

not the way to cure public grievances. The cure of them is rather in negotiation and in legislation. Any amount of litigation will arise out of this Act which we are now considering and I do not know where it is to end. What we ought to try to do is to respect the rights of all and give fair-play to all. I am not proposing any confiscation against the Canadian Pacific Railway Company, notwithstanding that it is a very rich and powerful corporation; but I am urging on parliament and on the government the necessity of their doing something for the relief of the settlers of the Northwest in the matter of this exemption clause. The relief in regard to the lands is coming gradually by the sale of the lands after twenty years. But this other frightful exemption, which declares that the company shall be for ever free from taxation by the Dominion or any province, is the worst exemption that was ever put on the statute-book of Canada. There is no such exemption in any other contract in this Canada of ours. I challenge any one to produce an equal one. It may not have been regarded in that light at the time it was imposed. The opposition of that day did so regard it, but the government did not; but it is to-day the most iniquitous exemption in Canada or in any province of Canada; and I do not think the hon. member for West Assiniboia should attack me for bringing that forward, even though I have not agreed with him on some things. I may have been inconsistent in some things; but when I am pointing out the iniquity of the exemption and asking for some cure for it, I ought to have the sympathy and support of the hon. gentlemen from the west.

Mr. FITZPATRICK. The hon. gentleman a moment ago admitted that he was not a lawyer. The evidence of that was so obvious in the suggestion he made that he need hardly have taken the trouble to give us the information. My hon. friend wished to know if this clause had been imposed on the government by the Canadian Pacific Railway Company. I may tell him that I drew the clause myself, and that I consulted the Canadian Pacific Railway with reference to it and as to the form in which it should be put, because I felt that it was necessary to consider the position of the Canadian Pacific Railway Company and to take its interests into account. If I were dealing with the interests of a beggar on the street, I would consult him before I would endeavour to dispose of them.

Mr. W. F. MACLEAN. Did the hon. gentleman, then, consult the settlers of the west?

An hon. MEMBER. They are the beggars.

Mr. W. F. MACLEAN. They are the beggars on the street.

Mr. FITZPATRICK. That is another suggestion on a par with the one the hon. gentleman made a moment ago, only in this in-

Mr. W. F. MACLEAN.

stance the hon. gentleman acts the part of an echo. The people of the Northwest were represented, I presume, at the time this contract was made. That was the time when those who are now protesting ought to have protested. That was the time when those who suggested a moment ago to my hon. friend to make this observation ought to have been heard; but they were not heard. Let me draw my hon. friend's attention to clause 16 in the contract, which provides that the stations and station grounds, &c., of the Canadian Pacific Railway Company shall be exempt from taxation by this parliament. To that extent that clause is a contract between this parliament and the Canadian Pacific Railway Company. But there is more than that. That clause is in effect a contract between this parliament and the Canadian Pacific Railway Company, by which this parliament undertook to provide that if thereafter the Territories were erected into a province, a constitutional limit would be put upon their powers as a province with respect to the right of taxation. That is what this parliament agreed to; that is what this contract drawn by Sir John Abbott and supported by other distinguished men of that day decided; and there was no protest then by the men who are now protesting against this exemption.

Mr. SPROULE. If the minister will excuse me, I think there was a discussion in the Railway Committee as to whether we had or had not the power, and my remembrance is that the contention of Sir John Abbott was that we had the power in the event of erecting a province.

Mr. FITZPATRICK. And parliament confirmed that opinion, and all we are doing now is to give effect to what parliament had in contemplation at that time. We are doing nothing more than that, and, so far as this load on the Northwest Territories which my hon. friend refers to is concerned, if parliament wants to rid the Territories of that incubus, if I may use the word, parliament is free to do it. Parliament has the means in its own hands, if the people of this country want to assume additional burdens to those which they already assumed in connection with that railway. But let us do one thing at a time. Let us give effect to what we contracted to do in 1881. When we have done that, the door is still wide open to us if we want to go further.

Mr. LAKE. This exemption from taxation is certainly a very serious burden on the people of the Northwest. The matter was laid before the present government some years ago, when the people of the Territories were asking for provincial autonomy, and I propose to put upon 'Hansard' the argument with reference to this particular subject which was used by the representative of the Northwest Territories at that time. He said: