

Mr. GEOFFRION: Suppose you don't find a company?

Hon. Mr. LANGEVIN: Who could doubt their finding a company with the double inducement of land and money, when in the States and other countries railways were begun and completed on the basis of land grants only? We were bound, irrespective of British Columbia, to construct a railway to the Rocky Mountains, certainly through a magnificent country for hundred of miles; but what would be the use of stopping there? Would it not be to a certain extent money ill-spent, when the road stopped short of the natural boundary of the Dominion, of the natural ocean outlet on the Pacific? Our interests undoubtedly dictated that prolongation. He maintained that in a revenue point of view Canada would not lose by this measure, for, as he had pointed out, the consumption of dutiable goods per head of the population was much greater than in Canada. There was already a population of 60,000, including Chinese and Indians, many of whom were civilized and useful inhabitants. He denied the statement of the member for Lotbinière that we already owed \$100,000,000, our debt being but \$80,000,000, and as the Government intended having the railway built by a private company they would incur nothing like another hundred millions of debt.

As to the pension list, several of the recipients could be made useful to the Dominion as public officers. It was absurd to suppose Canada could depend on the American Northern Pacific Railway, and if we wished to extend our population and trade and colonize our vast Western region, we must possess a railroad through our own territory, instead of travelling westward by one 100 or 200 miles from our frontier. It was necessary to satisfy the Columbians, as well as to give confidence to British capitalists, that a period should be fixed for the completion of the road; but if in seven or eight years it should appear with representatives from that Province sitting among us, that despite our good faith and utmost efforts it was impossible to complete the work within the time named they could not and would not find fault with us. He did not anticipate any failure, but looked at the worst contingency. He believed it was our duty and our interest took to complete Confederation and establish a British empire in North America, with the freest institutions in the world, under the British Flag now protecting us, and which would continue to protect us so long as we desired. He believed his countrymen of all origins and classes desired this result, and that trifling difficulties would not induce them to abandon reasonable effort for its attainment. British Columbia did not merit the treatment proposed by the amendment and he hoped the House would not refuse to adopt cheerfully the resolutions of the Government. (*Cheers.*)

Hon. Mr. SMITH (Westmorland) thought the subject was one of the greatest magnitude, and Government ought to have absolved all parties to allow every one to give the matter the freest possible consideration. He had at first done his best to oppose Confederation but he was now friendly to the Union,

and would be glad to see the whole of British North America united. There were two very important considerations—one was that there was a great departure from the principles of the constitution in the matter of the representation. With regard to the financial aspect, however, he could not but believe that lasting injury would be done to the country by the expenditure to be incurred. The cost of the railway could not be less than \$100,000,000, and it was equivalent to the Imperial Government asking England to embark in an enterprise involving a thousand millions. Was not the matter, therefore, sufficiently grave to merit the most serious consideration—and he entreated the Government to pause. The faith of the country was pledged by the resolution to complete the railway within ten years, no matter if the result should be ruin. No verbal reservations could have effect, the written record alone could hold, and the words of the resolution were clear, and if in two years the railway was not commenced, British Columbia could appeal to the Imperial Government. They had been told that the expenditure would not burden the people, but could that be believed, and no one would undertake to say that a Company would undertake the work as a remunerative scheme, and therefore sooner or later, the Government would have to pay every dollar of the expense, and the contractors would want the land as a profit. No one could suppose that even after the road was built, it would pay one tenth of its working expenses, and how, therefore, could British capitalists be expected to undertake the work.

The Minister of Customs had intimated that if they did not strike quickly, they would alienate British Columbia from the enterprise, but was that an element for discussion; no, if such were the case, the matter belonged to the Imperial Government only. Was the House ready to involve the country in so large an increase of debt? That debt was already \$100,000,000 and there were many burdens that would arise from the Intercolonial and other works. The Union Act had provided for the extension of the Canal system and that had only been delayed because of the deficient state of the finances of the Dominion. The cost of the railway could not be named, it might be much greater than the amount named and yet *coûte que coûte* the country would stand pledged to complete it. He should oppose the measure because it would impose burdens on the people that they were not able to bear and would involve the country in ruin and disaster.

Mr. RYMAL like the previous speaker, had not much faith in the blessings of Confederation, and should oppose the present measure, because he believed it violated their constitutional rights. In the Confederation scheme the principle of representation by population had been conceded, and yet that principle was now being violated. The Minister of Militia himself represented many times the whole number of white men in British Columbia, and there were many similar cases in the House, and the thing was so absurd and unjust that if it were the only objection, he would oppose the scheme for while he asked nothing more than justice, he would take nothing less.