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PROVINCIAL PARLIAMENT.

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

RAILWAY DEBATE.—(Continued.)

[From the Loyalist.]

THURSDAY, February 26.

Hon. Mr. Gray said it was unnecessary for him to follow the Hon. Attorney General, or the lucid exposition given in the other House, in reference to the great benefits to be derived from railways; he should, therefore, confine his remarks to the particular case then before them. What was the proposition the Government by these resolutions submitted to the House? (The hon. member then read an extract from the letter of the Canadian Delegation to the Nova Scotian Government, containing the latest proposition.) According to these propositions, the route is decided so far as from Halifax to St. John, and from Quebec to the Grand Falls, and it was also decided that this Province should build about five-twelfths of the road. Then came the question, how was the road to be disposed of after it was built? In order to ascertain that they must go back to the Toronto Convention, where it was decided that the income derived from the whole line should go towards paying off the debt so long as any debt remained, and that afterwards each Province should own that portion of the road in her own territory. That arrangement was in force still, and whenever the debt is cleared off this Province would own all that may be included within her boundary. Nova Scotia had agreed to come to the Bend, which was about forty miles beyond her frontier, and Canada would come to the Grand Falls, some fifty or sixty miles into this Province, so that we should finally own about 100 miles more of the road than we construct. By choosing this route we effect both objects, as only a few miles of the European and North American line would remain to be built; and the plan has this advantage over the former one, that we build less and own more. He had no doubt but that part of the road lying between Westmorland and St. John would pay well, as also would that part west of St. John so far as it answered for the European and North American line. He entertained very little doubts but the portion thence to Canada would also pay, as there would be a great deal of traffic betwixt Quebec and a good Atlantic port. But even if the portion from the junction to Quebec should not pay the interest, and the Province should be called upon to make up the deficiency from her treasury, we should be more than compensated by the great benefits arising from the line. It was his opinion, however, that the line would pay. It had been stated in some of the public prints that the Government intended to move for an additional duty of five per cent. on all imports to cover the interest on the capital necessary to construct this railway. He denied it in the most unequivocal manner. The Bills were already prepared, and there was no such clause in them. The Government fully contemplated that the roads would pay the interest. The next thing he should advert to was the question, "What had induced the Government to alter their plans since last year?" Last year the Facility Bills were passed, and when the question came up whether they should accept of the loan from the British Government, on the terms set forth in Mr. Hawes' letter, it was rejected. Subsequently the people reflected on the great benefit of procuring money to build the railway at three and a half per cent., and a change had taken place in public opinion. It had been said that the reason why the European and North American line had not been commenced, was that the Facility Bill had not received the Royal assent; but such was not the fact; it was because the people in this Province could not raise the money to pay the stock they had subscribed for. There were some subscribers, such as His Honor the Speaker and the Hon. Mr. Chandler, who could pay in the amount they had subscribed, but in order to do so they must withdraw their money from other quarters, by foreclosing mortgages on land, &c., which must be oppressive to the people. So it would be with others, for the people of this country have no money to invest in railways without withdrawing it from where it is now invested, which would injure the very people they were trying to benefit. Let them contrast that position of things with the present proposition, by which English capital would be brought in and

the people to get out of their difficulties instead of plunging them deeper therein. Every one must reap the benefit of this line by the increased value of his lands, and the enhanced value of labour. Last summer the Hon. Mr. Howe came to this Province, and gave his exposition on railway matters. From what he said at the Mechanics' Institute, St. John, the people were led to alter their opinions, and were willing for the Province to undertake the construction of her share of the Canada line, provided they could secure the construction of the European and North American line at the same time. The Government had never abandoned the latter line, but embraced the proposition of the other colonies, believing that the profits arising from the European line would make up for any loss they might sustain from the other. He (Mr. Gray) had opposed Mr. Howe's proposition, because this Province was asked to build more than she would receive any corresponding benefits for; but he was not blind to the great benefits our people would derive from a railway, and that it would open our wild lands, and increase our population. Subsequently, at the Toronto Convention it was agreed that each Colony should build her third of the line, share the receipts among them until the whole was paid for, and for each Province then to own what is in her own territory. This was announced by Mr. Howe immediately on his return to Nova Scotia, who announced that the scheme embraced the European line also, for which this Province was to assume the responsibility. Thus the road which the Legislature preferred last year was provided for by the arrangement entered into at the Toronto Convention. He would next say something in reference to the cost. The part allotted for this Province to build would not exceed 270 miles; that at £6000 per mile would amount to £1,620,000; and the interest at 3 1-2 per cent. would be £56,700 a year, which was the whole liability this Province would incur. Now he was prepared to show, from our own experience, that £6000 per mile was a high estimate. Fortunately the St. Andrews and Woodstock line was commenced, ten miles of it finished, and the remainder under contract. He had before him the accounts, down to the most minute sum, of the ten miles that are finished, and he had been assured by those who knew the route well that they are the most expensive ten miles out of the eighty, and the account also embraced the engineering expenses of thirty miles more of the line; he must also observe that these accounts also embraced an expensive bridge, and four miles of wooden superstructure, and yet the whole expense, including everything but the locomotive and cars, was but £32,000, or £3,200 per mile. The locomotive and cars were estimated to cost about £1,500 more. Thus it was evident—and the contract entered into for constructing the remainder bore him out in the assertion—that the line when completed will not cost over £3,500 per mile. He mentioned this to show that the Government in estimating the cost at £6000 per mile had done so in order that there might be no deception; they had taken the very worst possible view of the liabilities the Province would incur. The line from Shediac to St. John had been accurately surveyed, and every one who knew anything about it must acknowledge that it was quite as easy of construction as the St. Andrews line. Thus if the line should be constructed for £3000 per mile instead of £6000, their liabilities instead of being £56,000 per annum would be but £28,000. But whatever the interest might amount to, they would never have to pay it all, as there were certain portions of the line that would surely pay. Then they must not overlook the fact that they would save the expense of transmitting the mails, by sending them per railway; and they would also secure the carriage of the English mails to and from Montreal, for which this Province would receive about £14,000 a year. Thus if our liability should not exceed £28,000 a year, the saving in the transmission of our own mails would be £3000, and the receipts for conveying the British mails £14,000; making £17,000, which would reduce our liability to £11,000 a year. He did not say that the road could be constructed at the low rate he had mentioned, but he meant to impress on the Committee that every farthing saved would add to the profits. Had Mr. Howe been correct in his interpretations of the correspondence with the British Government, and the northern line to Quebec had been carried out,

would have been prepared to take his share of the responsibility, as it was far better to have two railways than none at all. Had that arrangement been carried out, this Province would have had 400 miles to build, and our liability would have been nearly double to what it is under the present arrangement. Then it should not be forgotten that, under the facility bill of last year this Province is bound to take stock to the amount of £300,000 currency in the European and North American Railway, the interest on which would be £18,000 a year. That amount would be saved by the present scheme. Mr. Morton, the United States Engineer, had surveyed two lines east of Bangor, one to Calais, and the other to Lincoln on the Penobscot, and public opinion in Maine was in favour of the upper route. If the Lincoln route should be adopted, the Halifax and Quebec Trunk line would answer both purposes until it reached the vicinity of Woodstock, and it would leave only twenty or thirty miles to build to complete our part of the European and North American line; and that would be built before the Americans could complete their part of it. (Hear, hear.) It had been said that the course the Government had pursued was the means of preventing the European and North American line from going on. That was not the case, for it was understood at the Portland Convention that the two Provinces and the State of Maine were to act simultaneously, and what had the other two countries done? In Nova Scotia they had not even incorporated the Company, and in Maine, although they opened their subscription book in August last, there was not to his knowledge a single dollar subscribed up to this day. Supposing our liability to be £56,000 a year—which was the highest estimate—the carrying of the mails would reduce it to £39,000. But if hon. members did not think the line would pay, why did the Legislature last year agree to take £300,000 worth of stock in the European and North American line? The facility bill was passed upon the presumption that the line would pay, and if it would pay of itself, it must a fortiori when it would have the Canadian line to feed it also. It was his belief that, take the both lines together, and the Province would never be called upon to pay a farthing of the interest. Let hon. members read the reports of the Engineers, Messrs. Morton and Wilkinson, and see what their calculations were on the subject. They were men of experience, who had long turned their attention to this subject, and they believed that the European and North American line would pay well. And let not the opinion of those men be treated as of no value. Supposing any hon. member wished to acquire agricultural information, to whom would he apply but to some practical farmer; and should not the same rule hold good in this case? The Engineers were the practical men, who knew more about railways than other people. He would ask should they believe what an Engineer says, or prefer the opinion of some hon. member who had never turned his attention to the subject. If the hon. members from the north were about to build a railway, to whom would they apply for advice? Why to an Engineer, whose duty it was to understand it. He saw it stated in Dr. Lardner's work on railways, that the average dividend derived from railways in England was four per cent, and the average in the United States eight per cent. The causes of the great difference were the expensive mode adopted in building railways in England, and the cost of the lands through which they pass, which was a heavy item in a thickly settled country. The census just taken in this Province showed one remarkable fact, to which he would next call hon. members' attention. While the towns showed scarcely any increase, the country population had increased rapidly. This showed anything but a prosperous state of things, for if the producers double while the consumers do not increase in number, it is evident that prices must fall, as the supply will be greater than the demand. Give us railways and the case will be reversed, for wherever railways are laid down towns and villages spring up along the line. This railway, when built, would not only connect us with Quebec, but the line would be continued westerly to Montreal, Kingston, Toronto and Detroit. From Detroit it would connect with Galena by another line, and the head waters of the Mississippi, around which were situated five of the richest States in the American Union. All these States wanted communication with the Atlantic, for

thoroughfares would become too limited for their vast products. Then there was Canada, without any winter port. People living on the sea-board in this Province little knew what it was to be pent up in the western country for months together and no communication with the sea. He would state an incident which occurred during the recent visit of the Canadian Delegates to this Province. The morning after their arrival in St. John he (hon. Mr. Gray) walked down to the wharf in company with the Hon. Francis Hincks, when that gentleman clasped his hands together and exclaimed—"The blue water! the blue water!" He (hon. Mr. Gray) had never felt proud of the Bay of Fundy before. To refer again to the great western country, and to prove that more outlets are wanting, he would mention a fact he had lately been informed of, that at the present moment there are over one million of barrels of flour in the State of Ohio, waiting to be conveyed through the Erie Canal, which could not be taken down in the autumn before the canal froze over; such was the pressure of business. He held in his hand a pamphlet showing the prosperous state of Illinois, from which he would read a few extracts. That State had built railways, having borrowed the money from English capitalists at six or seven per cent, and even then their scrip sold at a discount. It that State could under such circumstances build railways and prosper, what might we not expect, getting our money at three and a half per cent. (The hon. member then read certain statistics as to the rapid extension of agriculture in Illinois.) Although it appeared that a great influx of people had settled themselves down to the cultivation of land in Illinois, yet what they produced did not keep pace with the demand, so great were the facilities of getting the produce to market, by the railways through that country. Such would be the case here if we owned railways. The same work he had quoted from, also stated that the home consumption had increased faster than the demand for distant markets. (The hon. member then read some statistics relative to railways in Massachusetts.) The extent of the State of Massachusetts did not exceed five thousand square miles, while this Province contains twenty thousand square miles. They have no navigable rivers, and the country was far behind this in natural wealth. Whence, then, arose the great prosperity of Massachusetts? It was the effect of her railroads built by the energy of her people. Had Major Robinson's line been carried out, most of the wild lands pledged in aid of it would be found in this Province, as the road would pass chiefly through settled districts in Canada and Nova Scotia. But by the present scheme we should save our lands, and by building five twelfths we should own all that lies within the boundaries of this Province. He would next make an observation or two about the trade by this line. There were some who admitted that Canadian produce would come down, but thought we had nothing to send back. Now there was one article of which we had an abundance, and would send large quantities of it to Canada by this railroad, and defy all competition; he meant fish. Hon. Mr. Montgomery. "What by the southern route?" Hon. Mr. Gray.—Yes, Shediac was one of the great fishing ports of the Gulf, and it would be no farther from Shediac to Quebec by this line than by the line recommended by Major Robinson.—The hon. and learned member from Restigouche (Mr. Barbarie) was muttering his dissent. Why, he could not say anything to please those gentlemen from the north. If he said one thing, "Oh," said the hon. member on his right, (Mr. Montgomery) "that's soft sawder!" If he said another thing, the hon. and learned member (Mr. Barbarie) cried out "you're bamboozling!" and at the next thing he advanced his hon. and learned friend opposite (Mr. Johnson) shook his head as though there was nothing in it.—(laughter)—he begged pardon; he did not mean as though there was nothing in the head, but nothing in what he himself was saying.—The hon. and learned member from Restigouche was like a dog in the manger; if he could not have the railway just where he wished, he would have none at all. He must say, however, that though he acted like a dog in the manger, he did not look like a very savage dog. Last year the hon. and learned gentleman was strong in favour of railways; then it was supposed that the trunk line to Canada would go through the northern counties, and he would look