

but the suggestion conveyed in his remark was one calculated to produce a considerable effect, and one which I am convinced has produced a decided effect—not the suggestion made by my hon. friend, but voiced by him. I quite agree with the hon. member from Marshfield (Mr. Haythorne) in approving the idea that hon. members of this House use their own judgment and obey their independent convictions in voting upon questions submitted to them, and are not subjected to the lash of authority and forced to support a party. That is the position that I should like to see every member of this House take, and I am glad, although it may be somewhat at my own expense and at the expense of the Government, that what I have always said of the Senate—that it was a place where opinions were independent, and where men took a business view of public questions, and were not warped by party feeling—was correct; but, at the same time, I should claim for the Senate, also, the merit of consistency. Looking at the question from that point of view, it certainly is a surprise to me to hear the opinions expressed that I have heard to-day. My hon. friend from Marshfield submitted to the House in a condensed form the substance of all the objections that are made to this enterprise. Now, let us see how far these objections have not already been met by what has been done, and I propose merely to glance at that, and at what my hon. friend said which attracted my attention. This road, it is said, will be a rival with the Intercolonial Railway; it will take away the traffic past St. John; it does not go by the most direct line, inasmuch as it goes by Fredericton; it is not, according to the hon. gentleman's objections, the direct line, and it is not entitled to the name of the Short Line, because it makes a detour in order to reach Fredericton; and, moreover, it is said: "Why build this Short Line? What is the object of it? What is the advantage to accrue from it? What good is it going to do?" Now, all these questions have been answered by this House at least three times before. When this House sanctioned a grant to Mr. Blackman's company we consented to assist a road that was to run in rivalry to the Intercolonial Railway. To a certain extent

that was what it proposed to do. I do not know that the route then suggested was the route by Fredericton.

HON. MR. POWER—Yes.

HON. MR. ABBOTT—That road would have taken away the traffic from St. John, yet on the first occasion when that came before this House we voted for it. When it came before the House again, Mr. Blackman not having succeeded, the next thing we sanctioned here was an Act which possessed all the objections which occur to this. We passed an Act to give \$170,000 a year for fifteen years to build this road, to make this very connection, to run in competition with the Intercolonial Railway, which was then in existence. The line was not then determined, but it was quite on the cards that it should go by Fredericton, as this road goes; so that there, the second time, we sanctioned what so many hon. gentlemen find so blameable. The third time it came before us in 1885. We found that \$100,000 was not sufficient to secure the construction of the road, and we voted \$250,000 a year, and not for fifteen but for twenty years, to build this very road to run in competition with the Intercolonial Railway, and to run to Fredericton. Thus, having received the sanction of Parliament so often, all those objections must have been considered, surely, by hon. gentlemen in this House.

HON. MR. HAYTHORNE—Will the hon. gentleman explain how it was that with such very large grants the road was not finished?

HON. MR. ABBOTT—I have not asserted that the grants were very large. I say that while I admit the propriety of this House preserving its independence I think it should also study its consistency, and I say that on three important occasions increasing in importance as the occasions proceeded, this House has sanctioned every transaction which is now so strongly opposed.

HON. MR. MILLER—Then the House was voting on the line as a whole from Halifax to Moncton; now we are dealing with a small portion of it.

HON. MR. ABBOTT—If the House had been asked on those occasions to vote for