr. Speaker,** I am not in the best of health, and not equal to con-

tinuing the debate further to-night; and as I have a number of other matters to refer to, I will move the adjournment of the debate.

WEDNESDAY, 16th February, 1898.

The MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR (Mr. Sifton). I had the honour, last evening, of drawing the attention of the House to the remarkable change of front which has taken place on the part of the hon. leader of the Opposition (Sir Charles Tupper), and I need not further advert to that fact at present. I also consumed some time referring to a few of the statements which the hon. gentleman had made, and a few of the criticisms which he had addressed to my hon. friend the Minister of Railways and Canals (Mr. Blair). The hon. leader of the Opposition made a great many extraordinary statements in criticism of my hon. friend the Minister of Railways and Canals. He went so far as to use an expression which, I submit to you, Mr. Speaker, can hardly be considered parliamentary or a proper expression in the mouth of the leader of a great party, a baronet, an ex-High Commissioner, an ex-Prime Minister, an ex-Minister of Railways and Canals, and various other offices. He designated my hon. friend the Minister of Railways and Canals as a "Know-nothing." Surely my hon. friend was somewhat lost to the sense of what is due to his own dignity and the dignity of this House, when he made use of that expression.

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. I ask leave to interrupt my hon. friend for one single moment to ask him whether he thinks that was a greater violation of parliamentary decorum than for one of his colleagues to call a gentleman on his side of the House "Ananias."

The MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR. If my hon. friend will have any one who suggests that epithet on his side of the House, of course we cannot help it; the truth will come out some time. It would be quite impossible for us, at any rate, to prevent impressions of that kind being formed. But I do not suppose my hon. friend will take the position that, because some gentleman on this side intimated that there was a possible resemblance between Ananias and some gentleman on that side of the House, he is to be relieved for all time to come from all sense of decency and of the importance of maintaining parliamentary decorum.

What I was seeking to call the hon. gentleman's attention to in connection with my remarks on that subject was that while he was addressing his gentle criticism to my hon. friend the Minister of Railways and Canals, he was adverting most strongly to the fact that the Government had presumed to come down to Parliament and ask for the subsidizing of a line of railway, and yet

was not able to state either by speech in Parliament or in the Bill specifically what the rates for freight and passengers on this railway should be. That is a criticism that is very strongly and very repeatedly addressed to this side of the House by my hon. friend, it is a criticism that has been in the air, and has been seen in the press and heard in this House, and it has been heard a number of times while this question has been under consideration. Now the party of which the hon. gentleman is the titular leader was in control of the railway legislation of this Parliament from 1878 to 1896. I would like the combined wisdom of the gentlemen on that side of the House, before this discussion is through, to be addressed to meeting this challenge that I now make: For them to produce the case of a single railway Bill presented to this House since 1878 which stated the rates which were to be charged upon that railway. If they cannot do that let them produce a single case in which, since 1878, the Minister of Railways when he brought down a Bill for the subsidizing of a railway stated in this House what were to be the specific passenger rates upon that railway. Will they produce one single case in which they did what they have demanded and re-demanded we should do in regard to this particular railway?

Mr. MACLEAN. What about the two cent passenger rate Bill?

Mr. MACDONALD (Huron). Are you the leader of the Opposition?

Mr. MACLEAN. The challenge was to any member on this side.

The MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR. Now, I do not intend to follow the windings of my hon. friend's (Sir Charles Tupper's) attempt to give the reasons for his change of front, or to offer any further criticisms on his remarks at the present moment.

I was endeavouring, last evening when the debate adjourned, to explain the position in which the Government was placed respecting the difficulties arising out of the administration of the Yukon district, to the end that we might give to the House and the country a fair idea of the reasons which impelled the Government to the action which they have taken and to recommend the course which they have recommended to Parliament. I pointed out that the facts were unprecedented in this respect—that we had to accept responsibility for the government and administration of a distant and almost inaccessible country, and that the only mode of access to the country (practically speaking, although not absolutely so from a geographical standpoint) was through territory which was in the possession of the United States, and which, according to international usage, it was not competent for this Government to take possession of or to exercise jurisdiction over without negotia-

tions and the consent of the United States Government. I wish the House to take special note of the difficulties caused by that one fact when considering the criticisms addressed to us from the other side of the House based on the fact that we have not taken such action as would undoubtedly have brought about strained relations between the Government of Canada and the Government of United States. I might say, that the suggestion which was brought to the attention of the right hon. the First Minister in connection with the Stikine River, that this Government should take steps to prevent certain action being taken at Washington, comes very strangely indeed from an hon. gentleman who a night or two ago denounced most furiously and in the most unqualified terms the idea of any member of this Government having anything to do with the Government at Washington. This only shows the absolutely incoherent and inconsequential nature of the criticisms addressed to the Government.

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. My hon. friend perhaps will allow me to say that he has entirely misinterpreted my words if he thought that I proposed that this Government should put itself in communication with the American Government in any other way than through the Imperial Government and the British Ambassador at Washington.

The MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR. I am quite satisfied to let the hon. gentleman's explanation stand. I was pointing out the difficulties we were under with respect to that territory, and wish to state the further fact that up to that time we were dependent, for the very supplies which our officers in the Yukon district received, upon the American transportation companies which were doing business in the United States territory of Alaska. It will at once be seen by the House that that is a most important consideration. These supplies had to pass through nearly 1,600 miles of American territory before they reached the places where our supplies had to be delivered. We might have anticipated—in fact we did anticipate—what actually happened later on, that one of the boats containing supplies, some of which, I believe, were actually ordered for our own officers in the Yukon district, was held up in United States territory and provisions taken off, and our post was left short in consequence.

I only call attention to these facts to show to the House the difficult position in which the Government was placed. Then, Sir, let me call attention to this fact, that notwithstanding the warning which was addressed to the people of the United States last summer in regard to the almost absolute certainty of starvation, if any very large number of people went into the Yukon district, a considerable number of people did go, and a very large expense has been

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incurred by this Government for the pur-
 pose of preventing the starvation which
 might have followed had not such expense
 been incurred. Now this is the fact which
 the House will have to take into considera-
 tion. There are at the present time thou-
 sands of people upon the way, and thou-
 sands more who are making their prepara-
 tions to go into this district; and if, for the
 purpose of averting the danger of starvation
 of two or three thousand people of a sur-
 plus population, we have to go to enormous
 expense, what, Sir, would be the condition
 of affairs if 40,000 or 50,000 people should
 struggle through those mountains and find
 themselves at the end of the summer four
 or five hundred miles down in the northern
 part of the district, unable to return, and
 without a sufficient supply of provisions to
 take them through the winter? It is only
 necessary to state the proposition in order
 that the House may be seized of the fact
 that we have before us, and of the possi-
 bility of one of the most appalling catastro-
 phes the world has ever seen, outside of
 what takes place in a state of war. We
 have therefore to consider that no matter
 what warnings are addressed to the people,
 no matter what this Government or the
 United States Government may do or at-
 tempt to do, immense numbers of people
 will find their way into that territory, and
 if provision is not made for taking in sup-
 plies, these people will go in without suffi-
 cient supplies. We have this further to
 take into consideration, that the officers and
 men we have sent up there, the officers and
 men that we intend to send, would be, under
 such circumstances, surrounded as the offi-
 cials of the United States at Fort Yukon
 are surrounded to-day, if the last accounts
 we have received can be relied upon. Our
 officers would be surrounded as they are
 by thousands of starving people, armed men,
 accustomed to a somewhat lawless method
 of life; and the inevitable result of that
 state of affairs would be that the authority
 of this Government in that district would
 be overthrown, and the further result would
 be that it would be quite impossible for this
 Government to re-assert and to re-establish
 its authority until a railroad was built and
 a proper system of transportation provided
 so that our forces and our supplies could
 be taken in. Let me make that clear to
 the House. If it should happen that 40,000
 or 50,000 people should be there next fall
 without sufficient supplies, and our officers
 were left in the midst of those people, and
 those people felt and knew that this Gov-
 ernment had had time to provide for proper
 means of transportation and had not
 taken the necessary and requisite steps for
 so doing, it would be impossible that the
 moral authority which our officers now ex-
 ert over those people, could be retained
 under such circumstances. We would be
 face to face with the fact that 200 or 300
 of our officers would be surrounded by starving

thousands of armed men, of alien men, not
 citizens of Canada, but citizens of foreign
 countries, and these men would have pos-
 session of the Yukon district instead of the
 Government of Canada having control over
 it. So, Sir, we have before us the great
 danger of the authority of this Government
 being overridden, being destroyed, and the
 Government of that district being, theoretic-
 ally, if not actually, taken out of our hands
 by reason of the fact that we would have
 failed to meet the responsibility of the case,
 and failed to make adequate provision for
 what we foresaw, and what we knew ought
 to have been provided for. Now, Sir, so
 much for the national aspect of the ques-
 tion. There is also another aspect. We know
 that for many years past upon this con-
 tinent there has never been so great a move-
 ment of population to any one place as
 seems to be imminent at the present time
 in what is known as the movement to the
 Klondike district. It seems almost incon-
 ceivable to us to hear and read the estimates
 regarding the number of persons likely to go
 into that district. I saw the other day in
 the New York "Herald" a statement like
 this:

The statement that a quarter of a million gold-
 seekers will go from Seattle alone this year,
 seems to be well founded, in view of the "Her-
 ald's" despatches to the effect that 7,000 have
 sailed in the last eight days, and that 1,000
 are arriving there daily.

It is such facts as these that we have to
 deal with. We are told, too, that the
 transportation agencies in Europe are book-
 ing tens of thousands of people for the Pa-
 cific Coast, and that the immediate ob-
 ject of these people is to procure transportation
 to the Klondike district. We know, too,
 that the officers of the Canadian railways
 have made immense preparations for this
 trade; and, while no person can say ex-
 actly how much of it will materialize, every-
 thing points to the fact that the greatest
 rush that has been seen for many years
 upon this continent will take place during
 the next few months towards the Klondik
 district. It has been estimated, and the
 estimate does not seem to be an unreason-
 able or extravagant one, that from \$50,000,
 000 to \$75,000,000 will be spent in outfit-
 ting and in transportation by these people; and
 it does not require any lengthened argumen-
 on my part to show that a volume of trad-
 e of \$50,000,000 or \$75,000,000 is a thing to
 which the Government of this coun-
 try should devote a large amount of attention
 when it is possible to secure it for Canadian
 merchants and Canadian manufacturer.
 The possibilities of trade, therefore, were
 very carefully considered by the Govern-
 ment in connection with this question, and
 we have done all that we could to make
 reasonable arrangements with our friends in
 the United States in order that the passag-
 e of goods through the Dyea and Skagwa

routes might not interfere with the work of our merchants. But this we know, Mr. Speaker, that there are 10,000 or 12,000 men at Dyea and Skagway now. We know that these people now there cannot get over these passes probably in the next three months, and that it is an almost absolute certainty that within two or three weeks there will be more people at those two places than can get over the passes between now and next fall; and as a result of this we have the fact that means of access to that country, in the course of a couple of weeks, will be practically shut off so far as those places are concerned. Therefore, it seemed to the Government as most essential that another and better method of access to the country should be provided, so that immediately it is seen that the method of access to the country by Dyea and Skagway is shut off, we will be able to divert the stream of traffic along our Canadian route, and our Canadian merchants and manufacturers will benefit by that traffic being so diverted by reason of the fact that the purchase of goods will necessarily be made in Canada. Now, Sir, these are some of the considerations which have led the Government to regard this question as one of such serious and great urgency as to justify us in taking a very strong stand in reference to it, and in dealing with it in a way which has been described, and very properly described, as unusual. Not so unusual, however, in point of speed, in point of what may be called hurry, as to offend the experienced parliamentarian who presides over the destinies of the Opposition, because the only fault that that hon. gentleman found with us was that we had not moved fast enough. It is, Mr. Speaker, sometimes desirable that we should see ourselves as others see us, and if the House will permit me, I will just read a short extract from one of the best known and ablest commercial papers in the United States, as an indication of what our rivals for this great trade are thinking of our action in this connection. It is always a good thing to know what your opponent is doing, and while we are on the most friendly terms with the Cabinet of the United States, we know they are doing everything they can to secure this trade for their people, and they know we are doing everything we possibly can to secure this trade for our people. This is what one of their most reliable organs, the New York "Commercial Advertiser," in its edition of February 4, under the heading "The Klondike Railway," says:

The Canadian Government is sedulously following up its policy of securing all the benefits of Klondike wealth for itself. Having exacted royalties from American miners, having appropriated a proportion of the gold-bearing soil for itself—

That is a most outrageous thing for Canada to do, to appropriate a little bit of its own territory for itself

—and having imposed a heavy duty on supplies brought into the country by Americans, Canada has now chartered a railway to enable its citizens to reach the gold fields without entering American territory, and thus to cut down the profits of American transportation and supply companies.

I wonder whether our supplies would be allowed to go into the United States without paying duty.

The projected railway does not make an all-rail route to the Klondike, and it will, no doubt, be long before there is one. The road is to start on the coast just south of the southern boundary of Alaska, and traverse Dominion territory until it reaches navigable water flowing down through the Klondike region. It will be many years before there will be any settlements in the northern part of British Columbia to enable the building of a railway to connect the Canadian Pacific with the new Klondike road, and by the time there are, the Klondike gold will very likely be exhausted and the Klondike railway abandoned.

That, of course, is a matter of opinion.

The thrifty Canadian Government is not risking any money on the projected road. The contractors clamoured for a subsidy and insisted that they could not be expected to construct the road without one. But Sir Wilfrid Laurier and his colleagues stood firm, and all that the contractors receive from the Government is a land grant along the route. The bargain is pronounced to be the best one which Canada ever drove in a railway negotiation,—

Mr. FOSTER. I desire to ask the hon. gentleman—

The MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR. I will address a few remarks to the hon. gentleman in a few minutes, and I think I can satisfy him. This is a sentence that will grieve the hon. gentleman:

—as the land will never be worth anything without the railroad, and cannot prove very valuable with it, unless some unexpected mineral resources are discovered.

This is a comment on the action of hon. gentlemen on the other side of the House. I am sure they will like to know the estimation in which their party is held by our American friends, as compared with the opinion entertained by them of hon. gentlemen on this side of the House.

The new railway will be a short one, to be sure, but to get it built without spending a cent of the public moneys upon it—

I cannot expect the hon. member for York (Mr. Foster) to agree with this.

—is a great contrast to the prodigality with which Sir John Macdonald subsidized the Canadian Pacific, and indicates sincerity in the denunciation by Laurier and his party of the supposed corrupt relations between the Canadian Pacific and the Macdonald Government.

I commend this latter portion to the attention of the House.

An Ottawa Government organ exultantly remarks that Canada now has the key to the gold fields in her own hands, and can deal with the

Americans as she sees fit. This boast might have been withheld until the road was finished. Physical obstacles or excessive cost may prevent the contractors from building it at all under the terms of the contract.

Hon. gentlemen opposite think this is a trifling matter, but others do not think it so trifling.

The same journal says that Americans have made far too large a share of the profits of the Yukon, both in the transportation business, the outfitting and the mining itself. This is true, because they have had the enterprise to secure it.

I have read these extracts to show how the matter is looked at by people who are taking the largest interest in it on the other side of the line, how it is looked at by the men who are going to suffer from the railway being put through, which will involve loss of their trade, and by which we will be able to add the trade of the Yukon to the general trade of the Dominion.

If the House will not consider it a task too wearisome, I will try and offer a few remarks in regard to the various routes by which the Yukon can be reached, with the view of affording the House a little information on the subject, which possibly I have had a better opportunity of acquiring than have members of the House generally. First, we have the route by way of the Yukon River. That route involves an ocean passage from a Pacific Coast port to St. Michael's, at the mouth of the Yukon River, on the coast of Alaska. From St. Michael's by a river steambot, the passenger goes to Dawson City through the United States territory of Alaska, a distance of about 1,600 miles. The Yukon is a river that, during the early portion of the season, contains sufficient water to float river steamboats carrying freight to the amount of about 500 tons. These steamboats make one trip, fully loaded, from St. Michael's to Dawson City and return. They generally are able to make a second trip, but very seldom fully loaded. That is the information we have from the transportation companies on that river. The boats go up and down twice in the season, and make no more than two trips in the course of the year, and on the second trip, on account of low water, they are not able to take a boat-load. There are two companies doing business on that river, the North American Transportation Company, and the Alaska Commercial Company; and those are the only companies we can rely on actually to get freight up that river. Other people are building boats and intend to take them up the river next spring, but there is no certainty of those boats reaching Dawson City. The great difficulty arises from—and I need only mention the difficulty to realize the fact that a similar difficulty is met with in navigating all western rivers, and of course it applies to a river 1,600 miles long—the shoals and obstructions, which remove any certainty of

boats getting up the river unless conducted by experienced men, knowing fully the navigation of the river. Some of the boats under construction may get up, but there is no assurance that they will get as far as Dawson City next season. There is also the danger connected with that route, as regards getting provisions and supplies up the river, that it may not be made available for Canadian use. There are gold developments on the American side of the line, and these may lead the Americans to use their transportation facilities for the benefit of their own people, and we are liable to be told that the supplies carried are needed for their own settlements, and thus left without any facilities. Now, the combined transportation facilities of the two companies upon the Yukon route, next year, will be about 40,000 tons for all purposes whatever.

Mr. FOSTER. This year?

The MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR. Yes, this year; next season. It will be about 40,000 tons, and it would be a very liberal estimate on our part to assume that one-half of the tonnage of these companies would be devoted to the carriage of provisions and supplies to the Canadian side. We may therefore say that we can probably count on somewhat in the neighbourhood of 20,000 tons of supplies of all kinds; remember not provisions alone, but supplies and outfits of all kinds coming in by the Yukon route. That is the very outside limit of what we can reasonably expect to come by that route during the next season.

Then there is the Dyea route. When I was at Dyea there was no method of getting supplies over the Chilkoot Pass, except by packing them on men's backs. We are now informed that a portion of the distance has been spanned by a small tramway, that another portion has been spanned by a wire cable, and that small quantities of supplies can be taken over in that way. The cost at the present time is said to be 15 cents a pound, but the capacity for taking supplies over by that route is very, very limited, and only a small amount could be transported over that pass during the season. On the Skagway trail the only method of transferring supplies is by packing on horses' and on men's backs.

Then there is the Taku route. That is the route by way of Taku Inlet, and it is best known by reason of the fact that the most active glacier on the Pacific Coast is in the immediate neighbourhood of the harbour. The harbour is a very poor one generally filled with icebergs, as it was when I was there. This route is totally impracticable without a railway, and, like the other routes that I have spoken of, terminates in the strip of American territory which runs along the coast.

Then, Mr. Speaker, there is the Stikine route, and that is the route which has been

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decided upon by the Government after a full and careful and deliberate consideration. The House is now in possession of the report of Mr. Jennings, a very competent and reliable engineer who was sent up there last fall for the purpose of making an investigation. I need not say to the House that Mr. Jennings did not make what could be called a survey of a railway route, for he had no time to do anything of that kind. He took a couple of professional assistants up there with him, and he had authority to take general direction of all the operations and explorations. Mr. St. Cyr, a surveyor in the employ of the Department of the Interior, was then on the ground to assist in the work, and Mr. Jennings took with him a number of labourers and others. His instructions were not to make a survey of a railway route in the ordinary sense of the word, but an exploration of the country so as to give the Government all the information in regard to a wagon road, an electric railway or any method of transportation that the Government might consider desirable or feasible through the particular districts that were placed in his charge for the time being. Mr. Jennings went there and he has now made his report, which is in the hands of the members of the House. He was instructed at the same time to despatch a reliable officer, and he subsequently did despatch Mr. St. Cyr, who is a very reliable explorer, for some years in the employ of the Department of the Interior, and who went down from the head of Teslin Lake, through the Teslin Lake, and through the Hootalinqua River, for the purpose of ascertaining beyond a doubt particulars as to the navigability of the Hootalinqua River and Teslin Lake.

Sir CHARLES HIBBERT TUPPER.
Can the hon. gentleman say at what period of the year Mr. St. Cyr went there?

The MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR.
He went down late in the fall; I think he got through before the ice formed on the river. It was just about the time the ice was forming that he got to the junction of the Lewes and Hootalinqua rivers. We were in doubt as to whether that officer would be able to get down, because from the reports we had we thought that in all probability the ice would be formed upon the lake and upon the river before he could get there. However, we discovered, very much to our satisfaction, that our anticipation with regard to the earliness of the date that these waters froze over was entirely erroneous, and it is now known that these waters do not freeze over so early. In the fall as was generally understood. Mr. St. Cyr therefore made a report, which will be found incorporated in Mr. Jennings's printed report, and in that report the particulars respecting the navigability of Teslin Lake and the Hootalinqua River are given.

The members of this House will see beyond a doubt from Mr. St. Cyr's report—and I may say that he is a most reliable and experienced officer—that there is no doubt what- ever about the navigability of the Hootalinqua River.

I am dwelling upon these facts because the Government do not expect the members of the House to rush into this matter blindfolded. We wish to give to the House, and we wish to call to the particular attention of the House, all the details of the information which are necessary in order to enable an intelligent judgment to be formed upon the project which we are submitting. The navigability of these waters was, of course, a prime consideration, and no steps whatever could be taken towards making definite arrangements for the construction of this road until the report of Mr. St. Cyr was in my hands, so that I could say to my colleagues: We can now consider the construction of a railway from Stikine River to Teslin Lake, because we have ascertained that the waters beyond are navigable. We have now got that information, in authentic and definite form.

From the Stikine River to the junction of the Hootalinqua and the Lewes rivers the waters are navigable; from there to Dawson City the waters are navigable for scows and canoes without interruption, and with the exception of one short space in the river, known as the Five Fingers, the waters are continuously navigable. We have not had a survey made of the Five Fingers Rapids—we have had no opportunity of doing so—but we have such information from some of our officers and other persons who have passed down that river, that we think we are justified in saying to Parliament that a very few thousand dollars will suffice to blow up the boulders which form the obstruction at the Five Fingers Rapids. It will cost perhaps \$5,000, and certainly not more than \$10,000, and the waters will then be navigable all the way from the head of Teslin Lake to Dawson City. Then, we shall have an uninterrupted water route open from the 15th or 20th of May or thereabouts—that is the best information we have—until about the 1st of November. We shall have a continuous water route from Teslin Lake down to Dawson City during that period of the year. The railway from the Stikine River to Teslin Lake will furnish the link in providing for through transportation. The Stikine River is a navigable river; I do not think anybody ever supposed that it was navigable for ocean steamers, but it is sufficiently navigable for the purposes of this traffic. This is what Mr. Jennings says about it on page 7 of his report:

The Stikine River is usually navigable for powerful steamboats of suitable design to Glenora or Telegraph Creek, a distance of 150 miles, between the 1st of May and a date sometimes well on in October—

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I may say that I was at the Stikine River myself and went a short distance up the river and made careful inquiries about the dates when the ice formed in the fall ; and the information I received was to the effect that it was generally very late in Octo-ber—

—dependent of course on the openness of the season and the amount of rain and snowfall. Its width varies from half a mile on the lower river to 500 feet above. The depth is generally good and the channel is remarkably free from snags, sunken rocks or boulders, but at Little and Klootchman Cañons, respectively 96 and 106 miles from the sea, during high water periods when many drift trees are running, it is with considerable risk that the passage through these contracted reaches are made and delays are common, as drift-wood is liable to become foul of the rudders or wheel. The first 50 miles, or to the Great Glacier, is very good water with a moderate current not exceeding three miles per hour, while from this point upwards the channel becomes somewhat tortuous and contracted, with an increasing general rate of current varying from three to eight miles per hour ; however, the exceptionally swift sections are few and usually not more than half a mile in length.

A powerful river steamer should be able to make the Little Cañon in one day's run from the mouth of the river, and the Glenora or Telegraph Creek on the second day.

Mr. Jennings makes that report after having gone up this identical river, over this identical course, in a small steamer ; so that he is making the report, so far as this phase of the question is concerned, from absolute personal knowledge.

The sum of \$5,000 could be advantageously spent in removing snags and boulders and in placing permanent cables for use in the heavy water, principally above the Little Cañon.

I may say that the Government contemplate asking the House for authority to spend a small sum of money, whatever may be necessary, for the purpose of removing the snags spoken of, and improving the navigation of the Stikine River. That matter is now before the Minister of Public Works (Mr. Tarte), and is receiving his best attention. Of course, the House is aware that from the mouth of the Stikine River to Vancouver or Victoria the route is by ocean steamer. I am giving these details to the House so that the House will be cognizant of the route to be followed when this railway shall be completed, and the facilities for traffic which it will afford. I calculate that the average trip from Vancouver or Victoria to Wrangell will occupy certainly not more than three days, and probably will be accomplished in two days, when better facilities for making the trip are completed, and when the steamers run on quick time, as they will no doubt do during the coming season. From Wrangell to Telegraph Creek the trip should be made in two days ; from Telegraph Creek to Teslin Lake by the railway in one day ; and from Teslin Lake to Dawson City by steamboat in seven days.

So that we shall have by September next the possibility of reaching Dawson City from Victoria or Vancouver in thirteen days. I think, Mr. Speaker, if that desirable object is attained, the House will consider that the Government have succeeded in overcoming very great obstacles, and have brought about a very satisfactory result.

Then, Sir, this is to be remembered, that Dawson City is the extreme north-western town or large settlement in the Yukon district, not far from the boundary line ; and the first boat that goes up the Yukon River only reaches Dawson City about the middle of July. It is only between the middle of July and about two months later that there is any interchange of traffic at Dawson City by the Yukon River, and one cannot order freight which can possibly reach Dawson City by the Yukon after the first of September. About the 1st of September last we gave an order for freight to be sent to Dawson City by the Yukon River, and it never got there, and it is not there yet. So that that route is practically useless for modern commercial purposes. Though it has been used by the North American Transportation Co. and the Alaska Commercial Co., they have taken plenty of time to get in their supplies, making their arrangements a year or six months ahead ; but it is a route which is perfectly useless for modern commercial purposes, when large quantities of supplies have to be sent in on short notice. The route which we contemplate opening up will enable us to start on the 15th of May from Victoria or Vancouver, and in thirteen days to land people and provisions in Dawson City ; and from that time till late in the season, generally till from the 15th to the 30th of October, that traffic can be carried on.

There is not very much difference of opinion as to the route which the Canadian Government have selected being the best possible route for the purpose of reaching the Yukon district. Everybody who knows anything about it agrees with the Government on that point. My hon. friend the leader of the Opposition, although he has altered his opinion on a great many matters in connection with the contract, has not altered his opinion in regard to the Stikine route. He still thinks it is the best route. I venture to say that every member from British Columbia—men who know perhaps the most about the subject, if not personally, yet by hearsay from meeting men who do know personally—will be of the same opinion. The members of the Government of British Columbia, whom I met in Victoria, and with whom I discussed the question casually, expressed an unqualified opinion in favour of the Stikine route. So that we are in this position, that the route which the railway is to follow is the route endorsed by everybody who knows anything at all about the question. That appears to me to be a very important consideration for

the House to bear in mind in considering the question now before it.

There is another phase of the question to which I wish to draw attention. Our friends of the Opposition, while they are not able to say that the Stikine route is not the right route, are still so utterly averse to honestly and fairly giving the Government credit for being right, when they know that the Government is right, that they have raised some questions about the action of the Government in connection with transhipment and the rights we have in respect to the navigation of the Stikine River. I showed last night that the Minister of Railways and Canals had practically said only the same thing that the leader of the Opposition had said. The leader of the Opposition no doubt was making a wise and statesmanlike remark when he made that statement; but the Minister of Railways was apparently saying a most outrageous thing when he made the same statement. It seems to depend largely on who makes the statement, whether it is wise or statesmanlike. We have heard a great deal in regard to our rights on the Stikine River. I think I can give our hon. friends some light upon that subject. The boundary between the Yukon district and the territory of Alaska was settled many years ago by a treaty between Russia and Great Britain. At that time, the territory of Alaska was the property of the Russian Crown, and a treaty was made between Great Britain and Russia, known as the Anglo-Russian treaty of 1825, a copy of which I have in my hand. I am going to call attention to this little circumstance to show with what justification the great Conservative party claim to have the instinct of Government. And let the House understand this clearly, that when the United States purchased Alaska from Russia, they became subrogated in the rights of Russia, and could by no possibility have any additional rights or any right different from or in addition to those possessed by Russia.

The MINISTER OF MARINE AND FISHERIES (Sir Louis Davies). Or sovereignty.

The MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR. Or sovereignty. They took exactly what Russia possessed. And what the subjects of Great Britain possessed, under the Anglo-Russian treaty of 1825, as against Russia, they possessed as against the United States and all others. Article 6 of this treaty provides:

It is understood that the subjects of His Britannic Majesty, from whatever quarter they may arrive, whether from the ocean or the interior of the continent, shall for ever enjoy the right of navigating freely and without any hindrance whatever, all the rivers and streams which, in their course towards the Pacific Ocean, may cross the line of demarcation upon the line of coast described in article 3 of the present convention.

That was the law as it stood upon that point until the Washington treaty—the work of our hon. friends who possess in such a distinguished degree the instinct of government—was made. We had by treaty, not the mere right of navigation, not a limited right, not a right for the purposes of commerce only, but a right for all purposes—a proprietary, a complete right—with Russia and the subjects of the Russian Government, an absolutely equal right to—not the Stikine, or Yukon, or Porcupine rivers—but all the rivers that come down and cross the line of demarcation provided in the other articles of the treaty. That was the position we would be in to-day if it had not been for the statesmanship of hon. gentlemen opposite.

Mr. HAGGART. Does that treaty with Russia apply to the Yukon or Porcupine?

The MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR. I shall talk about the Yukon and Porcupine later. Will the hon. gentleman endeavour to address his great intellect to one subject at a time? I am talking about the rivers that cross the line of demarcation, with special reference to the Stikine River, which is of the utmost importance to us at present.

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. The hon. gentleman said distinctly the Yukon and the Porcupine Rivers.

The MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR. We will get to them afterwards. These hon. gentlemen are getting very restless. They know what is coming, and they do not like it. Now, will the House take cognizance of the fact that the subjects of Her Britannic Majesty possessed, under this treaty with Russia, a proprietary right, for all purposes whatever, in the Stikine River until that right was interfered with by the statesmanship of our friends on the other side. These gentlemen apparently had never read this treaty. They did not know what it contained, they had not the remotest conception of what they were doing when they put this clause in the Washington treaty, which they have been boasting about ever since the question of the Stikine River came up.

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. Will the hon. gentleman permit me to ask him one question, and that is, whether it was not a great Liberal statesman, the present Marquis of Ripon, who was at the head of that joint commission, and who ought to have had all the knowledge from the Foreign Office in England bearing on the subject?

The MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR. I admire the statesmanship of the great leader of the Conservative party, who, when his former leader made a most inexcusable blunder with regard to a Canadian matter, about which he should have instructed the Marquis of Ripon, seeks to throw the blame for his ignorance upon the Imperial officers,

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who should have received the requisite information from the officers of the Canadian Government. We are indebted to the sublime statesmanship of our friends on the other side for the curtailing, to a very great extent, of the privileges which we did enjoy on the Stikine River. Instead of this article which gave us an unrestricted proprietary right in the Stikine River, we have now the following :—

The navigation of the rivers Yukon, Porcupine and Stikine ascending and descending from, to and into the sea shall for ever remain free and open for the purposes of commerce to the subjects of Her Britannic Majesty and the citizens of the United States, subject to any law and regulations of either country, within its own territory, not inconsistent with such privilege of free navigation.

If they had understood what they were doing, they would not have put in the word "Stikine," but have applied the provision—the hon. member for Lanark (Mr. Haggart) will take note of the fact—to the Yukon and Porcupine to which it ought to have applied, if the Yukon and Porcupine were not covered by the Russian treaty, leaving out the word "Stikine," which they put in simply because they did not know the contents of this treaty. I do not need to explain to members of this House, who are experienced in public matters and many of whom have, time and again, year after year, discussed similar matters, the difference between an absolute proprietary right to a river and the privilege of its free navigation for purposes of commerce. Free navigation for purposes of commerce is a very valuable privilege, and we are going to make use of it to the utmost possible extent, but it is not of the same value, by any means, as the proprietary right which we would have had if these hon. gentlemen had let alone at the time what they did not understand.

Coming away from the question of that treaty and coming down to the position in which we are now placed—

Sir CHARLES HIBBERT TUPPER. I rise merely for information, and would ask the hon. gentleman if I am right in understanding him to argue that our rights under the treaty between Russia and Great Britain were curtailed by this provision of the Washington treaty ?

The MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR. I should say yes. If the hon. gentleman desires to dispute that, I think I will be able to satisfy him.

Sir CHARLES HIBBERT TUPPER. I do not wish to argue it, but wish to have the hon. gentleman's statement.

The MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR. (Reading.) "The navigation of the rivers Yukon and Porcupine and Stikine, ascending and descending from, to and into the sea." Every word of this clause is important.

That is, we have the right to get in and out by the sea, not simply from the mouth of the river—because a point might arise there—but we have a right to go to the sea wherever it shall be. Let me finish the reading of the text :

Shall for ever—
not a limited period—

—remain free and open, for the purposes of commerce, to the subjects of Her Britannic Majesty and the citizens of the United States, subject to any laws and regulations of either country, within its own territory, not inconsistent with such privilege of navigation.

Now, my hon. friend has to-day called the attention of the House to the fact, that certain legislation was pending before the Congress of the United States which would have the effect of curtailing the privileges of the Canadian people on the Stikine River. No legislation that can emanate from the Congress of the United States can repeal a treaty solemnly entered into by that country without violation of good faith and this Government does not consider that it would be in any way justified for one instant in entertaining the idea that the United States would contemplate violating a treaty that they made with Great Britain. Why, Sir, the United States is a civilized country, and no civilized country deliberately violates the treaties it has made. The only thing that could deprive the people of Canada, the subjects of Her Majesty, of the privileges which exist at the present time of the free navigation of the Stikine River, would be the voluntary abandonment of that privilege under another treaty, or a state of war between the two countries—and that, of course, would justify the abrogation of all treaties existing at that time. So that we consider ourselves in a perfectly apregnable position in regard to the navigation of the Stikine River. We have treaty rights there which cannot be taken away without our consent. Our friends of the United States Congress may pass a Bill, but not one that will violate the treaty which they have made with Great Britain. We may be perfectly certain of that; and it would be a most puerile thing, in my judgment—I give my opinion for what it may be worth—for the Government, whenever any irresponsible member of the United States Congress introduces a Bill, which, perhaps, would not have the slightest possible chance of being accepted by both branches of Congress or of receiving the signature of the President—a member who, perhaps, does not know what was in the treaty—to assume that the United States contemplated doing a thing which no civilized country would do, that is to say, to violate a solemn treaty. I have seen a copy of a Bill to which the attention of the House has been called on two or three occasions, and which has been made a subject of discussion in the press of late. It

not yet law, and I do not know whether it ever will be law, but, in any event, it does not affect the question before us, because it is only United States legislation provided for the purpose of aiding the Government of the United States to carry out this treaty in a way that may be necessary for the protection of the revenue of the United States. The clause which has been referred to, is as follows:—

The master of any foreign vessel, laden or in ballast, arriving, whether by sea or otherwise, in the waters of the United States from any foreign territory adjacent to the northern, north-eastern, or north-western frontiers of the United States, shall report at the office of any collector of the customs which shall be nearest to the point at which such vessels may enter such waters;—

That is a perfectly proper thing—to have the vessel report when it enters.

—and such vessel shall not transfer her cargo or passengers to another vessel, or proceed farther inland, either to unload or take in cargo, without a special permit from such collector, or deputy collector, issued under and in accordance with such general or special regulations as the Secretary of the Treasury may, in his discretion, from time to time prescribe. This section shall also apply to trade with or through Alaska.

Now, my hon. friend the Minister of Customs tells me that the procedure under this Act will, in no substantial respect, differ from our own procedure upon the St. Lawrence, the free navigation of which the United States have under identically the same treaty. It is not calculated in any way to interfere with or prevent the exercise of our right of navigation for the purposes of the commerce which we intend to build up. The only question of importance is the question of transshipment. That is a question upon which we can give no positive statement, because, although the matter has been brought to the attention of the United States Government, they have not yet expressed an opinion on the subject. It is a question which, if disputed, must be decided either by negotiation or by reference to a competent tribunal. But it must be evident that it is utterly out of the question for the Government of Canada, under the extraordinary circumstances in which we were placed, to think of opening up diplomatic negotiation and waiting until we got a question of that kind settled, before we proceeded to deal with the building of the railway. It would be a ridiculous proposition to go to the Government of the country which is now getting the largest portion of the trade which we seek to take away by constructing a railway, and, before starting to construct a railway, to try to get them to agree to something which would have the effect of taking the trade all away from them. They might possibly say that we were entitled to the privilege of transshipment; but, under the extraordinary circumstances, it would probably take us some time to get them to say so.

Under the circumstances, the negotiations might be prolonged for several years. In the meantime, I fear, our people would grow somewhat impatient for transportation facilities to the Yukon district. And the miners, the poor men, for whom hon. gentlemen opposite expressed such sympathy, if they were waiting for something to eat until we made a treaty with the United States, might be sad and hungry before that treaty was signed. If it had been absolutely necessary to get the privilege of transshipment before we could make use of the road, it would be a different thing. But it is not. I can quote my hon. friend the leader of the Opposition again, who says in his interview—I have not the extract with me, but I quote his statement substantially—that, if the transshipment at Wrangell is not permitted, we can make use of Port Simpson, which will be equally serviceable.

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. No, no; I never said anything of the kind.

The MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR. It is always cheaper to take our goods by large ocean steamboats. When you use a little steamboat, carrying 150 or 200 tons, your transport becomes expensive. I do not pretend that it is equally serviceable to tranship at Port Simpson.

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. My hon. friend did not hear me say that I had never said that Port Simpson was equally available. I never said that. But I did point out—and I made the statement with a view to prevent our being interfered with in the navigation of the Stikine—that, if vexatious exactions were made, we had Port Simpson to fall back upon. But I never said it was equally available, because I knew that there was a portion of the route between Port Simpson and the mouth of the Stikine that was subject to heavy weather, and that occasionally delay might be caused.

The MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR. I accept the hon. gentleman's statement that he did not say it was equally serviceable. He was so reported, but I presume it is a mistake. I desire, however, to point out to the House that while it is not as convenient for us to tranship at Port Simpson, yet we can tranship at Port Simpson and have a good and effective route. I made a careful examination of that subject myself when I was there. Mr. Ogilvie and myself went ashore at Port Simpson and examined the Hudson Bay Company's steamship, the "Caledonia," which was last year navigating the Stikine River, and was then pulled up at Port Simpson. The fact that the "Caledonia" was at Port Simpson proved conclusively that a boat of that quality could cross the intervening waters, because she was there and had so crossed. Inquiry demonstrated the fact that, with the exception of a very few days in the year, it is possible for a river

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boat constructed especially for the navigation of the Stikine River, to cross the waters between Port Simpson and Wrangell. As transhipment can take place at Port Simpson, we will have a Canadian route without any possibility of being interfered with by any regulations that may be made. It has been suggested to me to-day—I merely mention the suggestion for what it may be worth—that it is quite possible to get over the difficulty with regard to breaking bulk, if such a difficulty should be raised, by taking large barges built specially for the navigation of the Stikine, and towing them across from Port Simpson to Wrangell, and then sending them up the river. That might, no doubt, be done, and it might be a method of getting over the difficulty which might arise by reason of the increase in freight. But I mention this for the purpose of showing the House that, beyond the possibility of a doubt, this is an all-Canadian route, and a practicable all-Canadian route. We can make an all-Canadian route throughout, and that is what the Government have endeavoured to achieve. We have not come down here with a proposition that we knew nothing about, but we are prepared to give details, and are prepared to prove that the route is a practicable route, and an all-Canadian route. My hon. friend will excuse me if I justify the remark that I made, which I do not do at all with the object of showing that he is not correct in his statement—I loyally accept his explanation that he did not make the statement—but he was reported in the "Mail and Empire," in a despatch dated at Ottawa, January 27th, as saying :

Sir Charles gives the Government credit for acting with such vigour as it has shown, and asserts that the opening of the Canadian route, strongly urged by him upon both Governments interested is the proper course to pursue. He does not anticipate any trouble with the United States in transferring cargoes from ocean to river boats at Wrangell. If, however, such should happen, Canada has Port Simpson to fall back upon, which will be equally serviceable.

Of course, I accept my hon. friend's declaration that he did not make that statement; I only read it for the purpose of showing that I was not recklessly putting into my hon. friend's mouth a statement which I had not seen.

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

After Recess.

The MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR. I do not intend to weary the House with references to newspaper criticisms of this contract, but I have in my hand a couple of criticisms from a journal which, so far as I have been able to observe, has endeavoured, although adverse to the contract, apparently, to be fair in its criticism—I

refer to the "Evening Journal" of Ottawa. I think the criticisms of that newspaper, although mistaken, have not been intentionally unfair, and therefore I think it reasonable and proper to refer to a couple which I find in the "Journal" of the 18th inst., that is to-day. One reads as follows:—

Mr. Sifton stated in the House of Commons yesterday that the statement that the Rothschilds had offered to build a road by the Dalton trail for 5,000 acres per mile was a newspaper figment. Sir Louis Davies said in the House last Thursday that the Government had been in negotiation with the Rothschilds about a railway. Mr. Sifton's statement therefore, must mean simply that no formal figure was named to the Government by the Rothschild representatives. Messrs. Hamilton Smith and Henry Bratnober, representatives of the Rothschilds, stated in Montreal that their principals "proposed" to build by the Dalton trail for 5,000 acres per mile. Evidently, even if the figure did not reach the Government, it was the figure the Rothschilds were prepared to abide by; and in view of the fact that the Government made a private agreement with other people, ignoring the principle of disposing of public franchises by open competition, Mr. Sifton's statement about what the Government was or was not offered is not weighty as a dismissal of the Rothschild figure.

I wish to say in reference to that article, that no proposal, in writing or verbal, direct or indirect, in any way, shape, form or manner, came to the Government from Messrs. Hamilton, Smith and Henry Bratnober, representing, or assuming to represent, the Rothschilds, for the building of any railway in that country. It is comparatively easy, after other men have deposited a quarter of a million dollars and assumed a responsibility for the expenditure of several million dollars, for other gentlemen to make statements about what their principals would have been prepared to do. These gentlemen, apparently, have been in Canada for some time, but they have not seen, nor so far as I am aware, have they ever even waited upon the Government, nor had themselves introduced to the Government, so far as I know, until after this contract had been signed. I also wish to point out that there is no inconsistency or inaccuracy in the statement made by my hon. friend the Minister of Marine and Fisheries (Sir Louis Davies). As I said, I do not think the "Journal" is desirous of misrepresenting the Government, and therefore I think it is only fair that it should be set right. On page 395 of the "Hansard" my hon. friend the Minister of Marine and Fisheries said, in reference to a statement made by the hon. member for West Toronto (Mr. Clarke) :

The hon. gentleman will permit me to say, as I did not catch the name he mentioned, that the gentleman who does represent the Rothschilds in this country had the question put to him, whether he would make a tender to the Government, and after considering the whole question and examining all the information the Government could place before him, and cabling to his

principals at home, he wrote to the Government that after the fullest consideration he declined to touch it at all.

That is very clear; but that gentleman was not Mr. Hamilton Smith nor Mr. Bratnober; that gentleman was Mr. Kersey. I desire also to say that although in his written proposal, which has been laid before Parliament, he did not state that he represented the Rothschilds, yet he furnished to the Government the names of persons whom he assumed to represent, and amongst those names which he furnished to the Government were the Rothschilds firm, as well as several other leading financial people in Europe. The Government could hardly be expected to imagine that, when a gentleman was here representing the Rothschilds and negotiating with us, somebody else in Montreal, who had not introduced himself, was also representing the Rothschilds. That will dispose of the idea that we had any other or any better offer than the one we have laid before the House.

I was adverting to the question of the Stikine route when you, Mr. Speaker, left the Chair at six o'clock, and I want to say just a word or two, particularly to my friends in the North-west and British Columbia, in relation to the route, the all-Canadian route, to the Yukon country from the North-west, which I presume every patriotic Canadian would be very pleased to see opened up by the construction of a railway. I have seen an intimation that there was opposition to this project in Manitoba, the North-west, and also to a certain extent in some parts of Ontario, which was alleged to exist on the ground that it was not a route all through Canadian territory, but was hostile to or in substitution of a railway by way of the North-west Territories. Now, if my hon. friends will take the map which accompanies Mr. Oglvie's report they will see that one of the strongest points in favour of the Stikine route is that it is the continuation of, the natural complement to a route from the North-west to Peace River and thence to the Yukon; that it is the shortest, the best and in fact the only way of striking that country and getting in there. I am not in a position to speak of this route with absolute definiteness and correctness, because the Government have had no opportunity of obtaining exact and full information in regard to the route on that general line. But we know that the Peace River pierces the mountains, that there is a practical through route that way, and we know it is the only practicable route for many hundreds of miles north of the Yellow Head Pass, and that the Yellow Head Pass would be too far south for the purpose. That at all events is my opinion, and as the matter appears to me at the present moment—from a cursory examination—it would be too far south. Peace River valley will bring us to Halfway River, and from Talchudy Lake we reach

Stikine River and Telegraph Creek and go forward on this line to the navigable waters of Teslin Lake and the Hootalingua River. So we have not only an all-Canadian route, but a complement route from the North-west, and the only possible route we can make use of from that portion of the country. That is a point to which I wish to direct particularly the attention of members from the North-west. I refer to it in this general way, and if hon. members will take the map and study it for themselves, they will see at once that this conclusion is absolutely correct. I shall now speak of the advantages of this route. The Cassiar and Cariboo districts of British Columbia are very rich. They have been retarded in their development only by lack of railway facilities. I was told by a gentleman who is manager of a company now seeking to operate in the Omenica country that there is a great stretch of mineral lands in that district and in Cassiar, and, while there is not the richness of Bonanza Creek, there is sufficient mineral to admit of profitable and successful operations being carried on with suitable mining machinery. With proper transportation and mining facilities this company would carry on extensive works and make a profit on its capital. These districts, I say, have been held back by reason of the lack of transportation facilities. But the railway project now proposed to be undertaken would open up the Cassiar district almost completely, and go far towards satisfying the demand for railway facilities there; it would develop the country north, and, in addition to furnishing the Cassiar district with railway facilities, we would secure the natural complement of the enterprise by extending the railway down to Alice at the head of Observatory Inlet, and to an ocean port. Thus the road would traverse the northern part of British Columbia, opening and developing the rich districts of that province, and afterwards reach and develop the Yukon country, and thus it would develop those communities to which the people of the North-west Territories would be able to send their cattle and horses and in which they would find a market for their agricultural produce.

Mr. PRIOR. In what direction does the hon. Minister say the railway will be continued?

The MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR. It is contemplated to extend it from Telegraph Creek down to Alice Inlet, at the extension of Observatory Inlet, which will be seen marked on the map. The distance is about 200 miles; and although we have no engineer's report on that territory, we have made pretty careful inquiries from Hudson Bay officers and others who have special knowledge regarding it, and we are assured that without doubt it is a practicable route for a road between those two points.

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I have adverted to this matter in connection with the enterprise in order that members of the House, from the west particularly, may see that in considering this matter we have not lost sight of their interests. Members from Manitoba and the Northwest know very well and thoroughly understand that in any project of this kind I at least will be most sedulous in looking after the interests of Manitoba and the Northwest, the fertile districts of which I hope to see settled by a very much larger population than is there at the present time and affording a much larger and more profitable market for the merchants and manufacturers of the east.

This, therefore, is the scheme we have laid before the House for its approval. In addition to possessing these advantages, it is in every sense the only available and practicable route at the present time to meet the absolute necessities of the occasion; and I leave the subject with this statement as to the project, that when this railway has been completed it will be practically the only route that will carry the ordinary commerce connected with the Yukon country. The St. Michael's route can never do anything more than a small transportation business; the routes by Dyea and Skagway are impracticable—they are practicable only until the railway is built. The result of carrying out the proposed project will be that an immense volume of trade, which we hope to see going into that country, will be forced over the Stikine route, and instead of the thousands of miners, whom we are told by the New York "Herald" are arriving daily at Seattle, preparing to go north by American steamboats and by American routes, they will find themselves forced in their own interest to come to Victoria, Vancouver and other points in British Columbia, and there obtain their goods and outfits, take their passage on Canadian boats and travel by Canadian channels up to the Yukon district. This will be the result, we hope, and I see no reason to doubt that the hope is well founded in view of the policy we have submitted to the House. At the risk of being wearisome I will read some clauses from the contract, especially with the view of converting members of the Opposition. I have myself found, from this short experience I had in legislation before I came to this House, that it is a very common thing for even careful and systematic and intelligent members of the House, in the rush of business, not to give a very careful and thorough reading to Bills which come before Parliament. Therefore, so as to avoid any misconceptions, I shall take the liberty of reading the terms of this contract; and it will only take me a few minutes. It says:

1. The contractors covenant with the Government to lay out, construct, equip, and fully com-

plete a line of railway with proper terminal facilities from the navigable waters of the Stikine River in British Columbia, at or near the mouth of Telegraph Creek, Glenora, or the mouth of Clear Water River, thence running northward to the navigable waters of Teslin Lake, a distance of about one hundred and fifty miles, more or less, on or before the first day of September, A.D. 1898, the said railway when fully completed to be of the general standard and gauge of the Kaslo and Slocan Railway in British Columbia and according to the specifications to be approved by the Minister of Railways.

Provided also, that the said railway shall be the property of the contractors but shall be subject to inspection and approval by an engineer to be named by the Minister of Railways and Canals before being accepted as complete by the Government.

Provided further, that for the purposes of the season of 1898 and of complying with the requirements of this contract in respect to the completion of the line on or before the said first of September, it shall be sufficient if, on or before that date, the contractors have the rails laid in such a manner as will permit of regular and efficient operation of the railway, although the whole work be not fully completed, and if the said railway be sufficiently equipped for such operation. Provided also, that the location of said railway between the points mentioned shall be such as the contractors may decide upon without filing plans thereof prior to completion, provided that the grant of land hereby contracted for shall not be made upon a larger mileage than the Minister of Railways considers reasonably necessary for traversing the distance between the terminal points.

2. The Government shall submit to Parliament at its next ensuing session a measure for the necessary Act confirming this agreement and authorizing the Government and the contractors to perform and carry out the same, also incorporating the contractors and such others as may become shareholders into a company under the name of the Canadian Yukon Railway Company or other name approved by the contractors (herein after referred to as the contractors' company) with power to acquire and perform and carry out this agreement, and with all necessary provisions in that behalf, and with all necessary powers to build and operate a railway above mentioned and an extension thereof northward to Dawson City or thereabouts and an extension southward to a point in British Columbia to be designated by the Government and capable of being made an ocean port, also a line of railway from the waters of Lynn Canal to Port Selkirk or thereabouts by way of Chilkat Pass, also branch lines of railway from any points on the company's railways to any property owned by the company, also lines of railway from any navigable waters to any property owned by the company: Provided that the power to build said lines from Lynn Canal to Port Selkirk and said branch lines and said lines from navigable waters shall not be exercised without the consent of the Governor General in Council.

I am reading this to show that a lot of things which have been imputed to this contract, are not in it at all, that they are not contemplated by the contract, and that they never were contemplated by the Government. The House will at once see that this clause which provides for these extensions, does not at all contemplate that any bonus should be given for them. They are

mere charter powers for the construction of a line of railway which any company might get on application to Parliament in the usual way, and they do not contemplate any additions to the bonus or assessments given by the Government. It is stipulated further, that the power hereinafter provided for can only be exercised upon the authority of the Governor General in Council being given. The contract continues, to say :

The said Act of incorporation also to give the company full and sufficient powers to build and otherwise acquire and operate docks, wharfs and lines of steam and other vessels in connection with its railways and property, also telegraph and telephone lines, also to carry on mining and smelting operations and such other powers as may be necessary for the due operating and conduct of all business connected with and incidental to the development and working of the lands (to be granted by the Government as hereinafter provided) and the minerals therein, including power to issue land grant bonds and bonds secured by the company's undertakings.

3. Upon the incorporation of said company and upon the assignment by the contractors to such company of this agreement and upon the said company covenanting with the Government to carry out the same, and upon the said railway from Stikine River to Teslin Lake being completed and accepted as aforesaid, the contractors shall then but not before be relieved from personal responsibility hereunder and the company shall be thereafter deemed to be the parties of the second part hereto in lieu of the contractors and shall be bound as such, and be entitled to their rights hereunder.

I wish to call the attention of Parliament to this fact, that for the first time, so far as I am aware, in the railway history of this Dominion, the Government has, in making this contract, secured not only the liability of the company, which may be worth absolutely nothing, but the personal liability of the men themselves who are going into the work, and in this particular case the personal liability amounts to a very large sum. In addition to that, of course, there is the \$250,000 deposit, which, I think, also is a departure in the railway history of Canada. The contract continues :

4. For five years from the first of September, 1898, no line of railway shall be authorized by Parliament to be constructed—

This, of course, is subject to the ratification of Parliament, the Government making the agreement to be binding if Parliament ratifies it.

4. For five years from the first of September, 1898, no line of railway shall be authorized by Parliament to be constructed from Lynn Canal or thereabouts or from any point at or near the international boundary between Canada and Alaska into the Yukon district, and for five years from said date no aid in land or money shall be granted to any person or company other than the contractors and the contractors' company to assist in building any such railway.

The House will see that this clause does not say that any aid in land or money shall be granted to the contractors or the con-

tractors' company ; but it says that nobody else shall be permitted to build there. Now, the reading of that clause will at once dissipate the idea that there has been any monopoly granted to this company. There is no monopoly whatever. This company gets a charter to build from the Stikine River to Teslin Lake. There is no monopoly in that charter. The Legislature of British Columbia can give another charter tomorrow, or this House could give another charter. We do not bind ourselves not to give another charter ; we do not say anything about it, and, by the way, there is another charter in existence at the present time, namely, the Cassiar Central. This latter charter does not specifically name this route, but it is wide enough, as any lawyer in this House who reads the charter will agree with me, to justify any one else taking that charter, and going on, and building over the same route. There is nothing in this clause which, by any possible stretch of imagination, can be called a monopoly. As I have said, other people can get charters, and there is actually another charter in existence at this present moment. But what we do say is this : We say that nature or bad management has given somebody else the advantage over us by putting the ocean a little nearer to their territory than to ours, and that this Parliament is not going to help out that discrimination against Canadian trade and Canadian enterprise by granting another charter. We submit that to Parliament as a view which we think the representatives of the Canadian people should see proper to endorse. The contract continues to say :

5. The contractors and the contractors' company shall be entitled to receive in preference to any other person or company during ten years from the said first of September, 1898, such aid or assistance in land or money as the Government may be authorized and may see fit to grant in aid of a line of railway from the Stikine River to an ocean port in British Columbia, provided that the contractors or contractors' company are willing to undertake the construction of the same at once upon completion thereof within a reasonable time period.

The meaning of that is this—not that anybody else is prohibited from building a line of railway there ; nor that we will not give a charter to anybody else ; but that, if the Government decides that it is in the interest of Canada to have a railway built from Telegraph Creek to Observatory Inlet, and is willing to give so much land and so much money to assist in the construction of that road within ten years, we shall give this company the first chance to build it. That is what that means, and that is all it means, and the consent of Parliament would, of course, be necessary before we could give assistance to this company or to any other. But the point I wish to make is that it does not prohibit anybody else. All it says is that these people, hav-

t says that nobody build there. Now, we will at once dis- ere has been any company. There . This company from the Stikine re is no monopoly slature of British er charter to-mor- ive another char- elves not to give ot say anything here is another e present time, al. This latter, name this route, y lawyer in this arter will agree else taking that d building over nothing in this le stretch of im- onopoly. As I n get charters, r charter in ex- ent. But what that nature or somebody else tting the ocean y than to ours, y not going to -against Cana- enterprise by e submit that hich we think an-ilian people he contract

tractors' com- in preference to ring ten years 1898, such aid the Government to grant in aid ne River to an e provided that the are willing to same at once asonable time the Govern-

ot that any- lding a line ill not give that, if the in the in- llway built atory Inlet, e land and onstruction we shall ce to build and that is Parliament before we upany or wish to anybody ple, hav-

ing gone in as pioneers and built the first railway and opened up the trade, if there is to be an extension of the railway to the south, they are to have the first chance to go on and build it. Now, I submit to the House that if this clause were not in the contract at all, and if two years from to-day it were proposed by the Government of Canada to have a railway built from the Stikine River down to Observatory Inlet, and another company came here and asked for assistance for that purpose, and this company came for the same purpose, this House would not wait half a minute to decide to which company to give it. This House would at once decide to give it to the company which was on the ground and in operation. What possible sense would there be in having one company with a railway extending for 150 miles and another company with a railway extending for another 150 miles? Such a proposition would not be considered by this House as a reasonable business proposition.

6. The tolls to be collected by the contractors or contractors' company upon the line of railway hereby contracted for between Stikine River and Teslin Lake shall be first fixed by the Governor General in Council, and the tolls so fixed shall not be liable to reduction until the said railway has been in operation for four years, but such tolls shall be reduced by the Governor in Council by twenty-five per cent from and after such four years, and after the said railway has been in operation seven years they shall be reduced by twenty-five per cent off the tolls previously reduced, but after the said railway has been ten years in operation the tolls shall be subject to the general railway laws of Canada in that behalf.

A great deal of fault has been found because we did not come down to Parliament and state what the rates would be. I called the attention of the House and my hon. friend the leader of the Opposition this afternoon to the fact that such a thing never was heard of before—that in all the railway legislation of Canada, so far as I know, no Act of Parliament ever fixed the rates of any railway, and no Government ever stated in advance what the rates of any railway would be. It is time enough to fix the rates when the railway is prepared to go into operation. The law of Canada is that no railway company can fix its rates until they are first approved of by the Governor in Council; and this is precisely the law in regard to this company, except that it provides for an automatic reduction of the rates after the first tariff shall have been fixed. I am quite free to say that, although I do not anticipate that any member of the Government would think of authorizing such a wild tariff as was suggested by the hon. member for West York (Mr. Wallace) the other night, yet the rates upon this railway will be higher, considerably higher, much higher, than the rates upon an ordinary railway

in a settled country. The chances which people take in building a railway into mining country, of their property and the trade being destroyed owing to the mining district becoming exhausted, must be taken into consideration in a case of this kind, and I would not for one instant lead the House to suppose that the rates the Government would authorize would be no higher than those on an ordinary railway in a settled country; but I do not think they will go anywhere near the figures of the hon. member for West York.

7. The land granted to the contractors or contractors' company hereunder shall be free from taxation for ten years from the granting thereof except municipal taxation by an incorporated city, town or village within the Yukon provisional district.

I think the exception in this case is as great as the exemption. I think municipal taxation outside of incorporated towns or cities is not likely to materialize in ten years, so that the exemption amounts practically to nothing.

8. The contractors shall immediately construct a practicable sleigh road from the mouth of Stikine River to Teslin Lake, and shall provide suitable shelters or stopping places for travellers at intervals of not more than twenty-five miles along such road, such road and stopping places to be available for use at the earliest possible moment, and in any event not later than six weeks from the execution of this agreement.

9. The contractors or the contractors' company shall provide or arrange with others to provide steamboat transport of freight and passengers between the terminus of said railway on Teslin Lake or other terminus northerly thereof and Dawson City to and fro.

The next clause refers to the deposit of \$250,000, which I need not read, and I need say no more in regard to it than that the deposit is in the hands of the Government.

11. In aid of the construction of said line of railway from Stikine River to Teslin Lake the Government shall grant to the contractors for each mile of said railway twenty-five thousand acres of land to be selected as hereinafter mentioned from the Yukon provisional district and from that part of the North-west Territories of Canada lying west of the Mackenzie River and Liard River and north of the 60th parallel of latitude, such land to be and become vested in the contractors upon the said railway being completed and accepted as complete by the Government, and upon the said land being selected as hereinafter set forth.

Mr. HAGGART. Will the penalties apply to clauses 8 and 9, or has the hon. gentleman any idea whether clause 8 will be complied with or not?

The MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR. The \$250,000 deposit refers only to the construction of the railway. It does not apply to the construction of the sleigh road. But for that we have the covenant of the contractors, which, as the hon. gentleman is perfectly aware, is just as good as the deposit.

12. The lands shall be selected by the contractors along base lines, and the base lines may be of two kinds :

1st. The contractors may take as a base line a line which will correspond with the general course of any lake, river, stream or watercourse, such line to be determined by survey or approximate survey to the satisfaction of the authorized agent of the Minister of the Interior, and to follow the general course of the lake, river, stream or watercourse for the required distance ; and

2nd. The contractors may take as a base line a line commencing at any point located by them and running from such point due north, east, south or west. The land along a base line shall be divided into blocks, each block to extend three miles along the base line and to extend three miles backwards on each side of the base line. On each base line there shall be at least eight of such blocks, but there may be more at the option of the contractors. These blocks shall be numbered from one up consecutively ; the odd-numbered blocks shall be the property of the contractors ; the even-numbered shall remain the property of the Government. The contractors shall take at least four blocks on each base-line established by them for the purpose of selection, but shall not be bound to take more—but they may take as many more as they desire and as circumstances permit. Thus upon each base line so established there shall be laid out a tract not less than twenty-four miles along the course of said base line by three miles on each side thereof in width, making eight blocks of three miles by six miles. Provided that if in the selections of lands along any base line the courses thereof prevent rectangular blocks being laid out, such blocks shall be adjusted to the required angles, preserving as far as practicable blocks of an area of three miles by six. Any shortage or surplus of such area shall be adjusted by the prolongation or shortening of such base line.

The contractors may also at their option select additional blocks lying on either end of any odd-numbered block along a base line, but such additional blocks must be three miles square each and they shall not exceed three in number on each end of each such odd-numbered block.

Some hon. MEMBERS. Hear, hear.

The MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR. I shall refer to that later.

13. The contractors shall make selection of one-half of the lands to which they become entitled under this contract within three years from the first day of September, 1898, and of the remainder within six years from that date.

14. No portion of the beds of the rivers Yukon, Lewes or Hootalinqua, or of the lakes Teslin, Bennett, Tagish, Labarge or Marsh (said lakes and rivers forming continuous watercourses), or of the banks thereof for twenty-five feet on each side of the ordinary high-water mark shall pass to the contractors under any selection of lands made under the agreement.

I may say that that clause is one which was discussed a long time between the contractors and the Government, and the contractors thought they were being unfairly treated in not being allowed free selection along these rivers, because it is well known—contrary to the statements made in this House—that there are very profitable deposits, especially along the Hootalinqua,

which might be immediately made available.

15. The free rights of passage and use along navigable or floatable streams within the lands selected by the contractors shall not be impeded by them, and if any stream be diverted by them from its natural channel an equally convenient navigable or floatable channel shall be provided in lieu, and the Gold Commissioner of the district shall decide any dispute which may arise as to whether such equally convenient channel has been provided, and from his decision there shall be an appeal to the Governor General in Council.

16. Any and all mining claims actually held and recorded pursuant to Government regulations by a free miner or free miners, and being within a block of land taken or selected by the contractors hereunder, shall be excepted from the grant and shall not pass to the contractors, provided that such claims have been so actually held and recorded prior to the base line, along or with reference to which such block is taken, being actually run and marked on the ground by the contractors.

17. There shall be payable to and reserved by the Government a royalty of one per cent upon all gold mined by placer or alluvial or hydraulic mining upon the lands selected hereunder, and if and so long as any royalty up to one per cent is levied by the Government upon all gold got by quartz mining in Government land in the Yukon district a royalty of an equal amount up to one per cent, but no more shall be payable to and reserved by the Government upon all gold got by quartz mining in the land selected hereunder.

18. So soon as any ten continuous miles of said railway between Stikine River and Teslin Lake have been completed and in running order, and certified so to be by an officer named by the Minister of Railways in that behalf, the contractors may select ninety-two thousand one hundred and sixty acres, or two blocks of land hereunder, and thereupon such blocks shall be reserved by the Government from sale or location or free miners' claims, and upon the completion from time to time in a similar way of any other ten miles, the contractors shall have a similar right to select ninety-two thousand one hundred and sixty acres, or two blocks, which shall thereupon be similarly reserved, and upon the completion of the said railway and acceptance thereof by the Government as completed, the blocks so reserved shall be granted to the contractors. All free miners' claims being excepted, as provided by clause 16 hereof.

19. In case any land is excepted out of blocks taken by contractors on account of free miners' claims or otherwise, the quantity so excepted shall not be counted in the acreage of lands to which the contractors are entitled hereunder.

20. The contractors shall upon application sell to actual settlers for farming purposes, at prices to be fixed by the Governor General in Council, any arable lands forming part of those selected hereunder. Provided, however, that upon such sale all minerals and the right to mine same shall be reserved, and this clause shall not extend to lands suitable for village or town sites.

That clause was specially put in because there are a few places where men occupy small tracts of land, which might not perhaps be designated as farm but as grazing lands, and in such cases would be entitled to have their land at reasonable prices.

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21. So soon as the contractors notify the Minister of Railways and Canals to send an engineer to inspect and approve of any ten miles of the line of railway hereby contracted for, such engineer shall be sent without delay to make such inspection, and shall thereafter remain ready to inspect such each ten miles until the whole line is completed.

22. The grants of lands selected by the contractors hereunder shall be in fee simple, and shall include all precious metals and all minerals whatever, reserving only the royalties above provided for.

23. Provision shall be made in the Act incorporating the contractors' company against any discrimination by such company in operating its railways between customers, whether by discriminating rates or treatment or otherwise, or by means of its steamships or other connections or otherwise.

That clause was inserted in order that the company may not unfairly discriminate against any steamboat or transportation company and drive it off the route. The next clause relates to the use of water for hydraulic and placer mining.

What I desire to call the attention of the House particularly to with reference to this contract—which I have perhaps read at wearisome length—is this, that, in the first place, there is no monopoly of any kind whatever. In the next place, these people put up their \$250,000 to build a railway by the 1st of next September, and I venture to say there is not another man in Canada who would contract to build it by that time. If there is, I never heard of him. I did not even hear, in the midst of all the remarkably rash assertions which we have had from the other side of the House, it insinuated that there is in Canada to-day one single man who is prepared to put his money into a contract to build that road by the 1st of September. If there is, we have had no intimation of it. They have said almost everything that could be said on the other side, but they have not intimated that any man would undertake that work and carry it out on the terms proposed.

Mr. OSLER. What forfeiture is there other than that if the road is not built by that day—

The MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR. There is a forfeiture of \$250,000 now in the hands of the Finance Minister, and there is the personal responsibility of Mackenzie & Maun, under a signed contract, which renders them liable to the full extent of their means, whatever these may be.

Mr. OSLER. Suppose they do not build the road by that day?

The MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR. They lose the \$250,000 and are liable to damage.

Mr. OSLER. They do not forfeit their charter if they only build the road within a year from next September.

The MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR. They pay damages.

Sir CHARLES HIBBERT TUPPER. What damages?

The MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR. That would be decided in the ordinary way in which damages are decided. We make a contract, but we cannot be at the same time court and jury to decide upon the breach of a contract that may or may not take place. The hon. gentlemen need not get restless. The fact is this, that notwithstanding all the criticism that has been made, the vital point of this contract, which is that it provides for a railway by the 1st of September, has not been met in any shape or form. There has not been any information that any man in Canada would sign that contract to-day if it were offered to him. Least of all, I think, would my hon. friend from West Toronto (Mr. Osler) risk his good money in the scheme.

Sir CHARLES HIBBERT TUPPER. Will the hon. gentleman allow me—

The MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR. I would prefer that my hon. friend would not interrupt me.

Sir CHARLES HIBBERT TUPPER. Certainly then I shall not.

The MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR. These hon. gentlemen are not asking anything germane to the point. There are lots of lawyers to give an opinion as to what the contract means. I take it to be pretty clear. What I further desire to say is that having made that deposit, having entered into that obligation, my judgment is that that obligation means, under the extraordinary circumstances existing, an expenditure probably in the neighbourhood of \$4,000,000. Having taken that risk, these gentlemen have no right to locate a single acre of land until they have ten miles of that railway in operation. It is inconceivable that they should have ten miles in operation before the 15th of June; and, from now until then, any portion of that country can be taken up by any of the thousands of people who are going in. If it is easy to find Bonanzas and Eldorados, as the hon. leader of the Opposition (Sir Charles Tupper) seems to think, if it is only a question of getting up to the Yukon district and walking right in and finding beds of gold, why do not some of our hon. friends do it? There is nothing to prevent them. My hon. friend, the leader of the Opposition, is the president of a company which, I see he has said in an address delivered by him in London, has secured a capital of £70,000 sterling for doing work. If it is an easy thing and a sure thing—if anybody who can command capital has only to send prospectors to that country to plant their stakes on Bonanzas and Eldorados, why does not my hon. friend do it? He has the capital and has been working for several months in connection with this matter already. We all know that when a man talks that way about a

mining country, he is talking utter nonsense. We know that in the aggregate it takes more money to find and take out gold than the gold amounts to after it is taken out.

The total amount of money spent in taking gold out of placer-mining regions throughout the world, so far as known, is far in excess of what has been taken out. My hon. friend (Sir Charles Tupper) said that himself in the course of his speech. He possibly made the statement inadvertently. Far from this company having any outrageous advantages given to it, it is taking the whole responsibility, putting up the money, risking its millions, as well as its \$250,000 deposit, and risking all this upon a land grant—and the whole world has practically months to go through and take up claims before the contractors will make their selection. I need not say that this point was strongly contested by the contractors, that they protested bitterly against being put in that position, and it was only after long and wearisome negotiations that the Government got them to agree to this provision of the agreement; and then, finally, only by inserting the clause providing that they might make some selection after they had ten miles of the railway in operation. After they have ten miles in operation, they can take two blocks, that is, they can place claims in not more than two localities. After they have ten miles more in operation, they can take two blocks more, and so on. And, while this is going on, the two hundred and fifty thousand people who, we are told, are coming from all over the world into that country, are spreading over that vast territory, prospecting and picking out their claims beforehand and taking everything that is considered by them of much value. I cannot conceive of anything more perfectly clear than that the advantage in this contract is practically on the side of the Government. For my part, if I had any money—which Providence has never blessed me with so far—I would not care to risk it in a transaction of that kind. Now, I have just called attention to this method of selection in order that the House will see how utterly false the propositions are which are being advanced by the other side of the House, based upon some of the paper calculations which do not find any justification within the four corners of the contract.

I want to refer for a minute or two to some statements made on the subject of the standard of this railway. My hon. friend the Minister of Railways (Mr. Haggart) is going to follow me, I believe. I want to give him some things to start his remarks on. On page 224 of the "Hansard" he delivered himself upon this contract in words which I shall quote. He said:

I know the standard of the Kaslo-Slocan Railway—

I do not think he does.

—as well as the hon. gentleman does. It is a road built among mountains, twisting around a

hill with a curvature perhaps fifty times greater than anything that will be necessary on this road.

I am reading just to show how utterly reckless are the criticisms of this contract; and to expose the fact that, even a gentleman whom we have respected as a practical man of business, who was at the head of the Railway Department, and who, one would think, should speak with some degree of caution about a matter of business, especially an important matter of business, did not take the trouble of gaining the slightest bit of information on the subject he was talking about.

We know nothing about this road—

We don't? If the hon. gentleman had read the report of the department he presided over, he would have found out a good deal about this road. It is all there. The hon. gentleman's name is not appended to that report, but it is the report for the year during which he was Minister of Railways, and the slight accident of the change of Government at the end of the year is the only reason why his name does not appear there.

—for they have not the report of the engineer, which, I suppose, the hon. gentleman will lay on the Table of the House before another stage of this Bill is taken. The standard of the road, he says, is to be that of the Kaslo and Slocan Railway. What kind of a road is that? A narrow gauge road, with rails, twenty-seven or thirty pounds to the yard.

That is not the case. In the report of the department for the last year during which he presided over it, he will find it stated that the weight of the rails is forty-five pounds to the yard, and not twenty-seven or thirty pounds, as he says. Again, he says:

At any rate, the road—

That is this road (the Yukon road).

—is only going to be a temporary road, as the hon. leader of the Government stated the other evening—a narrow gauge road built upon any gradients and with any curvature the contractors may think fit, as long as it comes within the specifications of that mountain road built by the Canadian Pacific Railway from Kaslo to Slocan.

The road was not built by the Canadian Pacific Railway, and the hon. gentleman was reminded of this by the ex-Minister of Finance (Mr. Foster). The hon. gentleman (Mr. Haggart) continued:

It was an independent road, but it was afterwards obtained by the Canadian Pacific Railway Company.

It was not obtained by the Canadian Pacific Railway Company. Even that casual observation was not correct. The Canadian Pacific Railway Company did not obtain it or control it; that company never had anything to do with the road, and has not now. For the hon. gentleman's information, I may say that it was the Great Northern Railway.

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Company that had to do with the construc-
 tion of that road, although it was built and
 is now being operated, and has always been
 operated, by an independent company. The
 hon. gentleman goes on :

But perhaps I am mistaken on that point. I
 did not know who the possessor of the road was
 but I have been over it and I know what its char-
 acter is.

Then, why did he not tell us? He told us
 the very reverse of its character. Now, I
 will give the standard of the Kaslo and
 Slokan: Length of line, 31.8 miles; weight
 of steel rails, 45 pounds; radius of sharp-
 est curve, 193 feet; number of feet per
 mile, heaviest grade, 171.6. I am reading
 this to obviate the necessity of the hon. gen-
 tleman reading the report of the depart-
 ment he presided over. Such an unaccus-
 tomed labour it would be unfair to exact
 from him. If any hon. gentleman will figure
 this out, he will find that this grade is a
 trifle over 3 per cent. And, of course, the
 heaviest grade on the road we are propos-
 ing to have constructed in this district can-
 not be heavier. The cost of this tramway,
 as the hon. gentleman calls it, was \$22,800
 a mile. This is a rather unpleasant comment-
 ary on the statements of hon. gentlemen
 opposite who talk of its costing \$22,800 a
 mile to build a tramway. That was in a
 part of British Columbia, where the cost of
 building a railway—

Mr. PRIOR. If you had ever been out
 on that line you would find it a very differ-
 ent country.

The MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR.
 I have been over it, and over this tram-
 way. I rode over it thirty-one miles in
 less than an hour, and any one who knows
 anything about a railway knows that you
 cannot run thirty-one miles an hour over a
 tramway. It is a railroad, and it is a good
 railroad, too.

Mr. LANDERKIN. It is through the
 best timber in the world.

The MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR.
 It goes through a magnificently timbered
 belt, and is a difficult country in which to
 build a railroad, but not an extraordinarily
 difficult country, not anything like as ex-
 pensive a country, taking all things into
 consideration, as the country from the Stikine
 River to Teslin Lake. There is per-
 haps more expense of a certain kind, that
 is to say, there may be a little more rock
 cutting; but I venture to state that there is
 no part of the road from the Stikine River
 to Teslin Lake which will be built for
 \$22,800 a mile. Now, my hon. friend the
 ex-Minister of Railways (Mr. Haggart)
 does know all about the standard of
 the Kaslo and Slokan Railway. That is
 the standard of the road which we are
 going to build.

I want to speak to the House a moment in
 regard to the question of the weight of the

rails. The weight of the rails upon this rail-
 way, before it can be accepted by the Govern-
 ment and before the company can get a title
 to an acre of land, must be forty-five pounds,
 according to the standard. It is yet un-
 settled between the company and the Govern-
 ment as to whether forty-five pound rails
 should be laid upon the road this coming
 summer. If it is shown to the Govern-
 ment to be physically impossible to get
 in forty-five pound rails by the river, or
 enough of them, then we propose to let
 the company put down twenty-eight pound
 rails temporarily until they can get forty-
 five pound rails up the river, allowing traf-
 fic to go on in the meantime. That is the
 only advantage given to the contractors in
 the way of enabling them to get the road
 into operation by the 1st of September. It
 is not an advantage financially on the
 total operation, because anybody can see
 it would be much better for them to put
 forty-five pound rails in at once than to
 put down twenty-eight pound rails, and
 then have to take them up and substitute
 heavier ones.

Now, just one word about the other
 propositions that were made to the Govern-
 ment. When I opened my remarks
 this evening I think I made it clear that
 there were no other offers made to the
 Government than those which had been
 laid upon the Table of the House. The
 House is in full possession of everything
 that the Government is in possession of
 with respect to this matter, and I appre-
 hend that the members of the House have
 familiarized themselves fairly well with the
 contents of these documents. I will not
 weary the House, therefore, with read-
 ing them at length. The last two letters
 are those to which I desire to call the at-
 tention of the House. The only gentle-
 man whom we know as the representative
 of the Rothschilds is Mr. H. Maitland Ker-
 sey, lately agent of the White Star Steam-
 ship Line in the City of New York, and
 now engaged in financing a company for
 the purpose of putting steamboats upon
 the Yukon route between various points
 which I have spoken of to-night at length.
 As the papers upon the Table of the House
 will show, Mr. Kersey first made a propo-
 sition a considerable time ago for the con-
 struction of a railway from the Stikine
 River to Teslin Lake, in which he asked
 for a bonus of \$6,000 a mile. The time,
 the 1st of September, of course, was not
 mentioned at all, and I need not say that
 Mr. Kersey had no intention whatever of
 even suggesting that he could build a road
 by that time in the proposal which he laid
 before us. It was intimated to him that
 the Government would not give a cash
 bonus for this railway at all, and that dis-
 cussion on that question might therefore be
 dispensed with. Mr. Kersey came back,
 after having made full financial arrange-
 ments in London, and on the 21st of Janu-

ary he asked for an interview with me. I saw him in the presence of my hon. friend the Minister of Militia, and my hon. friend the member for Quebec West (Mr. Dobell). These gentlemen were both acquainted with Mr. Kersey, and I met him in company with them. I informed him that we were prepared to give a liberal amount of land. Mr. Kersey knew that 20,000 or 25,000 acres of land per mile was under discussion; and I informed him that we were prepared to give a liberal amount of land aggregating something in that neighbourhood; that we wanted the road in operation, if not finally completed, by the 1st of September; and that we wanted \$250,000 in cash deposited as a guarantee that the work should be accomplished. He placed in my hands, on the morning of the 22nd of January, this letter:

Ottawa, 22nd January, 1898.

Dear Mr. Sifton.—With reference to our conversation of last evening, I communicated fully by cable last night both to Devonshire House and Chatsworth the ideas of the Government as I understand them with regard to the construction of a railway between Glenora and Teslin. Saturday, as you are aware, is a difficult day to transact business in London, but as I had already prepared my friends for the message which was sent last night, I have every hope of receiving an answer at any moment, and that I shall be able to lay before you a definite and favourable proposition for the construction of the work within a few hours.

I may say that Mr. Kersey, before going to England, had put in the proposition for the construction of this railway. It was no new thing with him, he was not taken unawares, he knew all about it, and had discussed it fully with his principals in London:

I advised London that the Government requested a definite decision to-day, but that in any event they would not wait after Monday. I should, therefore, be in the position to either make you a definite offer not later than Monday or to withdraw entirely in favour of other applicants. I am now having the proposal drafted on the lines of my cable so as to save every possible moment. As I advised you yesterday, we have a fleet of boats building on the coast, including two steamers and numerous small boats on Teslin Lake itself, the engines and boilers for these boats and a saw-mill being sent in over the snow, and I have further a full equipment of men, sleighs, &c., under an experienced man who knows the trail, waiting in Victoria at the present moment for news to come of the taking of the ice on the Stikine River, in order that they may proceed to open up the trail.

I understand that we should have to guarantee the construction of the road by the 1st of September, putting up a deposit, and I have so advised London.

Thanking you for your courteous attention, I am, yours faithfully,

H. MAITLAND KERSEY.

Next I have a letter dated January 23rd, 1898. I think January 23rd was Sunday, but this letter probably reached my hands on Monday morning.

Sir,—With reference to the offer which I made to you on behalf of my syndicate in early December, and to the conversation which I had the pleasure of having with you on Friday last, in relation to the construction of a wagon road and railway from Glenora to Teslin Lake, I have to advise you, after consultation with London, that we deem it inadvisable to make a further offer to the Government which would of necessity involve a guarantee of the completion of the line by the 1st of September next, and which offer would have to be based on a land grant, unaccompanied by any cash subsidy.

I have to thank you for so kindly postponing action to enable me to communicate with my friends in England, and have the honour to remain,

Your obedient servant,

H. MAITLAND KERSEY.

I think that pretty well disposes of the figment that we had better offers lying around which we could have accepted, or that anybody was willing to make a better offer than that which was made to us. Now, Mr. Speaker, I am sorry that my hon. friend the ex-Minister of Finance (Mr. Foster) is not in his place, because I expect that the hon. gentleman will favour us with an eloquent denunciation of this contract before the discussion is through. But we have the advantage, the very great advantage, of our enemy having written a book, or rather a letter to the newspapers, and I will trouble the House with a short discussion of some of the views of a gentleman who signs himself "Onlooker." The hon. member for East York knows who "Onlooker" is, and I am justified by what took place in this House a few evenings ago in concluding that although the hand is the hand of "Onlooker," the voice is the voice of the hon. member for York. There are two or three things in connection with the hon. gentleman's criticisms of this contract which indicate that even the hon. gentleman's facility in not accurately stating facts has been somewhat outdone in this particular effort. I must say to the hon. gentleman that out in the wild and woolly west from which I come, it is not considered very good form for a leading statesman to anticipate discussion by Parliament of an important question by abusing his political opponents in a newspaper. Of course if the hon. gentleman thinks otherwise, he can exercise his privilege. I will now refer to "Onlooker's" letter in the "Citizen," of January 29.

Mr. LANDERKIN. They have had a great deal of experience with anonymous letters.

THE MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR. Yes, my hon. friend is correct. The great Conservative party is rich in such experience. I take it that this view presented in the "Citizen" is the view of that combination which is now the Conservative party in this House—that is to say it will be the official view. We had the view of the leader of the Opposition, his private view when he

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was first interviewed, and it was favourable to this contract in all its details, and it can scarcely be supposed that he seriously attempts to get out of that position; he practically approved of the contract, but the hon. members for East York, York and West York have been too much for the hon. gentleman and he had to change his view. I presume this statement by "Onlooker" will go down to history as the attitude of the Conservative party on this question, and that is the reason why I want to discuss it. I will not read the whole of the article, for if I did so I am afraid the House would never forgive me. The hon. gentleman in a certain part of his letter, in the fourth column, makes a statement—and if the hon. gentleman is going to indulge in literary efforts he must make his contributions shorter; for, although he can make members sit here and listen to him for three or four hours at a time, he cannot make people read lengthy articles in newspapers. Referring to the profits to be derived from the road, the hon. gentleman wrote:

Vary this calculation as you may, cut it down or increase the estimate, and it shows you that no more paying franchise could be obtained than the bare privilege of building and operating this road.

I am not going to criticise these observations at length, but I am going to show how entirely absurd is the position taken in this article, which will, I presume, be the position of the Opposition. The statement is made, it has been made in this House, and has been argued that it is a great privilege to allow the contractors to build the railway on account of the enormous profits. There is a provincial charter in existence at the present time, held by the Cassiar Central Company, for the building of a line of railway over this route. It contains a provision for a land grant, a lease of lands with mineral rights, to the extent of 10,240 acres per mile in the Cassiar district, subject to certain conditions. The provisions are not so favourable to the Cassiar Central Company as are these proposed by this Government, and therefore that company has not been able to get any money to build the road. If we made the same conditions we would not have our railway built. So we have a railway charter in existence covering the same territory as that by our projected railway and the company has the liberal concession of 10,240 acres of land per mile under lease for thirty-five years, which is practically a deed as regards the mineral rights. That grant is subject to certain conditions in respect to payment of royalties; but I need not go into that point fully. If hon. members will look at the charter in the British Columbia statutes they will see the conditions set out, and that there is a liberal concession given to the company for building the road. The gentlemen composing the company have been in England for a year and have not been able to secure, so

far as my knowledge goes, one dollar, and certainly they have not been able to build a single foot of the road. The proof of the pudding is in the eating; and if the charter is there, not only a charter but a large and liberal concession, and nobody of men can be got to build the railway, in the name of common sense what is the use of making a statement of that kind and sending it all over Canada? Is there to be no sense in statements made by public men? Here is an hon. gentleman who, for years and years, has been a member of the House, who has been Finance Minister, who has occupied the responsible position of leader of the House, and who in an anonymous letter, in an article not even over his own name, has made a statement which he knows and which every man knows to be absolutely and entirely false. Is there any justification for that sort of action?

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. I rise to a question of order.

Mr. SPEAKER. I was about to direct the attention of the hon. gentleman to the use of the word false. We do not approve of the use of that word in the House.

The MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR. I bow most deferentially to your ruling, Mr. Speaker, and if I have said anything contrary to the usage of the House I very cheerfully withdraw it. The House, I hope, however, will not forget that this clause is in the hon. gentleman's letter. Here is another point in the letter:

For a coast and boundary line of over 1,000 miles not a rail shall for five years be laid to compete with Messrs. Mann & Mackenzie. No matter what eligible passes may be discovered, no matter what citizen may wish to build and engage in lawful transport, there stands the flaming sword of the Government flashing in the monetary defence of Mann & Mackenzie. The mere statement of this monstrous proposition instantly condemns it.

The hon. gentleman says that the mere statement of a proposition, which is in effect that this Government proposes to defend Canadian trade, is enough to condemn it. This hon. gentleman who, hour after hour, and week after week, last session lectured and denounced the Government because Canadian trade was suffering, gets up here and says that the mere statement of the fact that the Government of Canada proposes to protect Canadian trade is enough to condemn the Government's policy in regard to this road.

Now, Sir, I bring this forward for the purpose of showing that the position of the Opposition on this point is, that we, in endeavouring to protect Canadian trade, are wrong. That is a point I want this House to take note of, and that is a point I want the country to take note of. I want the country to note that we on this side are endeavouring to protect that trade from invasion, and that our friends in the Opposi-

tion are not in favour of that policy. That is clear. Again, he says :

Worse still, if worse there could be. The Government have undertaken to bind Parliament for ten years to a preference for Mann & Mackenzie for any railway between Stikine River and any ocean port in British Columbia.

That is the most ingenious way of creating a false impression that could possibly be imagined ; but I need not criticise that statement, because there is something later on which will need comment.

Promising aid to them and prohibition to all others.

I would like my hon. friends on the other side of the House to take note of the fact that I have requested, and this Government have requested the ex-Minister of Finance (Mr. Foster) and the ex-Minister of Railways (Mr. Haggart), and the combined force of the intellects of gentlemen on the other side of the House, to set to work and show wherein that contract provides any prohibition to anybody else. He goes on :

And they have an exclusive option and monopoly of this all-rail route for ten years from September 1, 1898.

There is not one single word of truth in that statement.

Now, I am going to say a few words about the selection of the land, and I will place these words in connection with the statement here, which has been repeated time and again in this House throughout the discussion, and which, I suppose, we will hear again :

These lands will not be taken haphazard, but will be selected on placer creeks and quartz leads as a powerful and active company knows so well how to do. It is difficult to estimate the value of this tremendous concession. One gulch such as the Bonanza or Eldorado creeks would bring in with a minimum outlay scores of millions of dollars.

The hon. gentleman forgets that there were men tramping up and down those streams year after year since 1882, and in all that time they only found one Bonanza and one Eldorado. Let me ask, is there any method by which this wonderful company can apply the X rays to the whole of the Yukon district and pick out Bonanzas and Eldorados. If there is, I am not aware of it. But the hon. gentleman makes the statement, and he indicates that there is the clearest probability that these contractors will find an abundance of gold.

How many such finds may become the property of those two gentlemen ?

If there is any such probability of many of them being found, I would recommend the hon. gentleman to hire a few prospectors and send them out, because he has the first chance ; he has several months' start of the railway company.

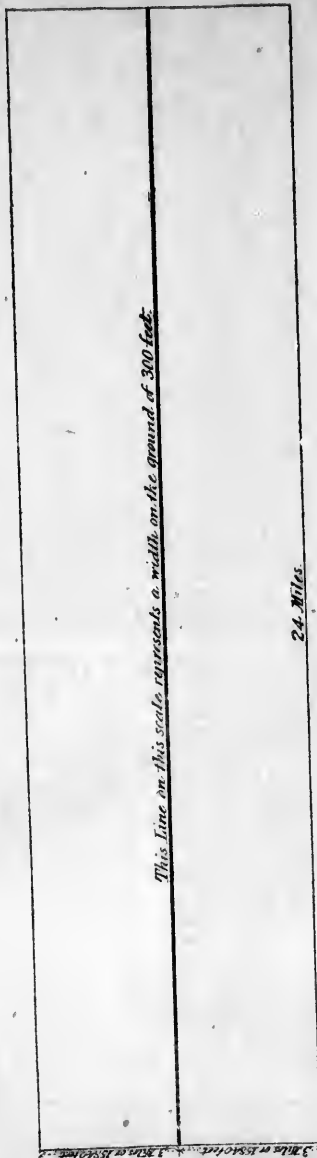
I want to say another thing, too, in reference to the observation of my hon. friend from West Toronto (Mr. Osler) when

he said that if this land grant were taken to London, England, it could be sold—substantially, this is what he said—for more than the 25,000,000 acres of land granted to the Canadian Pacific Railway would bring or was worth. Now, I suppose that the value of the land granted to the Canadian Pacific Railway would not be inaccurately or exorbitantly estimated at \$50,000,000. I would like to make a proposition to my hon. friend from West Toronto (Mr. Osler). I may say that I have not the authority of an Order in Council for making it, but I would make the suggestion, and possibly we could make a contract of the kind I am going to propose, if the House would approve of it. This railway company has no authority to get any territory at all until they have built some ten miles of railway. Several months will elapse before that is done, and there is nothing in this contract or in this Bill to prevent the Government from now giving the hon. member for West Toronto (Mr. Osler) the same privilege of selecting 3,750,000 acres of land on practically the same conditions as the land grant is given to the contractors. I would like the hon. gentleman (Mr. Osler) to think it over for a while, and let the Government know if he is prepared, on behalf of himself, or the gentlemen he represents, to put up \$50,000,000 in case we give him that same privilege, and if so, he can go in ahead of the railway company and take up the lands. I am not sure but that the House would sanction the proposal, and also sanction the passage of a Bill to pay the hon. gentleman (Mr. Osler) a liberal commission on the transaction, and indemnify him against the operation of the Independence of Parliament Act.

A few words now with reference to this question of selection. There are to be 3,750,000 acres of land. The gold is found in that territory in the beds of the water-courses, and I am told by Mr. Ogilvie—whom I asked for the special purpose of getting the information in an authoritative way—that the average width of the soil, where there is any possibility of finding gold—I am not speaking of rock ledges now, but of placer gold—the average width is not more than 300 feet. Now, if this company wants to get any gold-bearing territory at all, it is compelled to take its base line by following the general course of the stream, and to take this in blocks six miles wide and running across the supposed gold-bearing area. This map, which I here produce, is on the scale of one mile to the inch, and it shows the size of a block twenty-four miles long, such as that provided for in the contract. The company's blocks being six miles wide, that line represents the possible territory in which the company has any chance of finding gold : it represents 300 feet. They come along and follow the general line of the water-course, the average width of the soil in which it is possible to find placer gold being not more than 300 feet. The

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territory which they take, is 31,680 feet wide, and the soil in which they have a chance of finding gold is only an average of 300 feet. They, therefore, have a chance of getting territory 300 feet wide out of 31,680 feet. That is the way in which they must select their land, and that is the amount of territory which they have any chance of finding gold in. Now, their total grant is 3,750,000 acres, and the possible territory in which they can find anything—I am not speaking of quartz ledges—now, for I will discuss that later on—is the one-one-hundred-and-fifth part of that. Out of their grant of 3,750,000 acres, they have 35,714 acres in which they have a possible chance of finding anything; not a certainty, remember—nothing more than a mere probability. Does anybody imagine that you can walk up and down the water courses and find gold in paying quantities in all of them? You can find the colour of gold; you can find that all over the North-west, in places where it does not pay at all. But these gentlemen have a possible chance of finding something that pays in 35,714 acres out of the 3,750,000 acres—equal to a piece of territory less than ten miles by six miles in extent. That is the effect of the method of selection which we have provided that these gentlemen must adopt.

Now, as to the rich lodes and ledges which my hon. friend writes about. My hon. friend the leader of the Opposition (Sir Charles Tupper) is, I understand, the president or the manager of a gold mining company. I am told that the ex-Minister of Finance (Mr. Foster) is also the president of a gold mining company. I can take either of these gentlemen to as rich a mining district as there is in the world, the Slovan district, in the neighbourhood of the town of Sandon, and if they will talk there, as I have done, to experienced mining men—for instance, to Mr. Macdonald, one of the owners of the Payne mine, which pays a dividend of \$85,000 a month—they will find that these men of experience will tell them that there is no doubt whatever that in the neighbourhood of Sandon there are many ledges as rich as those which are exposed. Why does not my hon. friend the leader of the Opposition or my hon. friend the ex-Minister of Finance get a few of them? Why does not everybody who wants to get rich in a short time get a few of them? Because the experience of every mining country in the world is that it costs a great deal more in the aggregate to develop these ledges than they are worth. Yet by what process of reasoning do hon. gentlemen apply to the men who are getting this land grant a rule that applies to no other mining country in the world? If they find rich ledges, they will find them only after they have won them by spending their time and money; and anybody else in the world, under our present mining regulations, has just as good a chance of going there and

finding these rich ledges as the men who are building this railway. Why, I say, apply a different rule to this company from what has been applied to other companies? The hon. leader of the Opposition the other night made a statement which is perfectly true; he made it inadvertently; he did not intend to make it, and he tried to correct it after he did make it; but it is true just the same: that it costs more to take the gold out than the gold is worth after it is taken out.

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. If my hon. friend will allow me to tell him he has no foundation whatever for saying that I attempted in any way to qualify or withdraw that statement. I did make it, and I made it without the slightest qualification.

The MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR. I gathered that from the hon. gentleman's remarks. If he did not so intend, my inference is not correct. But he made the statement, and I say the statement is true; and I think I can prove it so far as the placer districts of Cassiar and Cariboo in British Columbia are concerned, which are in every respect the same in nature and in kind as the Klondike district. I have here a table which shows that in these districts from 1858 to 1890 inclusive, there was taken out \$45,140,889 in gold, which the House will agree with me was a very respectable production. Now, analyse the figures for a few minutes. I find that during that time the highest amount that was taken out in any one year, on the average, was \$1,222 per man, and the lowest was \$403 per man; and we all know that even the highest amount did not represent the wages and living expenses of the men who were working in those mines or anything like them. If you look down the table you will find these figures: for 1858, \$173 per man; for 1859, \$403; for 1860, \$506; for 1861, \$634; for 1862, \$517; for 1863, \$482; for 1864, \$849; for 1865, \$813; for 1866, \$893; for 1867, \$814; and so on till it goes down to \$518. This is the average amount of gold taken out per man per annum for the whole mining population and every member of this House knows that these figures do not at all represent the wages and expenses of the men actually engaged in mining operations in those districts. Now, what I want to know is by what process of reasoning is it argued that the same rule will not apply to the members of this company when they go to work to mine their railway land grant. There is no possible analogy which can be drawn from any mining operation in the world which will not lead to the inevitable conclusion that if these gentlemen send out a large number of prospectors and undertake to work their land grant for placer mining, they will spend more money than they will ever get out of the land grant. I want to say on that point that I think the

will make money out of their land grant, and I will tell you why I think so. Not because I think they will succeed in making any rich discoveries such as those that have been spoken of; because I cannot conceive of any reason why the same rule that applied in the very same kind of district in British Columbia will not apply in the Klondike district, especially when the expense and trouble of getting there are very much greater than they are in the other case. But in the Klondike district there are long stretches of territory where at the present time a man could take out \$4, \$6 or \$8 a day. There are large stretches of sand-bars of that kind which it will not pay the placer miner to stay and work for any length of time. But this company can take such districts, which would be unproductive if worked in the ordinary way, and they can apply to them the results of science and the latest improved methods of machinery, and make them profitable. In doing this they would employ a large number of men, and a large quantity of machinery and supplies, which would be furnished through the ordinary channels of Canadian trade; and this is one of the reasons why I think this contract should commend itself to the judgment of the members of this House.

Now, I have taken longer than I intended to take in the discussion of these matters. But I have one word more to say in regard to some statements contained in the letter of "Onlooker"; and I think it would be a mistake if the House failed to understand what the position of the great Conservative party is upon another phase of this question. Here is the statement of "Onlooker":

Is Canadian trade to the Yukon dependent on this particular method of contract-giving, with its peculiar attaching conditions? Have I not read in the same paper that gave the news of his deal that a United States commercial company had placed orders to the amount of \$170,000 in Vancouver for Yukon goods? Are there not scores of able transportation companies advertising for and now actually beginning the transport of people and supplies from Canada to the Klondike, and some of them over this very route? Is there not besides the Edmonton route, the Ashcroft route, the Skagway route, and the Dyea route, for all of which Canadians are outfitting parties in every quarter of Canada? Was the future of all trade to the Yukon from Canada bound up with this particular scheme?

Now, here we have as clearly as the hon. gentleman will dare to state it, the intimation of his opinion that the position of the Yukon trade at present does not warrant any extraordinary effort on the part of the government to secure it. We have here the intimation that we were getting \$170,000 of trade, and that surely if we were getting that amount, we ought to be satisfied. It ought to be nothing to us that our friends down on the Puget Sound were

getting millions, we ought to be satisfied—being a poor and small community—with getting \$170,000, and let the millions go to our friends on the other side of the line. That is the position which the Conservative party is taking in connection with this contract, and that is the point I want the House to understand, and which I think the hon. gentleman will have to explain to the manufacturers and merchants and wholesale men of the Dominion when he comes to explain the attitude he has taken upon this contract.

As to the difficulty of carrying out the undertaking by the contractors, I just wish to quote briefly an article from the "Victoria Colonist" which is a paper that generally opposes this Government, and a paper on the Pacific Coast which probably has a more accurate knowledge of the undertaking than any newspaper, ordinarily speaking, in this part of Canada. The "Victoria Colonist" says:

Hon. Clifford Sifton has declared that the task of constructing the Stikine-Teslin Railway is almost superhuman. This is strong language, but not too strong. Few people can grasp the magnitude of what Messrs. Mackenzie & Mann have undertaken. We believe they will succeed, but only those who have made actual calculations of what must be done in order that the 150 miles of railway may be completed by September 1, can have any idea of the magnitude of the undertaking. The actual work of building the road is not a very serious matter. If the contractors were given two years in which to do the work they would accomplish it without any very great difficulty; but it is to be remembered that they have practically only four months, and that during this short period everything used in constructing the railway, except the right of way and the ballast, must be taken up the Stikine River. This is what will make the undertaking exceptionally difficult, and if the contractors can manage to carry out their bargain they will deserve the first place among railway builders. We venture to say that no men ever before undertook to build 150 miles of railway under such circumstances in the same length of time. Fortunately, both the contractors are men who have energy and experience to assist them in their tremendous undertaking, and the facts that they have put up a very substantial guarantee shows that they believe themselves able to do what they are attempting.

That is the opinion of a paper published on the Pacific Coast which usually opposes the administration of this Government. Now, I have simply referred to that to show that we who entered into this contract are not the only persons who attach great importance to the magnitude of the undertaking which these contractors are attempting.

I propose to say only a few words more with regard to one or two points brought before the House during this discussion. The term "Land Monopoly" has been thrown across this House. I think it was my hon. friend from Gananoque (Mr. Taylor), or perhaps it was the hon. member for East Grey (Mr. Sproule), who suggested

that the men from the North-west could not be expected to support a land monopoly. I wonder that any man on that side of the House should have the assurance to talk of land monopoly. If the hon. gentlemen would like to look at a map, I will show them one that represents the fertile belt from the Rocky Mountains to the Red River and Lake Winnipeg. I will show them on that map the land monopoly of the North-west as it exists to-day. There it is. (Exhibiting map.) I live in the North-west—but let me explain the map first. Here, on this map, are the Red River and Lake Winnipeg, and there are the Rocky Mountains. This portion shows all the fertile belt, and of this fertile belt the hon. gentlemen opposite contracted to give away so much that they did not have enough there but had to go outside it. On all that enormous territory, every odd-numbered section—67,000,000 acres—has been reserved from settlement, and reserved for the benefit of the railway companies. Sixty-seven million acres—the whole fertile belt and much that is not is now a land monopoly reserved for the benefit of railway companies. Do hon. gentlemen opposite think it is the white portions of this map that show the land reserved? No, it is the black part. We mourn over that in the North-west, and therefore I had it marked in black on the map. I want the House to understand that that is the result of the land administration of our friends opposite, who claim to have the instinct of government. We have 67,000,000 acres of land in Manitoba and the North-west Territories reserved from settlement. On that 67,000,000 of acres, I, as the Minister of the Interior to-day, cannot give a man a homestead entry. Nor can I sell a single acre of it, although there are millions of acres of that land that never have been and never will be or can be earned by any railway company whatever. But, Sir, they are reserved by Order in Council, the good faith of the Dominion is pledged to that for ever, and no Government can interfere with that reserve until the bond is literally fulfilled to the very last letter. That is the position these hon. gentlemen have put us in. I wonder that any member on that side can have the colossal assurance to talk to any member from Manitoba or the North-west about land monopolies.

Do not let us run away with terms. What is a land monopoly? We have it in the North-west. We have there millions of acres owned by corporations—owned in part by a corporation which my hon. friend from West Toronto (Mr. Osler) represents. And let me say, I do not blame him for that, but I thought, when he stood up the other day and said he was going to oppose this contract at every stage and every chance he got, he was not quite so bitter when the Calgary and Edmonton Bill was before the House. I did not then hear, away in the far North-west, that any tenders were called

for when that road was contemplated. We all knew in the North-west that the cash subsidy to the Calgary and Edmonton Railway was enough to build the road and provide a very snug sum to go into the pockets of the promoters, as it ultimately did; but I did not hear that the hon. gentlemen who then composed the Government called for any tenders or permitted anybody else to have any share in that enterprise except our hon. friend from West Toronto (Mr. Osler). What we have in the shape of a land monopoly is this. We have millions of acres in that country owned by railway companies, and these companies are not required to do any work or spend any money. They sit down; they toil not neither do they spin. But the farmers toil and the farmers spin.

The farmers do their work: they cultivate their land and make their roads and bridges and pay their taxes and improve their land. And land goes up in value for the benefit of the railway companies. That is what takes place under the land-monopoly policy of our friends on the other side of the House. That is what is taking place now. And I tell the hon. gentlemen that there is no man sitting in this House to-day who realizes now, or who will live to realize the baneful effects of that policy upon the finest agricultural territory that the world has ever seen.

We propose, for the purpose of getting a great and valuable public work constructed under the most extraordinarily difficult circumstances, to give a land grant. It is a land grant to which value will be given by the labour of other people or by the expenditure of other people's money? No, Sir, but a land grant which is not worth a dollar, except as it is made valuable by the expenditure and the work of the men who get it. Let the hon. gentlemen rest with that and explain to this House the coherence and logic of the position they take on this subject. I apprehend that if any man goes up and discovers a valuable claim, he will register it for himself and not for the railway company, and the company can find their own claims and register them for themselves, and they are in no respect better off for the labour the miner has performed.

I have detained the House longer than I anticipated. I look for great things from the construction of this railway; I look for great things because of the fact that I think it will largely promote Canadian trade. I think that if it is promptly and vigorously carried through, as I have no doubt it will be, it will have the effect of drawing to Canada within the next six months trade to the extent, perhaps, of twenty or twenty-five millions of dollars, that being a moderate estimate. I think it will conduce to the honour and dignity of Canada in making that country safe to us from a national standpoint. It will remove the danger of the country being not in the hands of our

officers, but in the hands of an alien population who would condemn the authority of this Government. These things I look upon as important. Let my hon. friends opposite understand that if this railway project is obstructed, if it is stopped here or elsewhere, and if that territory passes from the control of Canada by reason of there being no railway communication, the people of Canada will hold them to a bitter account for it.

I have no more to say. As the Minister

who has been called upon to give the most attention to this subject, I have tried to place the House in possession of the facts as well as I could. I look upon this as one step in the development of the great West which I represent, by the too great favour of the people, in this House and in this Government. And, if, in some small measure, the benefits which I have anticipated are realized, I shall only be too grateful and happy to have had some part in bringing about such very happy results.

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