

ducts. It is impossible to make roads over our soil, such as will stand the wear and tear of heavy hauling, particularly in the spring and fall of the year. It has been a very difficult matter to get the productions of the country to market, with such inadequate facilities as we have at present, and it has already been a necessity to expend a large sum of money in order to enable our people to carry their surplus products to convenient harbors, and the question which forces itself upon us, is, whether it is most advisable to spend money in macadamizing and improving our common roads, or in building a line of railroad through the Island? It is a question which deserves our serious consideration, and should be taken up by this House, and dealt with upon its own merits. It is a fact readily admitted, that we have no loose stone or granite, such as is found in the neighboring Provinces of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, suitable for the construction of roads, and the cost of macadamizing with imported stone, has been found to be so very heavy, that it is quite evident that we never can prosecute that mode of road-making to any great extent. In this country labor is becoming very scarce, and the farmers are becoming better off, and markets tolerably good; ready cash is to be obtained for products of all kinds. The moment the harvest is over, farmers begin their threshing, and afterwards commence to bring their products to market; in many cases travelling a distance of 10 or 15 miles. This takes much time which is wanted on the farm. We all know that time is money. The expense to the farmer of getting his products to market, under existing circumstances, is equal to three times what it would had we a railroad. Had we a railroad, our farmers would be enabled to spend upon their farms, in preparing for the next year's crop, much of time now consumed in hauling their products to market. As the country grows older, and as farmers cultivate their lands to a greater extent, the more will the want of improved communication be felt. Under these circumstances, it is evident that, with the increasing prosperity of our people, something must be done to give them corresponding facilities of transport. Now, as I have said, the question is, shall we undertake to charter vessels to bring stone and gravel from abroad, with which to macadamize our roads, or shall we undertake to build a railroad? I know some hon. members are opposed to the latter expedient, because the line will not run down to particular districts. Along the western part of the country, for many miles, there is no harbor, nor means by which the inhabitants can provide themselves, by water transport, with many articles indispensably necessary to the comfort of their families. They have firewood in abundance, timber, staves for making barrels, and many other things required in other parts of the Island, the sale of which would go far towards enabling them to pay for their lands, all of which are now useless to them, by reason of the want of a railroad. Again, we have been told that building a railroad would bring ruin upon the Colony. Those who say this apparently contradict themselves, for nearly all the resolutions passed at public meetings, although they express opposition to the undertaking, nevertheless, admit that all countries in which railroads have been built, have flourished. So, if we take this for granted, these objections are untenable, and that facts which these opponents of a railway admit, are amongst the strongest arguments that can be adduced for building one. It is admitted by the opposition, that railroads are, in all countries, beneficial. The next question is, have we the resources adequate to such an undertaking? My own opinion is, that our pecuniary resources are, not only equal, but surpass those of our sister Provinces. And here I may be pardoned for making allusion to the press. There is no man who more highly appreciates the advantages of a free and enlightened press than I do. I glory in the liberty of a manly and independent press. But there are some people so foul and invidious, that no slander is too glaring or false; no insinuation too vile; nothing too bad to be put forth by them as a fact. I say, I glory in the liberty of a free press, I would be very sorry to interfere with its liberty; but a licentious press is a curse to the country in which it exists. The inference these calumniators of their country would have their readers draw, is that we have no resources for such an enterprise. Now, sir, what, in all probability, would a railroad cost us? It is well known that a first-class railroad can be had here for £5000 currency per mile for construction, including all the apparatus, whilst in England, they cost £33,000 sterling on the average; in Scotland over £25,000; in Ireland less. Of the earnings of a railroad, the only proper way to judge is by comparison; comparing with ours the resources and population of those countries where railroads have been built. If we take New Brunswick, we find that the cost of constructing the Shediac line of 108 miles was \$14,000 per mile, taking their then population at 194,000, amounted, on an average, to \$24 per head, for every man, woman and child in the Province. Our railroad, from Casumpec to Georgetown, a distance of 120 miles, at £5,000 per mile, would cost the people of this Island, an average of \$20 a head. No sensible man can be found in New Brunswick who will say that they could do without their railroads. The question then arises, can the people of this Island as well afford to have a railway as the people of that Province? There, much of the country is barren and worthless, and their people are largely engaged in the lumber trade, and that, not infrequently, fails to prove remunerative; consequently, the people in general are poor compared with ours, who have fine fertile lands, and, by their industry, are growing rich from the products of their farms. This is a strong argument in favor of the construction of a railroad in this Island. Besides this the population per square mile on this Island, is much greater than in any of the other Provinces. In Upper Canada at the last census, was 11.57 per square mile; in Lower Canada 5.29; Nova Scotia 17.72; New Brunswick 9.29; P. E. Island 37.29; Newfoundland 3.5; thus, making our population, per square mile, more than three times that of Upper Canada, seven times that of Lower Canada, double that of Nova Scotia, four times that of New Brunswick, and twelve times that of Newfoundland. The returns from the Shediac road for the past year, gave about one and a half per cent upon the cost of construction, over and above working expenses. But, if that road had been built by the gauge of 3ft. 6in., instead of 5ft. 6in., and had cost £5,000, per mile, instead of £14,000, the same amount of work would have been performed, and the profit would have been 4 per cent, instead of 1½ per cent. Take again, the difference in the working expenses and the wear and tear, between the narrow and broad gauge, which is said to be about 40 per cent and 70 per

cent, respectively, of the earnings; and in this way, assuming our traffic to be equal to that of the Shediac line, our Railway would not only pay working expenses, but leave a net profit of over 6 per cent, equal to the full interest on all the money invested in its construction; and, consequently, be no burden upon the country. As before remarked, the population of New Brunswick to the square mile, is only one-fourth that of ours. There is much of the land along their line which is rocky, barren, and unproductive, nevertheless, it is a fact, as shown by their returns, that over 95 per cent of all the passengers traffic of the Shediac road, is wayside or local traffic, and less than 5 per cent through traffic. Of the freight traffic, four-fifths is local, and only one-fifth passes through. As our country is settled all along the proposed line, and as we have a much denser population to the square mile, than New Brunswick, it is but fair to assume that we should have more traffic. So that if we take this as the standard of comparison, I don't see how a railroad through this Island could fail to be more remunerative than a railroad in the neighboring Provinces—receiving as it would, more work, the population being much greater to the square mile, and our products three times greater than they are in New Brunswick; so that, instead of the road ruining our people, it would be the means of adding to their wealth, by the benefits which would result from the increased facilities for transport of their productions, and the higher prices which they would obtain for them. In all progressive countries, railways are looked upon as necessities. The United States are intersected in every direction by lines of railway, and the people of that country were looked upon as amongst the most progressive and enterprising people in the world. Upper Canada, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia, are following in the same progressive path, and why should we lag behind? A substantial proof of the success of railroads in New Brunswick, is given by the fact, that they were now running a line from Fredericton to River de Loup, in Canada. With your permission, Sir, I will now allude to a letter of Mr. Derby, of Boston, which appeared in our local newspapers a short time since. This gentleman is admitted to be one of the first statisticians in the United States, and he says that, if the country would furnish 50 tons of freight per day, each way, or its equivalent, that is, 25 tons and 25 passengers, the railway would pay working expenses and interest. Now, every hon. member of the committee must be satisfied that the freight and travel would double the amount named. There can be but little doubt, therefore, that the work would pay, and would be no burden or expense upon the country. The railroad from Casumpec to Georgetown, at a cost of £5000 a mile, (the distance being 120 miles) would be £600,000. Right of Way, say £10,000; Engineer, say £220 for three years; Commissioners, £4000; Appraisers, £3000, and say, an additional £2750 for Contingencies—the total cost would thus be £622,000. During the first year of construction the expenditure would not exceed £150,000; and as the expenditure would extend over the whole year, not more than six months interest could be estimated, viz: £4500. The second year we should have to provide for the interest for twelve months, of the £150,000 expended for the first year, and £200,000 expended the second year for six months, amounting to £150,000. The third year interest of £350,000 for 12 months, and balance of expenditure, say £272,000 for, say, three months, equal to £26,580. In all, £6,080 in three years. Two and a half per cent on the imports, would amount in three years to £45,000, and balance of interest on this amount; say £600, to be added. So that, whilst in the years of construction £46,680 would be spent, the 2½ per cent would realize £45,600,—only 48¢ less than the expenditure—to say nothing about the saving in the Road Service and Post Office Department. One of the papers published in this city, the *Patriot*, stated a few days ago, to the effect that the Government contemplated levying a tax of 3 per cent on the imports, 2½ per cent on the advalorem, and 1½ per cent on the exports of the country. That statement was incorrect, and without the shadow of truth to support it.

At the close of his speech, he submitted the following:—

"Whereas, the Trade and Exports of this Island have much increased during the past few years; and whereas it is found almost impossible, in the absence of stone or gravel, to keep the roads in an efficient state of repair, to render easy the transport of the productions of the Colony; and whereas the construction and maintenance of a line of Railway through the Island, would greatly facilitate its trade, develop its resources, enlarge its revenue, and open more frequent and easy communication with the neighboring Provinces and the United States:

Resolved, therefore, That the construction of a first-class Railway, of three feet six inch gauge, from Casumpec Harbor to Georgetown, calling at Summerside and Charlottetown, with branch lines to Souris and Tignish, the cost of which not to exceed Five Thousand Pounds, currency per mile, is worthy the serious consideration of this House."

Hon. the LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (Mr. Wightman)—As the principles of the measure had been pretty fully discussed a few days ago, he would not enter at any length into their consideration then. Would merely say with respect to the resolution of the hon. the Leader of the Government, that he still saw no immediate necessity for committing the country to so costly an undertaking. The people should first be consulted, and as they had not been, nor any tangible expression of opinion in its favor obtained from them, he thought it would be an unwarrantable assumption of authority to commit the country to the building of one hundred and twenty miles of a railway, without knowing whether their constituents were willing for it or not. They came there as the servants, and not the masters, of those whom they represented; and hence their opinion should be first taken before proceeding further in the matter. If the work was undertaken, the money to build it, and the interest would have to be provided and paid by the people; and what was more reasonable than that those who had to bear the burden should first be consulted? It was premature to proceed with the matter until the route had been ascertained by a practical Engineer, and his report with the probable cost of construction, laid before them. The hon. member (the Leader of the Government) says that a railway can be built for £5000 currency per mile; but equally £5000 were others that it would cost much more. The Opposition, he could assure the Hon. Leader of the Government, was not opposed to the principle of a railway, but wished, before undertaking the work, to have the consent of the people. He (Hon. Mr. W.) felt confident if the matter was put off for another year, there would be more in favor of the undertaking than there were then,

because time would be given to consult their judgment, and elicit information from public discussion that might change the opinion of opponents and give the measure their support. The result of the public meetings which had been held in the country to discuss the question, went to show that the people were divided in opinion with respect to it; and he did not see that it was the duty of that hon. Committee to undertake so important a step until the country had more time to consider the matter. She people were fully competent to judge for themselves, and would not thank them to press forward so important a work without their consent. In no country was the bulk of the people more capable of judging of what was for their advantage than the people of this Island were. He would regard so has y a movement as insulting to their intelligence. It had been argued that it would afford greater facilities for conveying wood and other articles to market than were then enjoyed. He was free to admit that to many along the North side such might be the case, but all along the Southern coast of the Island, he thought the facilities for shipping were such as to render so expensive a work unnecessary. Nor did he think there were many who thought otherwise along the whole southern coast, except those who wished it in Georgetown. In proof of that, he begged to submit that they did not hear of a single man complaining that the facilities for shipping were insufficient on the south side of the Island. Nor did he believe that a railway would have much effect in enhancing the value of property generally throughout the country. It might in a few places but not otherwise. He did not believe, either, that a railway would add one farthing a bushel more to the price of produce. How could it? Would men who had facilities ample and sufficient for shipping at their own doors send it away by a railway? They would not. It was unreasonable to suppose they would. He would beg leave to submit, as an amendment, the following Resolution: "Whereas, the construction of a trunk line of Railway through the colony was not submitted to the people at the late general election, and no expression of public opinion upon the project has been given to this House by petition, and whereas sufficient information has not been laid before this House to enable it to decide satisfactorily upon the proper gauge of the road, or the best route it should run, as also the expenditure necessary for its construction, which would necessitate a large increase in our taxation. Therefore Resolved, That no resolution to frame a Bill upon for the construction of a railroad through this Island, be passed in this House until a survey of the route, by competent engineers, be first made, and the report of such surveyors, embodying their estimates of the probable cost of the road, be published for the approval of the people."

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