

servative party were absolutely opposed to the sale of the railway, three years afterward we are called upon to vote \$1,500,000 of the public money to redeem that railroad. In other words we are called upon to vote a sum which is equal to the clear profit that has been realized or is to be realized by private parties on the sale of that land, although it is pretended that the line should not be sold, that it should be retained because it is to the interests of the country to keep it. To-day we are called upon to pay \$1,500,000, to redeem it from a company which is supposed to possess the greater part of the shares, and the object of the expenditure is to put us exactly in the same position as we were three years ago. I could not allow this bill to pass without calling the attention of the House to the point. It is true, to a certain extent, this matter was a provincial one, but hon. gentlemen will bear in mind that even after that sale it was considered to be without effect, and probably the railway should be returned to the province of Quebec had it not been for the action of this Parliament. The purchasers and those who sold the road wanted to have the right, in order to realize any money profit on their transactions, to issue debentures, and it was found that they could not do so without legislation from Parliament. On that occasion my hon. friend the Hon. Mr. DeBoucherville opposed the bill, and had his motion carried, the purchasers of the road would very likely have been obliged to return it to the province. It is proposed by this bill that if, within a certain number of weeks or months, the Canadian Pacific Railway Company do not make arrangements to get possession of that railroad, then the \$1,500,000, shall be employed in some other way to bring the Canadian Pacific Railway down to Quebec. I express here my hope that the Government will do their best to devote that \$1,500,000, towards the construction of another railway which would nearly double the value of property on the north shore of the St. Lawrence in the province of Quebec and give to the city of Quebec what they desire—the terminus of the Canadian Pacific Railway. I will not say anything more on this question of the North Shore Railway. Now, as to the proposed short line, it is a matter of immense importance to the province of Quebec, especially

to the great centres of that province, and above all to the city of Quebec. I said at the outset that this portion of the measure was, in my opinion, a departure from the well known and well defined policy of the Government, or I might say the Conservative party, that—two positions being equal—we should favor a line which is more advantageous from a national point of view. It is often remarked that trade must find its level in spite of national interests, but this is true only to a certain extent, as daily experience demonstrates. For instance, it is recognized by everyone that our Canadian waterways are the best and shortest routes for the produce of the west, yet, notwithstanding the enormous expenditure which we have made to enlarge and improve our canals, there have been years when I think not more than five per cent. of the produce of the West, which should naturally come by Canadian waters, has passed down the St. Lawrence; ninety-five per cent. has gone to the seaboard by American canals and railways. We are therefore forced to the conclusion that this is due to the determination of the Americans to favor their own railways and cities at any sacrifice, and it proves that it is quite possible by the action of the government and the country to modify to a certain extent the course of trade. I have taken great pains to examine this matter of the choice of a short line thoroughly. I consider that the Canadian Pacific Railway being built, the only reason which would justify us in giving public money to encourage a short line is that it would be, without any doubt, the best line that could be selected. I regret to say that the line which is mentioned in the Bill is not, in my opinion, the shortest line. I have read carefully the reports of the rival engineers. There is the report of Mr. Schreiber, it is true, in favor of the line mentioned in this Bill, and there are two different reports of Mr. Light, which, to my mind, establish beyond any doubt that the shortest line would be one which is indicated on a map which, I suppose, every hon. member has seen, called the short line railway, between the cities of Montreal and St. John and Halifax, and which is known as the combination line. My hon. friend from Halifax has alluded to it already. Mr.