The Examiner.

A WEEKLY JOURNAL OF POLITICS, LITERATURE AND NEWS.

"This is true Liberty, when Freeborn Men, having to advise the Public, may speak free."—Euripides

VOL. XXII.] CHARLOTTETOWN, PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND, MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 1871. [NO. 39.

Parliamentary.

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

Important Railway Speeches.

Hon. ATTORNEY GENERAL rose for the purpose of seconding the resolution of the hon. the Leader of the Government. The amendment which had been submitted, was as anomalous as was the course the opposition pursued when they voted against the paragraph in the address in reply to the speech of His Honor the Lieut. Governor. If he, (Hon. Att'y General) offered such an opposition as that hon. member and his friends had given on that occasion, he would endeavor to be in a position to fortify his arguments with proofs which would admit of examination. His Honor, in the speech with which he opened the Legislature, said, "I am of opinion that the facilities for the transport and shipment of the productions of Prince Edward Island are now inadequate." In reply, they said, "We concur with your Honor in the opinion that the facilities for the shipment and transportation of the productions of our Colony are insufficient," which the opposition voted against. Were hon. members opposite prepared to say that the means for the shipment and transport of the productions of the country were sufficient? It was hardly necessary for him to say that they would not. He, (Hon. Att'y General) thought no intelligent audience would, when the facts and figures which had been submitted by the hon. the Leader of the Government were fairly placed before them, say but that there was an urgent necessity for having their facilities for the shipment of their productions improved by the construction of a Railway. The public debates of what took place in those meetings which in the country had voted against the undertaking, went to show that the people were not in reality opposed to a Railway. The extraordinary reasoning and resolution of the hon. Leader of the Opposition, (Hon. Mr. Wightman) only went to weaken his position. (Hear) and to prove that some other motive underlaid their hostility to the undertaking. Just think of a party of men saying to his Honor the Lieutenant Governor, "We will not even consider the matter!" Railways were not new. The construction or building of one was not a work that was never undertaken before. They had the experience of other countries and he thought their results were too well known for any one to get up with any show of reason, and say that they had been ruinous to the people of any country. (Hear.) No hon. member could get up and say that they had. On the contrary, they increased the value of every man's property in the country, and opened an avenue by means of which the comforts of civilized society were brought within the reach of all every man, while it equalised prices, and allowed men in all parts of the country to participate in the benefits arising from having the useful commodities of life cheapened and brought within their reach. It would be the means also of increasing the consumption of dutiable articles, while it would open up the means for their payment. It would also increase the facilities for travelling, and add to those means necessary even for a more general education of the people. (Applause.)

There was no class of people in the country but what would be benefited by the construction of a Railway. It had been so in other countries, and would be so here, too. One objection raised was, that the Land Question should first be settled. As in such reasoning he saw no argument, he would not pause to reply to it. He understood that the distance which the road would run through the properties of the large landed proprietors, would not exceed twenty miles, while most of it would be through that already in the hands of the Government, all of which would be enhanced in value by a Railway. Much of the land perhaps the whole, through which the road would go, which belonged to large proprietors, was let in long leases, and as a result, the tenant, and not the landlord would be benefited by the Railway. The landlord could but claim his rent. If their road was going to cost from £9,000 to £15,000 a mile, he certainly would admit the reasonableness of opposing the undertaking, but as it had been proven by the Leader of the Government that it could be built for £5,000, cy, a mile, he felt perfectly justified in supporting the resolution. But, if it would cost more than that, he would oppose it, (Hear, hear.) and challenged the opposition to show that the calculations of his hon. friend the Leader of the Government, were incorrect. Nor had any hon. member attempted to prove that the road could not be built for that amount. The only objection raised was, that the question had not been submitted to the people. He admitted that they were not there to betray the people; but their constituents expected them to provide for the improvement of their roads, in order that means of travel and locomotion might be made easier, and could not see but that their action would be quite legitimate if they met that by providing for building a cheap railway. If, on all matters affecting the local wants of the country, they had to consult their constituents they should have annual, instead of quadrennial elections. Why, they might as well go back to the days of Charles the First, when Parliaments sat for an unlimited term, if the representatives of the people had no authority to legislate on matters affecting the general interests, unless every question had been specially submitted to the people for approval at the polls. They went back to the people every fourth year to know whether they had confidence in them or not. They did so last year, and were entrusted with their confidence; and in considering the question of a Railway, if hon. members believed it would confer a general benefit upon the country, their duty was to support the resolution. If as the peoples representatives, they could not act thus certainly there was no dignity in holding the position they did, why if they were to have no mind of their own in disposing of matters which were to be dealt with. If they were to be merely repeating-machines, constituents might as well pick up men from the street and give them their instructions on every question upon which they were to vote. But he took a higher, nobler, broader and more dignified view of the position and responsibilities of a Legislator. His duty was to promote the public interests of the people to the extent of his power, and when he came to that House had to exercise his reason, and pursue that course of which his better judgment approved in dealing with all matters upon which he had to give an opinion, or record a vote. They did so on the Hustings, and should do so there also. The public man who truckled to every whim and fancy, and bowed to every clamor, exercising no mind of his own, was to be despised and pitied. (Applause.) He was not an Engineer, nor had he the ability to go into the matter with the exactness of his hon. friend the Leader of the Government, but he knew this Island was in a peculiar position with respect to such undertakings, and would add a favorable one, for they had the experience of the world at large as to the best guage to be adopted and need not go forward in the dark. Not so in England and other countries when they commenced their's. The first time he traveled on a railway was in England. It was the broad guage. Since that period trial had been made of the relative merits of the different guages, and the narrow guage was coming into general use in all places where they were introducing new lines. Engineers said they could be built for half the price of the broad guage, (Hear, Hear,) one great advantage being that they were much more easily adapted to the contour of the country as was convincingly proved by a valuable pamphlet which he had been reading, the perusal of which he would recommend to their notice. He thought the opposition to the Railway scheme arose more from party feelings than hostility to the undertaking, and did not know that they should be too severe on hon. members, if by so doing they thought they could make political capital, perhaps he would do so himself. (Laughter). But still they ought to give the matter an unbiassed consideration, and deal with it in a reasonable and proper spirit. If a Railroad paid in the other Provinces where the population was so much less than it was in this Island, he could not see why it should not pay here also. It had been stated by persons quite competent to form an opinion that the working expenses of the narrow guage would be but 40 per cent of the net earnings of the road, while that of the broad guage was 72 per cent. Hence if it could be shewn that their road could be built for £5,000 currency per mile, and that over 90 per cent of the traffic on the road in a less densely settled Province was local. Surely on this Island much more profitable results would be attained. He was no statician, yet he would submit a few figures which his hon. friend the Leader of the Opposition might refute if he could. The length of the road from Shediac to St. John was 108 miles. The gross receipts of which last year was $188,548. A Railroad from Alberton to Georgetown would be say 120 miles, which with a traffic equal to that on the Shediac line, would yield a traffic of $209,497 or £65,467 16s. 3d. per annum. Basing these calculations on the road nearest to themselves, with the working of which they were best acquainted, he thought he was not indulging in any flights of fancy or imaginary calculations in what he had advanced. Assuming that the road would cost on an average £5,500 a mile, which would include land damages, Railway Commissioners, &c., for 120 miles, it would reach the sum of £660,000, the interest of which at six per cent would amount to £39,600. Assuming then, as he had before noticed, that the working expenses of the 3 feet 6 inch guage would be but 40 per cent or 30 per cent less than that of the broad, and that the receipts of earnings from all sources would be £65,467 the expenses at 40 per cent would amount to £26,187, thus leaving a balance in favor of the road of £39,280, to meet the interest of the capital or cost of the railway, which, as he before stated, was £39,600, leaving a balance of £320 to pay the interest in full; and surely the hon. member (the Leader of the Opposition) would not allow such a trifling draw upon the public revenues of the country to frighten him out of depriving the Colony of a Railway. (Laughter). He (Hon. Atty. Gen.) thought the arguments and figures submitted by the Hon Leader of the Government, himself and others, clearly shewed that the P. E. Island Railway would at the end of ten years be self-sustaining. That was, going on the assumption that the local traffic would be equal to that on the E. and N. A. Railway. He merely threw out these hints to shame those hon. members who had gone to public meetings in the country with such dolorous arguments against a work to which he felt they themselves were not opposed. (Hear, hear and laughter). He hoped, however, hon. members opposite would excuse him (Hon. Attorney General) when he said he thought it would be much more creditable to them, as the representatives of an intelligent people, to set the matter fairly before there constituents, (Hear.) He respected the opposition of those who differed from his opinion, and would be sorry to underate their judgment, but when they had the assurance of the Hon. Leader of the Government, that if the railroad would cost more than the sum he had named he would have nothing to do with it, he was at a loss whether to charge their hostility to their want of candour or credulity. He had the honor to represent one of the most intelligent constituencies on the Island, and was glad to be able to say the most of them were in favor of a Railway. He could not but feel amused to notice the haste of the opposition in introducing a Resolution as an amendment of that which they had prejudged would have been submitted, rather than of what had. He hoped the opposition would assume a more dignified position, and produce figures and arguments to support the course they were pursuing. Instead of rising to show that the arguments or figures of the hon. Leader of the Government were incorrect, the hon. Leader of the Opposition arose and submitted a resolution which, he supposed, had been written, and re-written, and engraved in caucus, before it was concluded to bring it forward, and when they did submit it, the only argument was, "O, you have not submitted the question to the people at the polls!" [Hear.] He, (hon. Att'y General) had as much respect for public opinion as any man could have, but he had no respect for the inconsistent and and unparliamentary course which the hon member allowed himself to pursue when he submitted that amendment. And yet, with all their vaunted regard, in words, for the opinion of the people, there was not one word in that amendment which pledged them to go to the people with that question. [Hear] Was that consistent? Did it not show that, when on the floor of that House, and at public meetings they used such reasoning, that they used it for a cloak wherewith to cover their political scheming. Was that frank? was it honorable? was it becoming the dignity of the representatives of the people? [Applause from Gov't members.] He would tell hon. members opposite, that it would have been much more becoming the position they had the honor to occupy, had they gone to their constituents, and truthfully laid the matter before them. [Hear.] Such political shirking betrayed, not merely hostility to the Government, but open deception towards those they represented. Well did the hon. member, the Leader of the Opposition, know how utterly impossible it would be to obtain a fair expression of opinion at the polls on that one question. He was well aware that Education, Confederation, and other issues, would arise to divert attention from it. [Hear.] That the Opposition were insincere he felt constrained to believe, or they would not have tabled a resolution which anticipated a course which his hon. friend on his right, (Hon Leader of the Government) had not yet taken. That such was the course he had taken he could not then deny, yet it set forth the object the Opposition had in view. But he would indignantly enquire, if that was the way so important a public question should be dealt with? He felt convinced that if the hon. member would but direct his attention earnestly to the matter, and demonstrate the enquiry by figures, he would find that, instead of the undertaking being one which would bring ruin upon the country, the very opposite would be the result. [Hear, and yes.] The general interests and prospects of the country could not be injured by such a work, and the hon. member would find that spending half a million of money amongst the people, would lay the basis for their increased and increasing prosperity. [Hear.] Sorry indeed would he, (Hon. Att'y General) be to plunge his loved native Island home into a course which would entail lasting ruin upon its people. He might be rash at times, and perhaps, inconsiderate, but he hoped and trusted, he was neither so rash nor short-sighted as to pursue a course which would entail such a legacy on his native land. He was prepared heartily to go for the construction of a Railway on the terms suggested, believing as he did, that such a course was one that would confer untold benefits upon Prince Edward Island, and would take the liberty of recommending to hon. members opposite the wisdom and propriety of following the course pursued by his hon. friend who submitted the resolution, and endeavor as he did to fortify their position by facts and figures, which challenged scrutiny and investigation. To hear those outside who opposed the measure, expressing their views on the question, a stranger would suppose they were the Rothschilds of the Island, and possessed the commercial wealth of the Colony. Amongst their leading merchants, farmers, mechanics, and capitalists, many were in favor of a Railway, while he admitted many other respectable men counselled delay. But he, (Hon. Att'y General) could see no reason for the opposition given to the undertaking but that which resulted from selfishness. Those who advocated a Railway, if it ruined the country, could not fail to injure themselves also. He would merely add that every farm in the Colony was susceptible of being much improved; that their whole Island would yet be cultivated like a garden, and of course give employment to a Railway. Yet, if hon. members opposite could, by facts, figures and reasonable arguments based thereon, show him that a Railway would bring ruin upon the home of himself and his children, he would give to it his decided opposition. [Cheers.]

Hon. B. DAVIES.—In rising to address the Committee on this occasion, Mr. Chairman, my first duty is to protest against the unfair treatment to which the minority have been subjected by the majority. The Government has laid down a rule for this side of the House, which they have no idea of applying to themselves. Relying on the majority at their back, they refused the motion of the hon. member from Souris, (Mr. McLean) for a Committee to consider the present Education system of the Colony. They burked that resolution by moving the previous question. The subject matter of that resolution is one of the greatest importance to the people of the Island, and no stronger proof of this can be adduced than the fact that it caused the disruption of the late Government. I should have supposed that those gentlemen who deserted their party, and crossed the floor of the House, for the alleged reason that our Educational Act operated unfairly against the interests of their church, would have gladly availed themselves of the opportunity offered by the resolution of going into Committee, when their alleged grievance could be investigated and redressed. But the sincerity of their professions can be judged by the course they have pursued, for their action indicates that they have no grievance to complain of. I protest against the arbitrary conduct of the hon. Leader of the Government and his fifteen followers, in laying down, not an hour ago, the rule that the House should not go into Committee, unless clear reasons for such Committee were given by the mover, and now, without any reason assigned, going into Committee on one of the most important questions ever mooted in this Assembly. This conduct only proves the tyranny of the majority, in refusing to this side of the House the rights they claim and exercise for themselves. I advise young members who support the Government to be cautious in adopting the belief that they are safe in the future, because in the present they are acting with the majority. The soundness of the cause they support, not the party with which they associate, will justify them in the eyes of the people. Much stress had been laid on the bad state of our roads, as affording an argument for this proposed railway. I deny that such is the case. The complaint has originated with a few residents of the neighborhood of Charlottetown. The great bulk of the farmers are willing to put the present roads in a substantial state of repair as speedily as it can be done, and are satisfied with the action of the Government in macadamising those roads. I believe that nine feet in the centre of a road could be macadamised for £700 a mile, or thereabouts. Now, Sir, this scheme is practicable, and requires at first to be applied to the vicinity of the shipping-places and principal settlements, and could be fully carried out in the course of a few years. The fact is, Mr. Chairman, that it is not the bad state of the roads that troubles the farmers, but the difficulty of obtaining as much produce as they would wish to bring to market. Any farmer in moderately good circumstances, has good teams and carts, and bad as the state of the roads in the shipping season may be, he thinks more about the price he is likely to obtain, than of a little inconvenience in reaching the place where he is to receive it. No country possesses finer roads than we do for ten months of the year, and while I admit that for a few months in the spring and fall the roads in the neighborhood of Charlottetown, and other shipping-places, are bad, yet I maintain that the country does not require this gigantic project of a railroad, which will cost, before it is completed, a million and a quarter of pounds. I consider it to be one of the most wild, reckless, and uncalled for undertakings ever thought of in a country situated as we are, and altogether beyond our means, and which if ever carried out, will be an everlasting charge on the community, especially on the farmers. It is so far beyond our means that I am convinced that the Government are fully aware that they cannot accomplish one-third of the undertaking without aid, and that aid I have no doubt, they expect to obtain from their friends in the Dominion, in exchange for delivering the Island into their hands. Confederation is, in my opinion, the object sought, and not the prosperity of the Island. It is Confederation, Mr. Chairman; it is the miserable, grovelling, pecuniary interest of the Government and its supporters, that is sought to be advanced under the resolution now before us, and not that of the people and this country by a railroad. Mr. Chairman, neither the Members of the Government nor their supporters in this House were returned to carry out this scheme. It was not mooted before the last Election, and it was by mere chance that the Government came into power, and they do not possess the confidence of their constituencies; and, under these circumstances, nothing but the confidence of their being retained in power by the men who had deserted their party and principles would induce them to bring forward this undertaking. If they were conscious that the people approved their conduct, they would not scorn to consult them before committing the country. Sir, I consider it discreditable to any party, claiming a right to be respected, to attempt, as the Government are now doing, without the consent of the people, to mortgage every man's farm, house and stock, to pay the interest on this railroad. On this branch of the subject I shall remark presently. I will now say a few words in reply to the little that has been adduced in favor of this railroad scheme. The hon. and learned Attorney General stated that he would support no measure which should not restrict the Government to £5,000 per mile, and if the road could not be constructed for that amount, he for one would not consent to its being built at all. Now the hon. Attorney General is no novice in matters of governmental or other business, and he knows full well that this undertaking once entered into must be carried out. If after having commenced the work and made some small progress in it, it should be found that it will cost double that estimate, does he mean to tell this committee that it will be abandoned? No, Sir! if once commenced, it will have to be completed at any cost. I would, therefore, beg of the hon. gentlemen of the conservative party, who have a regard for themselves and the country to pause before committing themselves to this vast and wild scheme. The action of the Government in proceeding as they have done in this matter may be compared to that of a merchant unacquainted with the ship building, contracting with a party to build him a ship worth £6 a ton for £4. He thinks he is driving a good bargain, but such cases almost always turned out differently, for often the contractor had exhausted the contract price, the merchant has to take the ship into his own hands, discover to his sorrow that instead of his vessel costing £4 per ton the price will come nearer £8, and instead of getting a cheap and strong vessel he is the owner of a dear and probably a weak one. So will it be with the Government admitting them for the sake of argument, to be honest and sincere in their desire for the advancement of the prosperity of the country, if they persist in pressing with undue and unbecoming haste this measure upon the people. They have admitted one after another that they have no personal knowledge of the details of such an undertaking as this, but justify themselves by professing unbounded confidence in the Engineer and others with whom they have been in correspondence, who have alleged that the road can be built for £5,000 per mile. We, on this side of the House do not pretend to be accurately posted up on the matter of the cost of a work of this nature, but we claim to be able to form an estimate of what it may reasonably be expected to cost. We are aware of the cost of Railroads in Great Britain and her Colonies. We know that no railroad has been built in these provinces at a cost less than from £11,000 to £15,000 per mile, and I believe that I am quite justified in stating that this great undertaking cannot be completed at less than £10,000 per mile. True, a narrow gauge is less expensive than a broad one, but I have yet to learn that it is as safe, and that it will answer all purposes as well as the other. I assert without fear of successful contradiction it has not been sufficiently tried to justify the opinions expressed by its advocates. Scientific men differ in their opinions as to its merits, and some Engineers of the highest standing in their profession have pronounced it a failure. In Great Britain, I believe, there are but about eight miles of this gauge in an out of the way place somewhere in Wales, and the rate of speed over the road is slow, even for that old fashioned country. The Government tells us that narrow gauge railways of considerable length are in operation in Sweden. I have heard that such is the case, and I have also heard of the man in moon, but I have no desire to visit either locality to ascertain the facts. We all know that it is the interest of Engineers and Contractors to induce Governments and private associations to embark in such undertakings, and that consequently overtures from such parties ought to be received with caution. Common prudence would seem to suggest that such an undertaking as is now proposed would even if carried out within the cost as estimated by the Government, involve us in an amount of taxation which the country cannot bear. This must be evident to any reasonable man and if such be the case the Government in bringing it forward must be actuated either by motives of vanity or personal aggrandizement rather than by a desire to advance the interests of the people of the Island. And this will account for the disinclination of the Government to have the question submitted to the people. When I hear it stated that a line of the gauge of three feet six inches can be laid down here at half the cost of the line between Pictou and Halifax, because we have no mountains, I answer that if we have no mountains yet we have no plains. Our land is not level, it is undulating, and we can not point to any part of the Island presenting such facilities for a railroad as the first twenty miles from Truro towards Halifax. We would have to do a great deal of cutting down of elevations and filling up of hollows. This together with the cost of right of way will raise the cost of the track to nearly, if not quite, that of the line I refer to. The hon. Attorney General has stated that the party which carries this question will have a political lease for life. Probably they will with the aid of the navvies whom they will have to import into the country, be able, at the next election, to swamp the present electors. Two thousand navvies judiciously dispersed throughout the various polling divisions, which might otherwise be doubtful, will secure the return of the Railroad party. This opinion of the Hon. Atty. General, in this respect, I believe to be correct. The great amount of patronage—the expenditure of so large an amount of money—together with the votes of these navvies would, I allow, probably enable the ruling power to retain their positions for a long period of time. But I doubt whether the Government will be countenanced by their supporters in so outrageous a scheme. It is monstrous to contemplate such an idea, to think that the very men who have been placed here by the people should endeavor to suppress or outvote them, by bringing in a parcel of laborers who will have no interest in the country. This is an Act which I do not think the Hon. Atty. General would be guilty of, especially when we know that the navvies are of the lowest class of society, that they have the character of being boisterous and unruly; and that many of them are the scum of the earth. If this railroad is to be built, I trust that steps will be taken to prevent strangers, unless actual settlers participate in the elective franchise. I should think that a residence in the Island of five years should be required before such roving characters should be allowed to vote at an election. How will the natives of the Island like to have their votes nullified by those of the imported employees of the government? Members on this side of the House have been advised to consider their question calmly and and dispassionately. We shall do so; and I take the liberty of recommending a similar course to the Government and its supporters. Before entering upon so stupendous an undertaking it behoves government to specify clearly and precisely the sources from which they propose to extract taxes sufficient to meet the yearly interest of the principal required for the undertaking. They cannot expect this side of the House to support a measure requiring in round numbers £60 000 per annum, without first showing how that amount is to be provided. Sir, I demand to know whether it is proposed to raise a part of the tax from the lands and goods, and chattels of our farmers? A prominent supporter of the Government has said that such would be a proper source from which a contribution should be derived; I also would like to know what additional percentage it is intended to and to the *ad valorem* and specific duties; and alterations are to be made with reference to the articles at present admitted free of duty. It is not only desirable—it is a matter of simple justice to the minority that such information should be given us, but the supporters of the Government, if not already in possession of such information, ought to be furnished with it at once. While on my legs I will take the liberty of referring to another remark made by the Hon. Atty. General. He said in the most self-complacent manner that the road would not be built without "pickings;" and the announcement appeared to be received with satisfaction by some of the occupants of the red benches. Now I do not, for a moment, wish to be understood as implying that the hon gentleman would himself participate in public plunder, for I have no doubt that he would not do anything of the kind. But while I hold this opinion of the hon. member personally, I must express my surprise that a member of the Government would boldly hold out to his supporters the prospect of *pickings* if this great railroad scheme should be carried. This way of treating the subject is a return to the course of the *ancient regime* and his connection with the party who flourished under that system, will be accepted by his party as a justification. The hon. Attorney General has also stated his belief that the Opposition would vote against a resolution limiting the Government to pay no more than five hundred pounds per mile. Certainly we should, although he might bring certificates from all the Engineers in Europe and America to the effect that such a price would be sufficient. I, for one, would not endorse absurdities, no matter by whom they may be uttered, or by what authority they may be sanctioned. The principles of Liberalism are adverse to the reception of any man or body of men which are not in conformity with reason. The honorable Attorney General made a further charge against us that we had raked up every question we could think of in opposition to this Railroad. Well, Sir, if the settlement of the Land question and the Educational question are, as I believe them to be, of more urgent importance than the Railroad, we have the right, and it is our duty to do so. The Land question should be finally disposed of, before the question of a Railroad is entertained. I may be permitted, Mr. Chairman, to trespass for a few moments longer on your time and that of this honorable Committee, in remarking upon an observation which fell from the hon. Leader of the Government. He thought proper to express his opinion relative to the liberty taken by some portion of the Press in commenting on his acts and the policy of his Government. Indeed I understood him to say that its licentiousness must be restrained, or at least the language he used conveyed to me the impression that such was his idea. Well, Mr. Chairman, a great difference of opinion has existed and will exist as to what degree of freedom of expression will amount to licentiousness. I do not admit that the opposition journals deserve the approbrious term applied to them. It is the duty of a free press to speak openly and fearlessly on all matters affecting the public interests, although they may be dealing with men of high position, and before the hon. Leader calls for measures in restraint of the freedom of the press he had better satisfy himself that he has cause to complain of it. The people are the best judges as to whether the press exceeds the fair bounds of criticism on public men and their acts. It must be a bad cause indeed when the presses in the employ of the Government cannot defend them against our single press advocate. It has been stated that the construction of 150 miles of railroad is, for this Island, an undertaking of no greater magnitude than a work of equal extent in the other provinces. Now, I will, in answer to this take the example of Nova Scotia. We know that the construction of the road from Halifax to Windsor and Truro, exhausted her resources before the work was completed, although her finances were in a flourishing condition, and her population and revenue were in comparison to ours as four to one; and the financial secretary stated on its completion that the means of the colony were so far pledged that but three or four pounds were available for the roads and bridges of that year. This proves conclusively that the plan proposed for us is unwise and showy, that the proposition of this side of the House to encourage a company to undertake the work by granting subsidies is more feasible. In that manner the railroads in Britain and the United States, as well as in Canada have been constructed, and in no other way can we act without involving the Colony in Bankruptcy. I understand that the hon. Leader of the Government is of opinion that a sum not exceeding £16 000 a year will be sufficient to meet the requirements of the scheme, but I believe that it will require the interest of nearly £1,500,000, which at 6 per cent will amount to £90,000 a year. I have taken the trouble to draw up an estimate of the probable cost of the new work now in contemplation, and another in accordance with that of the Government, which I shall now read. My estimate is as follows:—

130 miles at £16 000 per mile	£1,300 000
Debt of the Colony,	158,334
Finishing new Court House,	6,000
Purchase of Model Farm,	4 500
Building new Lunatic Asylum,	8,000
Dredging Machine and Steamer,	5,000
	£1,582,034
The interest on which at 6 per cent would be,	94,922
Less interest on present debt,	9,600
Leaving to be annually provided,	85,322

Now, Mr. Chairman, I shall read over another estimate, made out from the statements offered by the Government, which is as follows:—

120 miles at £5 000 per mile,	£600 000
Government to pay half cost of Branch lines, say 100 miles, £2,500 per mile,	250 000
Debt of Colony at present,	158,334
Finishing Court House,	6,000
Purchase of Model Farm,	4,500
Building new Lunatic Asylum,	8 000
Dredging Machine,	5,000
	£1 032,034
Interest on above at 6 per cent,	61 922
Less interest on present debt,	9 600
	£52 322

Leaving according to their own statement, £52,322, to be provided in addition to the present revenue. Now, even this is alarming to any one having our welfare at heart, and if exacted will inflict a degree of distress never before experienced by the people of the Island. In making out the latter estimate I have assumed that the Government will only pay one half the cost of the branch lines. This is the method practiced in Canada, and I have a right to assume that our Government will adopt the same course. It would be in this wise,—four or five or more Townships would be incorporated, they would govern themselves locally, providing money for the repairs of roads, bridges, &c. Suppose Rustico wanted a branch line. When that settlement was incorporated she would apply for say 8 miles at £6,000 per mile. That would cost £46,000, and as soon as half that sum would be provided by the municipality of Rustico the Government would advance the remainder, and thus branch lines would be built throughout the Island. With these views I shall support the amendment.

Mr. BEER,—I wish to ask the hon. member for Belfast what he meant by the expression that the majority were drilled to put down the resolution of the hon. member from Souris? I can tell him that I am as independent as the man who held on to office forty-eight hours after his colleagues in the government had resigned. I suppose that the government supporters have been drilled in caucus that they came into the House prepared to reject the resolution of the hon. member from Souris without agreement or discussion.

Hon. B. DAVIES.—I used the term "drilled" because on no other principle could I understand the inconsistency of the majority in quashing the resolution of the hon. member for Souris for a Committee on the Education Act in the arbitrary manner in which they did, and then going into this Committee on a subject in favor of which there were no petitions before us. As to the reference to my remaining in office after the late Government had resigned, I may say that I did so, because I was afraid that the departmental offices would be filled up by Confederates. If the Hon. Mr. Haythorne, the Leader of the late Government, had acted as was to have been expected of him a Confederate would not have been called upon to form a government. When I ascertained that the present Leader had been called upon to form a government, I at once resigned. I did not remain an hour in office after that.

Hon. Mr. HOWLAN.—It is unfair in the hon. member to asperse the character of the Hon Mr. Haythorne. The reason he alleges for remaining in the Government is not the true one. He sometimes indulges in flights of fancy. It was but the other night that he stated that he knew nothing of certain despatches, when in fact his name was signed to them.

Hon. B. DAVIES.—I had not read them, but as Secretary, I had to sign them.

Hon. Mr. HOWLAN.—That is no excuse. The Col. Secretary, the first office of the Government, whose duty it is to watch over the public interest from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same, should not affix his signature to documents of the contents of which he is ignorant. I never sign my name to a paper until I know what it contains. The hon. member has also told us that he did not resign his office because he was afraid that the successive Governments might be confederates. That, Sir, was not the reason. The fact was, the man he had on the lookout told him that Sir Robert Hodgson was not to be played with, that he knew his duty and would perform it. What possible effect in retarding or accelerating confederates could the retention of office by the hon. member have had? Nor was it from a desire to protect the interests of the Colony that he clung tenaciously to office; and yet we are told by men of this stamp that none are to be trusted but themselves. Wherever the hon member got his information I know not, but he must have been the only one who saw confederation mysteriously hidden in a change of government. The rule I have always understood is that the defeat of the commanding officer involved the resignation of the subordinates. That hon member said that he resigned in consequence of the Administrator having sent for the present Leader to form a government. I would ask that hon. member this question. Would he have resigned if he could have held on longer? It is all very well for that hon member to assert his scruples about confederation, as inducing him to retain office after his colleagues had resigned; but I can tell him that he was obliged to yield the reins unto other hands; and if he cannot give a more satisfactory reason than that he has now offered, he had better let the matter pass into oblivion, without note or comment. The hon. member adduced certain figures to shew the amount of interest we should have to pay yearly on the cost of a railway. I have taken his figures down, and I find that one of his calculations fixes the interest at £52 000 a year, while the other makes it £94,000. If the latter be the correct amount, I am at a loss to know how the former estimate can be correct.

Hon. B. DAVIES.—Let us have your own statement of it.

Hon. Mr HOWLAN.—I will give you some of my figures directly. After laboring some time to show the embarrassed state of our finances, how does the hon. member wind up his argument, what is the conclusion to which he has arrived? Simply this, he says I am not against a railroad if it can be built by a private company. I do not believe that there is one man in the ranks of the opposition who is opposed to a railroad, but they find it convenient to object to any plan proposed by the Government. Their conduct reminds me of a temperance meeting of farmers met one evening to organize a temperance society. Those present were unanimous in favor of establishing the association, but several were claiming exemption from its obligation on special occasions. One had always commemorated the anniversary of the birth of Washington by a social glass, and they could not let the 4th of July pass without a similar recognition. A third could dispense with his glass on either of these occasions, but the turkey of Thanksgiving Day required a fluid accompaniment, still another could resist temptation on these several occasions, but the thirst was imperative in the time of sheep-shearing. Their several pleas were allowed, but the next morning the latter individual was seen staggering along the road, and in answer to the enquiry of a neighbor as to whether he had not joined the temperance band the previous evening, admitted the fact, but stated that it was sheep-shearing time just then, (Laughter). And as many and as varied would be the different reasons against building the railroad if it were submitted to the people at the polls, and members of the opposition had the suggestion of all and every objection to it, no matter how frivolous and untenable they might be. Now what about the railway in Nova Scotia? I understood the hon. member from Belfast to say that the line from Pictou to Halifax cost £14 000 per mile, but instead of that sum it cost only £11,000.

Hon. B. DAVIES.—I said from £11 000 to £14,000 or £15,000.

Hon Mr. HOWLAN.—The hon. member stated that the company which had contracted for building the line at £11,000 per mile had failed, and that the Government had then stepped in and finished it at a total cost of £14,000 per mile, and as he is desirous to have a company build our road, I presume he would like to witness the same results here. We have had presented to us by the hon member a most deplorable picture of our financial condition, but not long since when the hon. member was in office I heard him make a most elaborate speech, the purport of which was the prosperous condition of the Island. What, I ask, has caused in so short a time so great a change in our condition and prosperity. It is strange indeed to see an hon. member who, but recently in power, was loud in his praises of our prosperity, now in opposition, utter his mournful forebodings over our financial condition, and assert that the Island, instead of prospering is retrograding. The public accounts show that we are steadily advancing in prosperity. The new public buildings in Charlottetown show it. The history of our banking institutions proclaim the same fact. A few years ago the Bill to incorporate a Bank was rejected. The next year it was passed. Since then its capital stock has increased, and it is intended to augment it still further. Is this an evidence that the country is going to ruin? The returns of the Bank for last year show deposits on call amounting to £47,000. A few years elapse, and another Bank is started in utter disregard of the prophets who raised the croaking cry that one Bank would be quite sufficient for all the business of the Island. Now we have the Union Bank, of Charlottetown, the Farmers' Bank, of Rustico, the Summerside Bank, and they are all doing a healthy and legitimate business. Our Savings' Bank has reached the limits of deposits allowed by law, and it is intended to enlarge the sphere of its usefulness by giving it increased capabilities of receiving the savings of industry. The Union Bank returns show £37,000 deposits. Do these statements show that the country is impoverished, or in a state of prosperity? The truth is, money never was so plentiful in town or country, and so far from there being a scarcity of money, we find that the principal difficulty for the last few years has been to find profitable investment for realized capital. The poor man has money to his credit in the Savings' Bank, and the state of public credit is vouched for by the fact that every Treasury Warrant up to July last has been called in. What money the poorer classes do not require for immediate use, has been deposited on interest in the Savings' Bank, thus showing the confidence they repose in that institution, and that they would rather let the Government take charge of their savings, than keep it laid up in their own possession. I assert that we are financially in a better position than the Dominion of Canada or State of Maine occupied when they commenced the construction of Railroads. It is true that the Grand Trunk Railway was at first unfortunate. It was carried through a comparatively large tract of uninhabited country, but it is now doing a large amount of business. We propose a line of 130 miles in length, over a country which offers less engineering difficulties than any line of equal length of which I ever heard. The neighboring Dominion and the State of Maine had many obstacles to contend with, yet with all their difficulties they have secured for themselves thousands of miles of Railway. But what are we trying to do? Only asking for 130 miles, through a country like which you cannot find another for easy cutting or evenness of surface, no part of it being rocky or mountainous as is the case in the Dominion and in Maine. I have under my hand a statement of the principal Railroads in Canada Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and the State of Maine, showing the number of miles owned by each. This statement showing the length, gross and net earnings, is as follows:—

	Miles.	Gross Earnings.	Net do.
Great Western of Canada,	324	$11,770	$6,448
Grand Trunk, Canada,	13-0	5,180	1,165
N. Railway of Canada.	95	7,064	1,778
E. N. R. W. of Maine,	45	2,882	1,249
Boston and Maine,	146	12,810	3,766
Maine Central,	110	5 354	1,637
Portland, Saco & Portsmouth,	51	11,265	3,442
Atlantic & St. Lawrence,	130	7,270	1,324
E. N. R. R. St. John,	158	1,700	524
Nova Scotia Gov't R. R.	145	1,938	no acct.
N. B. and Canada R. R,	119	880	"
Total mileage,	2,683		
Gross earnings,			$16,580,117
Net earnings,			5,147 340
Average of gross earnings per mile,			6,180
Do net do,			2,120
Quebec and N.B. estimated gross earnings,			3,290

My answer to the statements about the cost of fencing the road, and of lawyers bills is very brief. All costs, save those of right of way, are to be included in the contract. A very eminent engineer has written on here to the effect that a road such as we propose to build will not cost more than £4 000 per mile. Mr. Boyd estimates that it can be built for about £4,500 per mile, and we have Mr. Derby's statement that it can be built for $12,000 per mile, and it is