

LEGISLATIVE NEWS.

RAILWAY DEBATE.

[Knowing that our readers are anxious to learn the sentiments of their Representatives on this important subject, we have trespassed on our Literary space to publish their speeches, when the question was debated in the House.]

Mr STREET regretted to see so much warmth manifesting itself in the debate; hon. members had at first spoken of the opposite lines with becoming delicacy, but the question had now assumed this shape—which of the two lines should be carried on? This had been the result of the report of the Select Committee, that report having recommended but one line to the exclusion of all others; it had thus become an apple of discord between contending parties and rival lines. He regretted that this question had assumed this antagonistic character, as it would prevent that calm and cool deliberation which the importance of the subject demanded.—He did not like the resolution of the learned Attorney General, for this reason, that resolution puts forth the introduction of foreign capital as an object of primary importance; this he thought an unfair light to place the subject in before the country. In his opinion no public work should be undertaken in this Province that would not be a permanent benefit; the mere introduction of capital to be applied in the construction of public works, without considering whether those works would be advantageous, would not be productive of those benefits which some hon. members seemed to imagine. He would call the attention of the committee to some of the public works which had been undertaken in this Province, and hon. members could see the result produced and judge for themselves. He pointed them in the first instance to the New Brunswick and Nova Scotia Land Company, established some years since in this Province. During the time that Captain Kendall was at the head of that establishment, money had been expended lavishly in making roads, erecting houses, and clearing lands, and who, he would ask, received the benefit of this lavish expenditure? It was very well known that foreigners had come here, and had taken away with them the principal amount of this money. This, he feared, would be the case were a large amount of capital to be expended at present, and our own people would not receive that benefit which would be anticipated. He would, therefore, again express his regret that the introduction of capital had been set forth in the resolution as of primary importance. It had been stated that the introduction of Railways would be attended with the most beneficial results to the people of this Province; he was of the same opinion himself, and if they were careful not to go too far, the benefits would be incalculable. He agreed fully with the learned member for St. John, (Mr Ritchie) that if they should begin a Railroad and be unable to finish it, they would be doing a great injury instead of a benefit. He was not prepared with statistics upon this subject, but had listened with great attention to all the arguments and statistics of hon. members during the debate, in order to satisfy his mind which course to pursue. The learned Attorney General had opened the present debate with a most powerful and eloquent speech in favor of the Shediac line, proposing to drop the line from St. Andrews to Woodstock; but it was for the present committee to say which of the two lines they would support. The hon. member for Charlotte (Mr Brown), and the hon. and learned member for York (Mr Fisher), had decided in favor of the latter line. The learned member for York (Mr Fisher) had delivered a powerful speech in favor of this line. The learned member for St. John (Mr Ritchie) had also made an eloquent appeal in favor of the Shediac line.—Thus the different parties had their favorite line, and hon. members should narrowly scrutinize the different arguments, making due allowance for sectional feelings and the excitement of debate; he, however, thought that they should not abandon the S. Andrew's line, unless they were fully satisfied that the Shediac line was preferable, and he must say that he had heard no arguments yet which convinced him that it would be the case. He felt much interest in the north, as he had most of his property there, and if he could be satisfied that this line would pay, he would certainly not be doing his duty to his constituents were he to oppose it. He could not believe that the merchants of the north would send their fish down this Railway, if it were built; they would never discharge the cargo of a fishing vessel at Shediac for the purpose of sending the fish down this railway to Saint John, where they would have to pay commission and other charges to persons there to ship them again to the American markets: it was unreasonable to suppose this. The northern merchants would export their own fish in their own vessels, without bringing them to Shediac, merely to accommodate the Shediac line. No doubt the people of Saint John would endeavour to make the northern merchants believe that all the fish caught in the Gulf should come down this line, and that they in the north were such a pack of fools that they must get a Saint John merchant to transact their business for them. The merchants of the north would take it as an insult to be asked to send their fish to Saint John for exportation. A great deal has been said about the salmon which would come down this line. This also was a mistake; the merchants there would salt them up and send them to Halifax and other markets. As to our West India trade, it was their own fault at the north if they did not carry it on; he was satisfied the railroad would not give it to them. With reference to the Saint John markets for the north

it had always been acknowledged by the people of Westmorland that Miramichi was a much better market for their surplus produce than Saint John. He alluded of course, to the time when business was good; and no people complained more bitterly of the depression of business in the north than the people of Westmorland; but it was unnecessary for him to follow the learned member for John, and other hon. members who had spoken in favor of the Shediac line, through all their arguments, particularly as his hon. friend from York (Mr Fisher) had fully answered them. As to the produce of Pr. Edward's Island coming down this line for the Saint John market, he could inform hon. members that this would not be the case—the Halifax and Newfoundland markets were much better than Saint John, and to these markets they now resorted. They also exported very considerable quantities of grain to Europe of latter years, and had received handsome returns. It was also a matter worthy of consideration, whether the introduction of the Island produce into our markets would not be an injury to our own farmers. There was another inducement held out to build the Shediac line—that it would intersect the great trunk line. He did not think that line would ever be built: the report of Captain Harness had struck a death blow to that scheme. He regretted to see the remark in the report of the Select Committee—that if the British Government wished to retain these Colonies she would build this railway. The British Government would laugh at this as a parent would laugh at a spoiled child who had been fed with too many sugar plums, and had grown insolent. It looked like petulance to see New Brunswick holding out such doctrine as this to the British Government. He would only remark that if they meant to say that unless this railway were carried on this Province would join the United States, he would repudiate any such doctrine, and so would the people of this Province, and he hoped this House would never respond to any such doctrine. With reference to the St. Andrews line, he stood perfectly disinterested, but viewing that line as connecting with Canada, he thought it of much greater importance than the Shediac line could ever be. Another reason why he supported the Saint Andrews line was this; it would be the means of uniting the Counties of Charlotte and Carleton, by opening up that fine tract of country through which the line passed, for actual settlement, and would throw open the harbor of Saint Andrews to the whole upper Saint John. Besides this, it would have the effect of reviving the town of Saint Andrews, and of benefiting the County of Charlotte to a great extent. The Americans owned large tracts of land on the upper Saint John, and carried on extensive lumbering pursuits; they too, would gladly avail themselves of this line to transport their goods up, and their manufactures of wood down to Saint Andrews for shipment. This railway would also give an impetus to the manufacture of deals and other lumber in that country, which would give employment to our industrial classes to a much greater extent than the present practice of exporting the raw material in the shape of timber. Agricultural produce of every kind could be raised in that fine country in large quantities, and every thing which could be urged in this respect in favour of the Shediac line, could be said with equal truth of this. Taking all these things into consideration, he certainly thought the Saint Andrews line stood in the most favourable position; and he could not think that a majority of this committee would ever consent to throw it overboard and adopt another line in its stead; particularly after all that had been done by that Company, and the inducements previously held out to stockholders by the solemn enactments of this House.

Mr CARMAN said, that since he had the honor of a seat in that House, no subject had come under their consideration of such importance as the one then before the committee. So much impressed was he with the importance of the subject, so deep a responsibility did he feel resting upon him, as one of the representatives of the people, that he feared he would not be enabled to proceed as he proposed when he rose to address the committee; it was a subject to which he had given his attention and deliberate consideration, and the more he had reflected upon it, the more was he impressed with the necessity of a careful and deliberate procedure on the part of the committee, as it was a subject involving the future well being and prosperity of this Province. He was sorry to find himself differing in opinion from gentlemen who, like himself, were representing the northern counties in this Province, which it had been said, are to be materially benefited from the construction of a railway from Saint John to Shediac; and when he found some of those Gentlemen, for whose opinion he had great respect, signing the report recommending the house to embark in this undertaking, he found his embarrassment still further increased, as he could not agree with them in the conclusion to which they had arrived. He could not but think that the house had been rather hasty in the matter, the constituency of the Province had not had an opportunity of reading the report of the committee, and hon. members were deprived of obtaining the opinion of their constituents. But as the question was now before them, they were called upon to decide upon it. Three lines of railway were spoken of—the great Trunk line to connect the North American Colonies, the Saint Andrews and Woodstock line, and the Saint John and Shediac line. Hon. Gentlemen appeared to have arrayed themselves on either side, for the two last mentioned lines, some contending for the former and others for the latter. He (Mr Carman) was not an advocate for either; when the bill for the issue of scrip for the Saint Andrews line

was under consideration, he took no part in the debate, and had not made up his mind how he would vote, but when the subject came up again he would be prepared to vote, perhaps give his reasons for the vote he should then give. He agreed with that part of the report of the committee which states that it was a matter of the greatest moment that a railway should be laid down to connect the lower Provinces with the interior of Canada, as he thought it would tend to the union of the Colonies, and by which union alone they can for any length of time remain appendages to the British Empire. It might be said that he was an advocate for this line, because it was contemplated to run through the north eastern section of the Province, and he would not deny but that circumstance strengthened his desire for the accomplishment of that great work; but he could appeal to hon. gentlemen in that house, whether he had not pledged himself to support it, let it run in what direction it might through the Province. When he (Mr C.) read the able report of Major Robinson, his heart beat with hope, and shortly after, on visiting Fredericton and conversing with the Attorney General, that hope increased, and when he took his seat this session, he felt confident that a measure of so much importance to this Province would not be lost sight of. But he feared that the hope he had thus cherished was not to be realized. He now learned that the demon of discord was at work, and that those local and sectional feelings—which marred every general measure brought forward for the benefit of the Province, were rife. They could not be concealed—they now crept out. The hon. member for Charlotte had his favourite scheme—the Saint Andrews Railway—and declared his intention of opposing the great Trunk line. The hon. and learned member for Saint John (Mr Ritchie) had his favorite scheme—the Shediac railway—and of so much importance did he consider this line, that scarcely a day passed that he did not enquire of the government whether they intend bringing forward a measure relative to its immediate construction. He characterized it as the *Railroad*. His (Mr Carman's) hon. and learned friend on his right (Mr Fisher) had his favorite scheme—"the improvement of the navigation of the River St. John"—and this was to be the great highway from St. John to Quebec, and thence to the Far West; and he called the great Trunk line "a vagary." When he (Mr Carman) found all this, he had made up his mind that if it depended upon that House the great Trunk line would not be laid down through this Province. During the progress of the survey the good people of St. John were on the alert; no pains were spared to convince the Commissioners that the Bay of Fundy line was the best. They were extremely anxious for a Railroad to connect the lower colonies with Canada, but when the survey was completed, and that line abandoned, and the north-eastern recommended, an ominous silence prevailed. Meetings were held in various parts of the Province, next the citizens of St. John were silent; all at once a new idea appeared to take them—they threw off their lethargy, and resolved to have a railroad. And for what? To connect the lower colonies with Canada? No—but to connect them with the United States, which, in the language of the report, would be "a great highway from Europe to the remotest State in the Union."—He would now turn his attention to the line more particularly under the consideration of the committee—the Saint John and Shediac line. It commences at St. John, the great emporium of commerce in this Province, and terminates "no where." He begged pardon of his hon. friend opposite (Mr Hanington) for the expression; by using it he did not intend to disparage the place of his nativity, or to cast the least reflection on it or its inhabitants. What is there to induce a terminus there—to connect the St. Lawrence with the Bay of Fundy? For what? What is there to carry from thence to St. John? What can the people on the Gulf shore send to St. John—their timber? St. John has better than they have. Their deals? There are more in St. John than can find a market. Their ship timber? They have as good in St. John. Their grind stones? St. John has abundance nearer. Their agricultural produce? They cannot supply themselves. Their fish? They have as good a market as St. John has. But we are told that the waters of the Gulf will be alive with steamers. To go where—to carry what? Many years since an enterprising gentleman ran a steamboat between Pictou and Miramichi, touching at Charlottetown, and, although she was aided by bounties from the three Provinces, she would not pay, and was taken off the line. A company was then formed at Charlottetown, a boat was purchased in England, she also received the bounty, but proving to be a losing speculation, she was disposed of. Those enterprising people of St. John who had done much towards improving Shediac (the Messrs. Scovell) the year before that put on a boat to run between Pictou, P. E. Island, and Shediac; they likewise were aided by bounties, but after having run her for one year they took her to St. John to be employed as a tug. But even admitting that the whole trade of the north and east were to find its way to St. John, what would they do with the stuff? The farmers now cry out for bounties on their products. The fishermen are seeking a bounty on their fish; would they consume it. No, they would ship it. Have we not then as good markets as they have, and as great facilities for shipment? Can we not send our grain to England, our fish to the Mediterranean, the West Indies, the Brazils, the United States, and can we not send them to Canada with greater facility and less expense than St. John. Prince Edward Island has a better market in Halifax and in Newfoundland than St. John can give her. Great stress was laid on the export of fresh salmon,

and we were told that this railroad was to enrich the fisherman of the north, in the export of this article. If hon. gentlemen will cast their eyes upon the map they will see at a glance that Miramichi, the nearest point at which salmon are taken in any quantity, is more than 70 miles from the contemplated railroad; there are no salmon taken at Shediac. It has been said that the propellers that come through the canals from the Far West, will proceed to Shediac and deposit their cargoes, and take cargoes of fish in return; but fish is one of the articles that is to be transported on this railroad, and if the propellers do this, they will take away so much of the traffic, which must be deducted from the calculation of the profits. But it is contemplated that this railroad will extend from St. John to Calais, to meet the one from thence to Portland and Montreal; and does any one suppose that those propellers will pass by Montreal with their cargoes and proceed down to the River of St. Lawrence, and so on down the Gulf to Shediac, discharge their cargoes, and have them conveyed to St. John by railroad when they can discharge them at Montreal, and have them conveyed to Portland by rail, and thence to St. John by water and railroad. The hon. and learned member from St. John says the railroad will not stop at Shediac.—Once get it there, says he, and it will soon extend to Miramichi, and the more northern counties. If that be really the case why cannot we proceed with the great Trunk line; but he (Mr Carman) could not be seduced by this argument; he knew the north a little better than his hon. friend; they have nothing to give St. John that St. John has not; but give them the main Trunk line to Quebec, passing along the Gulf shore, and then they would open a market for their fish. But he was wasting time; he was like one beating the air. The Shediac line had been determined upon and hon. gentlemen had worked themselves into a belief that it *will* pay, and they must be allowed to enjoy their opinions; the citizens of St. John were sanguine, a very numerous and respectable meeting had been held, and resolutions passed, and a committee consisting of some of their most intelligent, talented and influential men had been sent as a deputation to urge the measure upon the consideration of the House, and they had discharged their mission with great ability. He had listened attentively to all the arguments, but they had failed to convince him that the Shediac Railroad would pay. However much they might be disposed to regard the opinion of individuals, the fact of a whole community favoring a measure, was not conclusive, for if they look to history they would find that not only individuals but communities fix their mind upon an object, and go mad in the pursuit.

If hon. gentlemen would turn their attention to the history of France, they will find that the nation ran wild with the great Mississippi scheme, projected by a Mr Law, who for the time was the most popular man in Europe; but suddenly the bubble burst and well nigh caused a national bankruptcy, and the projector was compelled to escape for his life. If they turned to the history of England, they would find that the great South Sea bubble, as it has been aptly termed, was projected, by which every one was to become rich. This bubble, together with upwards of eighty others that had been projected about the same time, burst, causing disappointment, loss, and misery. But he would come down to a later period, and nearer home—to a project that received very general attention and approbation, and one that was fresh in the recollection of every member of the committee. He alluded to the Shubenacadie Canal; that was designed to benefit Nova Scotia and to enrich Halifax. Every one knew the end of that great project; it had ended in disappointment and loss, and the unfinished walls and locks remained as monuments of the folly of the projectors. He would come down to a still later period, and to what had occurred in this Province.

In 1836 an act had passed that House, incorporating a company to construct a Railway from Shediac to the Bend of Petitcodiac, and to build steamers to ply on the Bay of Fundy; and in the same year acts had passed for the Lancaster Mill Company, the Tobique Mill Company, the South West Mill Company, the Saint John Bridge Company, and a number of other companies, which had proved most signal failures. And the projectors of these companies were no less sanguine than the projectors of the Saint John and Shediac Railway. He therefore called upon the committee to pause before they committed an act that was to plunge the province in a debt that could never be liquidated, for the purpose of carrying on a work of no national importance, and to his mind of very doubtful commercial advantage; for when, he would ask, in the history of Railroads, could one be found running as it were along a peninsula, parallel with both sea and inland navigation, and terminating at a place without commerce, without manufactures and without population. He was of opinion that the province was not in a condition to undertake of itself the construction of a Railroad; it was not sufficiently advanced in population. The adjoining state of Maine, to which hon. members were so fond of pointing as an example, had now only 120 miles of Railroad, and that has been constructed within three or four years, and it had a population of seven hundred thousand; and New Brunswick, now with a population of only two hundred thousand, was called upon immediately to construct a Railroad of equal extent. Having made these remarks on the Shediac line, he would crave the indulgence of the committee, and offer a few remarks on the report of the Select Committee. They set out with a quotation from his Excellency's speech at the opening of the