

March 30, 1871

**Hon. Mr. ANGLIN** said this was a matter of too great importance to be made a party question. He hoped every member would look upon it in a purely practical light, and oppose it as a utopian measure brought in by the visionaries who were hurrying the country to ruin. Looking at the measure on its merits there was something objectionable in every one of the clauses. He disapproved of the unfair Parliamentary representation, giving six members to 13,000 people; to pensioning officers, and to the payment of \$100,000 per annum to sustain a corrupt and extravagant Government, given, too, under the pretence that it was rent for public lands. Let the House know all the meaning of these terms. The Government of the Dominion were to undertake the construction and completion, under any contingency, of a Pacific railway within ten years after the date of the union. Why could not the Government come forward honestly and friendly and tell the truth, that they knew it would lay a heavy burden on the Dominion to carry out this engagement? But no, each member of the Government tried to make light of the difficulties to be encountered in the construction of this road.

The Red River expedition, in their march to Fort Garry, had given evidence as to the nature of the country between the head of Lake Superior and Red River, and they had proved it to be of the most sterile character. It was proved to be, for hundreds of miles, a wilderness of rock, swamp and lake, quite uninhabitable, and presenting the greatest difficulties to the construction of a railway. At the Rocky Mountains, fresh difficulties were to be met, and the *British Colonist*, a paper published at Victoria, V.I., favourable to confederation, spoke of the route through which it was proposed to run the railway, as a "sea of mountains." If this account were correct, it would be difficult to find those vast tracts of fertile country spoken of by hon. members opposite, and it could be no easy matter to run a railway through it. With this much known, this House should be enabled to understand how much of a burden they were expected to bear, before they were asked to vote for this measure. He spoke of the resources of the United States as very superior to those of Canada.

**Hon. Sir GEORGE-É. CARTIER:** We have more in proportion than they have. You may defend the American system; we are opposed to it.

**Hon. Mr. ANGLIN** said that the proposed debt would take away Canada's only advantage over the States, and the policy of the Government was breaking down all barriers and would ultimately tend to annexation. He condemned the proposed expenditure as enormous, and pointed out how a proposition to incur an amount in England equal, in proportion to her wealth, would be received, and said it could not be supposed that the amount could be paid without a greatly increased taxation. He spoke of the present surplus revenue as very exceptional, and spoke of the difficulties and deficiencies of former years, and said that the Minister of Finance himself understood that in the proposals now before the House, a debt of \$100,000,000 was

incurred, under which the Dominion would stagger. In addition to this amount for cost of construction there would be the working expenses to add to the burden, and the result would be as described the previous night by the member for Wentworth. Where was the amount to be obtained? It could not be obtained, and the obligation was only to be incurred because some few thousands of people on the Pacific coast were discontented and would otherwise seek annexation to the United States. The Statement that the cost incurred would only amount to a million and a quarter, could not be believed by a single member of the House. They would pledge themselves to construct the line in ten years, and who could say that the country would not have to pay every dollar. A company had been spoken of, but where was the company? How could any company raise seventy-five millions of dollars on fifty million acres of barren waste land, and the Government only played with the House and imposed on the credulity of their supporters in saying the work would be done by a railway.

The question should be viewed calmly and dispassionately and not as a party question, as the Minister of Militia had tried to make it. The Minister of Customs had imagined a teeming and prosperous population in British Columbia and the North West, but were they to base their vote on baseless imaginings. Where was this population to come from when it was well known that the population of British Columbia had materially decreased of late years! It could only be explained by the fact that the country was not inviting to settlers. It was hard to persuade settlers to come even to Ontario and the other parts of the Dominion, and how could it be supposed that a larger immigration could be directed to these new colonies. The House had been told that it was bound to construct the railway to the Rocky Mountains, but he would like to know how, when and where that obligation was incurred;—they were bound to do nothing of the kind unless the finances of the country fully justified it. It had also been stated that although they incurred the obligation, they would not be compelled to carry it out unless they chose.

**Hon. Mr. MORRIS** said he had stated that the House was not to be led away, but was to remember that any scheme for carrying out the work would have to be submitted to it, and that it would control the whole matter, and those were the facts.

**Hon. Mr. ANGLIN** resumed that if the representative of British Columbia honestly considered the interests of his people he would repudiate the whole Government scheme. Let not the members believe the statement of any Minister, but let them read the words of the resolutions themselves, and judge what a burden they involved, and he believed that if every duty and tax was doubled the expenditure would not be met, but when the debt and taxation was then increased, the way to annexation would well be opened, and he stood there to do what he could to save the country from the fate, and from the irresistible ruin that would ensue from this scheme. He implored the House to ignore party and think of the country.