

Provincial Parliament.

MR JOHNSON'S SPEECH ON THE RAILWAY DEBATE.

Mr J. M. JOHNSON after explaining that in his remarks on a former day, he did not reflect upon Mr Wilkinson, but merely contended that as his strictures upon Major Robinson's Report had been published and circulated, it was but common justice that Major Robinson's reply should also go forth to the world, and all that he had said on this subject was in answer to remarks which tended to place Major R. in a false position. Mr Wilkinson was subordinate to Major R. in that survey, and he had thought fit to publish some strictures of his own mere notion, and to make statements, which, to say the least of them, were no evidence of his knowledge of the Eastern section of this Province. He had stated that the Eastern route recommended by Major Robinson, crossed a great number of rivers, ravines, &c. He (Mr J.) believed that Mr Wilkinson had never been in that section of the Country, and he knew that many of the rivers referred to, did not run within ten or fifteen miles of Major Robinson's line. It had been said that Major R. was influenced by the atmosphere of Halifax during a temporary residence, but no person would suspect Mr Wilkinson of being equally influenced by the atmosphere of Fredericton, where he resided, and held a situation in the Crown Land Office. He believed Mr W. to be a clever man, as a surveyor, but was not prepared to admit his standing as an engineer, equal to that of Major R.; he had found fault with Major R.'s line without examining or even seeing the country through which it passed, and had not pointed out any mode by which the mountain ranges running east and west across New Brunswick could otherwise be avoided. He had made these remarks in consequence of what had been said by the Honorable member from Charlotte (Captain Robinson) who last spoke, and should now proceed to the question before the Committee.

The question was one of vast importance, and he regretted that the Government had not come down with their bills, instead of vague and general resolutions; the Committee could then deal with the whole question, and possess a full knowledge of the measures required by the Government. No doubt there was a motive for the present course, and he had a right to form his own conjectures on the subject.

He did not feel disposed to speak of the comparative advantages of the Eastern route, and the one now submitted by the Government, but this necessity had been forced upon him by the course pursued by the members of the Government here and upstairs. Those gentlemen had chosen to refer to local feelings, and called upon the Eastern members to consider the question unbiassed by any such sectional feelings. Why had this caution been given before any such feelings had been manifested, and before any of the members from his section of the country had spoken? Was it intended to taunt them with prejudices—or was it meant to excite the local feelings of the members who represented this side of the Province, and thus engage local prejudices in favor of a scheme which their cool, deliberate judgment would condemn?

Had the Government wished the matter to be decided upon its merits? then should they ask the House whether a line of Railway to connect the Colonies, and upon the terms offered, was of such importance as to claim their support, leaving the route to be decided by disinterested British Commissioners. But if the Government felt that the present offer on the part of Canada and Nova Scotia, and without a loan for the European and North American line on equal terms, was not such as should be accepted, and yet desired to strengthen themselves in power by £2,000,000 sterling, and the consequent patronage; then indeed had they acted wisely in stirring up local feelings and affirming the route to be through those Counties where a majority of members could be secured, and their having pursued this course, convinced him (Mr J.) that the safety of the Government and not the advancement of the whole Province, had induced the Honorable Mr Chandler's submission to Canadian dictation.

That Honorable gentleman had told them that he had no interest to serve, but he resided in a part of the country where the line must go, and he held a large amount of real estate there. Members in this House might be similarly situated, and the Railroad might increase the value of that property 100 per cent. He did not say that Honorable members would be influenced by such mercenary motives, or that they would consent to ruin the Province that they might enrich themselves; but he felt that had he £40,000, or £50,000 in real property in Westmorland, it might cause him not to see the ruin to others in so clear a light. It would at least balance the local feelings of which he was accused as a northern member. The Honorable Attorney General might conceive it is duty to advocate the Government scheme even to the ruin of his own constituents but he might have spared their feelings when he was blighting their prospects; he at least should not have taunted them with narrow minded prejudice. That Honorable gentleman well knew that only by enlisting local feelings could they hope to carry this measure through the House. And that means had been taken out of doors to bring this local feeling to bear upon representatives who could not agree to support it.

The Honorable Attorney General had told them that the Government had agreed to the

Northern route, and to build the European and North American line by money borrowed on the same terms, but were forced to abandon that scheme when they learned that the Imperial Government would not advance money for any but the Halifax and Quebec line. Now, he did not hesitate to say that the construction put upon Mr Hawes's letter, by the Governments of Canada, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia, and at the meeting in Toronto, was correct, and the only one which it would reasonably bear. Look at the language used in that letter, "Her Majesty's Government will, by no means, object to its forming part of the plan which may be determined upon that it should include a provision for establishing a communication between the projected Railway and the Railways of the United States."

Now, what plan had Mr Hawes been speaking of? Surely the plan of building the line by the loan or guarantee of the Imperial Government. What provision could he mean this plan to include if not the assistance of that Government for this as for the other Line. 'Twas true that Earl Grey in his despatch of 27th November last had said that this was not intended, but he did not refuse to consider any application which might be made in reference to that Line. It was not the least remarkable feature in the late arrangement, that while Canada had retained in their final offer the condition that money was to be obtained at the same rate for the Line from Quebec to Montreal, £1,500,000 more, our Government had consented to withdraw the condition in the former agreement that this Province should obtain on equal terms the money required to build the European and North American Line. (Hon. Mr Partelow. There is no such condition.) He (Mr J.) would shew the Hon. Secretary that there was The agreement at Toronto was upon condition that we should get the money on equal terms for the European and North American Line; and Hon. Members (Messrs. Grey and Wilmot) had gone into the Government on those conditions. Then the offer made by Canadian Delegates at Halifax reserved the condition for the Quebec and Montreal Line. (Here Mr J. referred to the minute of Council on Messrs. Gray and Wilmot going into the Government and to the offer made by Canadian delegates to prove his statements.)

How then had we been so gulled by the Canadian Delegation? How had the Hon. Mr Chandler been beating about during the last twelve months? Last Session he was opposed to the Halifax and Quebec Line—against the Government undertaking Railroads. In June he was converted by a short journey with the Hon. Joseph Howe, fell into all the measures at Toronto, renounced his old fears, discarded all doubts, and agreed to pledge the Revenues for this undertaking round the Eastern shore. In January he was thrown adrift again, not because the Halifax and Quebec Line must be abandoned, but because the E. and N. A. Line was not included. In this state of doubt, he trembled, until like lightning's flash, the visit of Messrs Young, Hinks and Tache, from Canada, was announced by Telegraph. Three days' conversation with them in Fredericton, and Mr Chandler was converted to their doctrines, and went to aid in misleading Mr Howe, to whom the whole credit of the of the British offer was due. Mr Chandler had all along been as a feather in the air, blown about by every varying blast; and when Messrs Young, Hinks and Tache went to Nova Scotia, Mr Chandler went as *attaché* also;—agreed to sink everything that was due to New Brunswick that Canada and Nova Scotia might visit each other by steam.

Were they to be told, then, that we could not obtain the assistance required for both Lines, when we were backed up by Canada and Nova Scotia. It could have been obtained if our Government had been sufficiently firm. The debt of Canada was £5,000,000. £4,500,000 of this was expended in public works.—Not Railways, which required a large annual expenditure for working expenses, but Canals, which required little more than the first outlay. The Hon. Member from the St. John (Mr Grey) had taken his statement literally when he said canals had no working expenses, but that Hon. Member knew that he spoke comparatively, and in this sense the remark was correct.

Canada had borrowed from Great Britain £1,500,000 for public works, shortly after the rebellion of '37-8, and were now seeking £2,000,000 for the joint Railway, and £1,500,000 for the Line to Montreal. If they could get this amount we should not be refused aid to the Portland Line. But we were told that Canada would not consent to any line but the one by the Valley of the St John. This statement amounted to little short of an insult upon us. We were to build five-twelfths of the Line—carry it through our own Province just where Canada should dictate, and Canada would make use of us to get an additional loan of one million and a half for internal improvements. Had our Government manifested half the firmness in resisting the dictation of Canada which they exhibited in refusing the calls of the people of New Brunswick on frequent occasions, we should be in a position to dictate to Canada. Our natural position gave us this power. They wanted the line and it must pass through New Brunswick. We could build to the Canadian and Nova Scotian boundary, and they must join us where we pleased; but Nova Scotia was with us and we should have two to one in our favor. The Hon. Attorney General said, they were bound to adopt this route as most conducive to the Ge-

neral interests of the Province. This was a bold statement, and one not to be sustained by arguments or facts. If this were the case that Hon. Gentleman must have been influenced by local feelings when he had agreed to the Toronto arrangement. He (the Hon. Attorney General) had placed himself in the position, of having formerly pledged himself to carry out the first scheme, and now he said he could not do so, but that he must carry out the present proposition. (Hon. Attorney General here rose to explain, that he had distinctly stated in his opening speech, that in consequence of Earl Grey's last Despatch, and of the construction therein put upon Mr Hawes's letter, it was no longer possible for this Province to carry out the former scheme; and that therefore he had felt that either the present proposition must be supported, or the Province would get no Railroad at all.

He (Mr J.) remembered the statement of the Hon. Attorney General, but did not agree that the question was this line or none. It might suit the Government to urge such an argument, but it was not in their power to convince men of its truth. It might indeed be said that unless the European line were connected and provided for, the Government could not carry the Northern route through this House, and that the members on this side of the Province would oppose it. But where then was the disinterested patriotism of those who accused the Eastern members of sectional feelings? Who were the dogs in the manger referred to by the Honorable member of the Government? (Mr Gray) Why that gentleman would only support Mr Hawes's proposition on condition that a line through St. John and to the American frontier should be also provided for.

As so much had been said in favor of this route, and without pointing out any of its advantages over the Major Robinson line, he would ask the indulgence of the Committee while he considered it in a financial, commercial, and national point of view. They had been told that £1,600,000 Currency or £600,000 per mile would be sufficient to build the line through this Province. Now Major Robinson's report would show that this sum was more than sufficient by the Eastern route, because the natural difficulties would be avoided, and the North-west branch of the Miramichi would afford the only passage across the mountain ranges; that the grades would be the easiest yet known on a line of equal length, that for 635 miles the whole distance from Halifax to Quebec by this route, 100 tons per train could be taken, an additional engine being required for 25 miles only. Whereas no other line could be found without crossing a range of mountains from the Tobique to the head waters of the Restigouche and the Miramichi, extending completely across the face of the country, and being 1216 feet high; and even from Mr Wilkinson's own shewing the line across these mountains is only practicable. (Here Mr Johnson referred to Major Robinson's report, and also his reply to Mr Wilkinson, to show that there would be a rise of one foot in 49, or, 107½ feet per mile, for four miles; and read an extract.) "An Engine which could draw a load of freight up a moderate grade of 30 feet per mile of 144 tons, would on an incline of one in 49, draw only 36 tons; and this was the grade for four miles in length which Mr Wilkinson thought nothing more than objectionable, but which Major R. says is next to impracticable. This was but one of the many difficulties to be found on the favorite Government route; and he (Mr J.) felt certain that instead of £1,600,000 Currency;—two millions sterling would be expended and the line not completed. This two millions would involve an annual charge to remit the interest to Great Britain of £84,000 Currency; and when this should be added to the civil list 14,000, expenses of legislation, collection and protection of the Revenue, and ordinary expenses of Government, we should find a deficiency to be made up by increased tariff and not have one shilling left for roads, schools, or other objects, to which they had been used to lend assistance. This was a serious point of view in which the question might be considered. When we had a trunk line from Halifax to Quebec which absorbed all our revenues, how would the back settlers be benefitted who paid a large portion of those revenues, and yet resided hundreds of miles away, and could not get a road, a bridge, or a schoolmaster. (Mr Needham—if the line was going North you would not refuse it on that ground.) He (Mr J.) contended that did the line go by Major R.'s survey, it would not cost anything like that sum, and yet he would not wish to see it built on these terms. New Brunswick would then build one-third and not five-twelfths, and he would not ask that line without a branch to Saint John. He would rather see the Eastern Counties connected with St. John by railroad as the Western Counties were by the River St. John, than have the Halifax and Quebec line alone; it was not fair for the Honorable member from the City to say that he was selfish. He (Mr J.) had advocated and supported the European and North American line at a time, when all hopes of the Quebec line were abandoned; he had done it in Northumberland before the last election, at a time when it was not over popular in that quarter, and when it had been made a ground of canvass against him; he had risked his election by bringing this question prominently before his constituents, and under like circumstances he would pursue a similar course.

They had been told that Canada and Nova Scotia would build a portion of the line through New Brunswick under this arrangement, but this was deception. Had the other line been adopted Canada would have 100

miles to build down the St. Lawrence and this Province so much less than by the present scheme. The average cost of lines in the United States was no criterion, many lines were laid down in that country in a temporary manner, and with flat iron; and after three or four years were rebuilt at twice the original cost. The working expenses on the best paying lines in the States, amounted to 38 per cent. on the gross receipts, but upon a line with grades of 107 feet rise per mile, and offered to the competition of the River St. John and the lines from Western Canada to ports in the United States, we might fairly suppose 135 per cent. nearer the mark. The Honorable member of the Government (Mr Gray) had given a glowing description of the paying prospects of this line; but if he were correct, the Government should be censured for allowing Canada or Nova Scotia to build any portion through New Brunswick, we should retain the whole line and its consequent profits for our own people. That Hon. member had last year informed the House that the European and North American line would be a good speculation and that a Company would be formed at once to carry it out, he was then in the Company and out of the Government, but was now in the Government and out of the Company; and he told us they had to abandon the Northern route because money could not be obtained for the grand speculation which he was last year going to build and make a fortune by. He would by and by, refer to the journals and debates to shew how consistent the present position of our Government was with their expressed and deliberate opinions. Last winter, but the idea had just struck him, that the parts of our Government were not unlike those of a steam engine. There was the Honorable Secretary representing the piston or *primum mobile*; the Honorable Mr Chandler up stairs, as the safety valve; the Attorney General the hot-well, keeping the whole machine in hot water; the Surveyor General the connecting rod between free trade and protection, old tory and liberal; the Honorable member from St. John opposite, (Mr Gray) might be considered the political eccentric. (Hon. Mr Hayward—what part am I?) He (Mr J.) would style the Honorable member from Sunbury, the Government blow-off pipe.

In a commercial point of view, the proposed route could not bear comparison with the Eastern. The trade of Western New Brunswick now flowed by the River St. John to and from the city. Build this Railroad parallel to the river and into Quebec, the river would in effect be made to flow the other way—the whole supplying trade to the lumberers above Fredericton would then be in the hands of the Canadians. Canada would still retain her trade with Eastern New Brunswick, because they are cut off from St. John by nature, and require to make a voyage round Nova Scotia to get to the commercial capital of their own Province. Let members of the Committee examine the map. There was a Line running north and south, dividing the Eastern Counties from the Western. The former had no commercial interests in common with the latter, but the Eastern Railroad with a branch to St. John would turn the trade of those counties to that city, while they must retain all the trade of the Western Counties until destroyed or diverted by a Railroad to Canada as now proposed. Would any man in his senses build an artificial highway parallel to and through the same country watered by a magnificent river, and yet leave that half of the Province whose resources were greater and its trade more valuable, entirely unconnected by land or water communication. The Western Counties bordering on the State of Maine from Saint Andrews up to the Canadian Line without a solitary harbor, while on the Eastern side of the Province there were thirteen or fourteen good harbors setting in at right angles to the Major Robinson Line which would thus be fed at every few miles from a seaboard of two hundred miles in extent, abounding with the best fisheries in the world. On the one side of the Province the line will find a rival in the parallel river and no additional traffic. On the other there is no rival highway and every possible source of increased traffic from sea and land. The Eastern Counties of New Brunswick would in a few years add more to the prosperity of Saint John than all the trade they could receive from Canada. But the Eastern Line would deprive Canada of this trade, while the other route would leave it untouched, and take part of the trade of Western New Brunswick from St. John. No wonder, then, that Canada preferred the Valley of the St. John route. But it was when viewed as a national undertaking that the present scheme appeared most absurd. They had been told up stairs, and it was hinted here, that annexationists would oppose this route. He (Mr J.) had never heard of more than one annexation resolution being moved in the Province, and that was at St. John. But it was a strange way to prevent annexation, by building an iron rail all along the boundary line. This route was intended to fence out the Americans. What were the objects which the Imperial Government had in view when they offered aid for this work? Were they not those of national defence and emigration. A military road and homes for their surplus people. How could the line now proposed answer either of these purposes, for 100 miles along the American frontier, without access by the navy from one end to the other, and thus liable to be rendered useless when most required. Had the Eastern Line been built in 1838, there would not have been a rebellion in Canada; but had the Valley of the St. John Line been laid down, how many troops