

Mr. BLAKE said the member for Lambton (Mr. Mackenzie) in his amendment had pointed out the importance of the matter the grave nature of the burden proposed to be incurred, and therefore suggested the postponement of the consideration of the matter, and it was impossible to answer those statements. Much had been heard that the railway would not cost the Dominion in cash \$100,000,000, but no one attempted to deny that the railway would cost that amount and where could the money come from but from the resources of the country. It might be in lands and it might be in money, but the result was the same, and the only argument the Minister of Militia had used was to speak of the American lines and contrast greenbacks with gold. He complained of the system of alternate sections not being followed in land grants. The argument seemed to be that they would not be compelled to perform impossibilities, but an honest man would fulfil an obligation, though the result might be bankruptcy. If rashly the national credit and faith were pledged to build that road in ten years, he said that any one who voted for that obligation with the mental reservation that they would not be compelled to fulfil the obligation unless such should be desirable was a base man. The spirit and the letter of the bond were alike binding, and the question was most serious.

The Bill was not one that could be repealed but was an irrevocable determination to build the road in ten years whatever the hazard, whatever the results, and should they not seek to communicate with their people before arriving at this irrevocable determination. It had been urged in order to secure votes that there was a reserve power of repudiation, but if the obligation was undertaken, the people would hold themselves bound by it, and could gentlemen be prepared to meet an indignant people if they incurred this responsibility without consulting those they represented, and if the gentlemen did so act, though they might go back to their people, they would not come back to that House. The question was whether the debt of the country should, at a stroke, be doubled, or whether they should have an opportunity of consulting their people before taking such a step. They had been urged to haste, but he maintained that there had been too much haste in bringing about Confederation already, and he was not anxious to ruin entirely that portion of the scheme which had been too hastily consummated. He had not heard what harm could result from postponement and as to the argument that British Columbia was hanging in the balance, he would say that while England was true to herself, the result did not lie with British Columbia, and therefore time for consideration should not be refused.

Hon. Mr. TILLEY said it was a great advantage to be able to hear both sides of a question, but he could see no very great difference in the proposition of the Government and the amendment proposed. The hon. member for Lambton after his defeat last night was obliged to adopt the more successful stand which had been taken by the hon. member for Dundas. There was no talk about the necessity of this delay from the hon. gentleman opposite before this evening. It was all very well to

ask for this delay now, but the scheme had been before the people and had been discussed in the papers for months. The terms were published in Toronto papers three months ago, and, in fact, the Union had been talked of ever since the commencement of the Confederation. In reply to the arguments of the hon. members opposite, he said that a grant of \$10,000 per mile in addition to the land grant would place the construction of the railway beyond the possibility of a doubt. There could be no difficulty in disposing of the lands at a fair price. The fertile belt was spoken of by the American writers who had visited it, as being of immense extent and of great fertility. The Northern Pacific railway looked to it for a portion of their future trade. It was, therefore, in the interest of this Dominion to construct a road through our own territory to the Pacific.

Hon. Mr. McDUGALL (Lanark North) said the House should not be led away by claptrap speeches from the hon. gentleman opposite. Let them look at the facts. Here was a statement of Mr. Hind, an officer appointed by this Government, who explored the North West, and submitted his report thereon. This gentleman stated that in the whole of the fertile belt there were not 40,000,000 acres of available land. Taking a fertile belt in the Rocky Mountains which was not mentioned in that report, to contain 10,000,000 acres more, there were but 50,000,000 acres of any commercial or exchangeable value, in the North West. Where then were the Government lands to come from after granting large sections to the railway? The experience of the United States had shown that it was not in the interest of a country to grant its unsettled lands in large blocks to private companies. The proposition before the House was to give all the valuable lands of the North West to a company which was not yet formed. After the experience of English capitalists on Canadian railways, it was not likely that capital could be got to construct this railway. The money must be had in some way even at the risk of involving the Dominion in ruin. In reply to the statement of the Hon. Minister of Customs that this question had been before the public for some time, he would refer the hon. gentleman to the files of papers in the reading room. If he would look at them he would see that the country was startled at the gigantic proportions of this scheme. On the 27th of that month, the *ipsissima verba* of the scheme were presented to this House, and that was the first time the public had an opportunity of passing judgment on it. It was only after it was taken up and discussed in this House the other day, that it might be said to have been placed before the people. Could the hon. gentleman then deny that delay should be granted before passing this measure. It had not been presented to the House in the constitutional manner and it was only right to give the people an opportunity to express their approval or disapproval of it.

The amendment was put and lost on the following division: Yeas, 7; nays, 135.

Mr. BODWELL moved in amendment to leave out all the words after "that" and insert the following: "That the proposed terms of