

ceded, there would be no difficulty in dealing with the details, and since the promoters were willing to agree to such a scheme, he thought it right that he should give it his support. In recapitulation he would simply say that the money subsidy was a matter which required careful handling, but seeing that there was such a large amount of waste land in our back country would be opened up for settlement, he did not think that any great difficulty could present itself as to the land subsidy. As it stood at present it was of no use to us, whereas when opened up for settlement, as it undoubtedly would be in the event of such a railway being built, it would at once become a source of wealth to us, and would be generally to the benefit of the whole people. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. CLARKE (Norfolk) said this was one of the most serious railway undertakings that had ever been proposed in Ontario, and required very careful consideration, because in his opinion it was developing another Pacific Railway. He did not see anything in the arguments which had been brought forward by the hon. member for North York which would justify the Legislature in countenancing the scheme as it stood at present. There might be other and more cogent reasons for its construction, but at present the interests of the country did not require it. There were already a large number of railways proposed to be carried into that country, and he had a very strong objection to it on account of the large land subsidy and the money subsidy which it was proposed to ask for it. He considered the present necessities of the country had been sufficiently provided for. The time was coming when the Victoria Railway would be a necessity, but that would not be until the lands set already apart for settlement were fully taken up. The proposed road was not upon the high road to commerce, and in this respect had no right to be countenanced by the House. The land was not needed for settlement, for the Free Grant Territories were not yet half nor quarter settled, and to let the lumberman go into the district would simply mean destruction and waste of the most valuable timber. He was in favour of the protection of our forests, which were yearly becoming more valuable, and at present our supply of timber was greatly in advance of the demand. Our timber ought to be economised, and no part of the land ought to be granted to a private corporation such as the Victoria Railway Company, until much stronger reasons were given for its existence and purposes.

Mr. LAUDER said that papers containing information regarding this scheme had recently been laid before him, and he had read them with great interest. Ever since he had a seat in this House he had been in favour of grants to railways, although he objected to the \$100,000 per annum which had been proposed to be laid aside for railway purposes by the present Government. He pointed out the large amount of aid given by counties to railways, and showed that the county of Grey had given bonuses amounting to some \$800,000. The Government had aided the Toronto, Grey, and Bruce Railway to some extent, and he drew their attention to the fact that it was the only railway which had completed its original scheme, and carried its works through to the lakes upon the plan at first devised. When the railway referred to was first proposed, only a few townships along the route of the line were settled, and there were 70,000 acres unsettled. It was offered at auction in 1866 at an upset price of ten cents an acre, and they could not get a bidder even at that for a very large portion of it. Within the last two years the Government had been able to sell every foot of it at one dollar an acre and upward, the people and their families settling there had earned large sums building the railway, and he was safe in saying that every dollar that had been spent by the Government upon the railway had again found its way into the Treasury in the way of payments for patents. He would refer to the Commissioner of Crown Lands if there had not been more patents issued for those districts within the past two years than for ten years previously. There was no more profitable investment for the funds of the country than aiding railways, and thus opening up for settlement the back portions of the country, for property in the vicinity of the line had doubled and trebled in value, the timber which a farm produced frequently paying the expenses of clearing. He pointed out that a very large proportion of the surplus apportioned for railway purposes had not yet been appropriated, and he thought the enterprise to which he had made reference deserved the support of the Government.

He pointed to the many railway schemes which had been undertaken and carried out by the chief promoter of the Victoria Railway—Mr. George Laidlaw. He quoted the opinion of Hon. Mr. Scott, the late Commissioner of Crown Lands, as to the increase which had taken place in the value of the lands along the line of the Toronto, Grey, and Bruce Railway, and the increased sale of Crown Lands it had occasioned. That, at least, was one scheme of Mr. Laidlaw's which had been successful. He showed that the principle of giving a land subsidy had been introduced into the scheme of the late Dominion Government for building the Pacific Railway, and contended that it was favourably received in this Province, and he thought if it were desirable to make such a grant in favour of a railway which would bring greater advantages to another Province than it would to Ontario, surely it was much more so in the case of a railway entirely within our own jurisdiction. He quoted the following paragraph from the report of Mr. Begg, the agent of the present Government at Glasgow, who had gone to the Free Grant Territory to select a suitable tract for the location of a proposed temperance colony:—"The construction of a railway by the Dominion Government from the Georgian Bay to the Ottawa River will encourage and aid this and other settlements in the Free Grant Districts, as lines of railway must soon be extended from the southern frontier to tap the Dominion line, and thus open up the vast country of the basin of the Nipissing, which contains hundreds of thousands of acres of excellent land, now a waste and almost impenetrable wilderness. It appears to me that if the Government were to grant a belt of unoccupied lands along these new lines of railway, contractors would gladly undertake to settle workmen and their families on those lands in part payment of wages, at a fixed rate per acre, and the result would prove a great gain to the Province." He considered a scheme like the Victoria Railway deserved the support and aid of the Government, and he, as a representative of a western constituency, was prepared to take the responsibility of saying so. The greater portion of the settled lands of the western portion of the Province were opened up by schemes similar to this. He was glad that the hon. member had brought up his motion, although he did not know how regular the discussion might be. The matter would be somewhat more tangible when brought before the House in its details, and although he did not know what opinion other hon. members might entertain on the question, he was at least safe in promising it fair play, as he was sure he could guarantee them the approval of his own constituency. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. WOOD said he had felt considerable delicacy in speaking on this subject, in consequence of his constituency being very much interested in the success of this railway, but after the remarks of the hon. members who had before spoken, he felt at more freedom. The railway aid scheme of the late Government was looked upon at the time it was introduced as a very liberal measure, and had been endorsed by the people of this country, but to the newer sections of the country the ratio of aid turned out to be very unfair. The sum of \$2,000 a mile in the older sections, and \$3,000 per mile in the more sparsely settled sections, were very fair to these portions of the country, because they could make up sufficient additional amounts in the way of bonuses—say \$5,000 and \$6,000 a mile respectively—to induce the prosecution of the undertaking, and to a greater or less extent the railways derived some support from them in the way of traffic. In the unsettled portions of the country, however, there was no bonus to be got, and no traffic to assist in the maintenance of the railway; and while practically the grants to the railways in settled and partially settled portions of the country amounted to \$7,000 per mile, when the Government and local bonuses were added together, the whole assistance given to the railway in the unsettled country only amounted to \$4,000 per mile, or the simple Government grant. As a result there was not a single railway built in a free grant territory at the present time, and so far as opening up new territory was concerned, the act had been a failure. The Toronto & Nipissing Railway stopped short within a few miles of the free grant territory, and the same was the case with other roads of the same class. The section of country lying north of Peterborough and Hastings, in the direction of the Ottawa embraced millions of acres, and although lumbermen had found their way into it,