

country that a line should be taken from the northern bend of the International, near Lake Megantic, and go to Portage, which would be a line inside our own territory, and then, joining the line from Quebec by the Etchemin valley to Portage, strike across the State of Maine to Canterbury, which would give us less distance in the State of Maine, while it would also open up one of the best of our counties in the Province of Quebec, the county of Beauce. And if the line was taken from Richmond eastwards, we would find that the great county of Richmond and Wolfe would be opened up and greatly benefited. The hon. member for Stanstead seems to think that the only person who was interested in this line was Mr. Graham, of Richmond. The hon. member forgot that the Government of this country has been appealed to by petitions from the county of Drummond, and from various municipalities in the county of Richmond and Wolfe, asking a survey of that line. That line has not been surveyed by the Dominion Government, and why? This is a question which somewhat puzzles me, because of the very obvious fact that that line passes through the town which is represented by the hon. member for Richmond and Wolfe (Mr. Ives), who is considered, I believe, one of the most prominent supporters of the Government in this House. Early last fall a public meeting was held in Richmond, asking that gentleman to induce the Government to try a survey through his county, but the Government did not try that survey. I believe the answer given to that request was that it was too late in the day. Well, Sir, I happen to know that after that time other survey parties were sent out to survey the line between Sherbrooke and Montreal, to the north of Orford Mountain. Certainly, if the season of the year was not too late to survey that portion of the proposed route, it could not have been too late to try a survey from Richmond eastward. One would suppose that the hon. member for Richmond and Wolfe, who was a supporter of the Government, and would naturally be supposed to be interested in the county which he represented, would, as an assistance to his county, have endeavored to obtain the survey of that line. And, Sir, did I not know the peculiar circumstances of the hon. gentleman, I would not think it possible to explain that fact. I have no doubt that hon. gentlemen opposite will say that it was impossible that any such line could be carried through. Well, Sir, one might have thought so, but I think I have seen enough of hon. members opposite to know that they are quite ready to get a little money spent in their counties whenever they can. It does seem an extraordinary thing that the hon. member for Richmond and Wolfe should not have attempted to find a line through his county, which would have been, perhaps, a better line than the one proposed. Why did he not do it? The only reason I can think of is the fact that, as I know, that hon. gentleman is more intimately connected with the International railroad, more intimately connected with the city of Sherbrooke, in which he resides, more interested in that portion of the country, than he is in the county which he represents. Sir, this is one of the reasons why it is important that this question should not be decided to-day. I believe this is one of the reasons why we should take more time to ponder this question, before we vote upon it, because I contend that there are suspicious circumstances connected with this matter, and they are suggested to my mind in consequence of what I have just stated. When I find that an hon. member who is a supporter of the Government in this House does not try to benefit his own county, but in consequence of what I know to be the greater personal interest that he has in another direction, he prefers to see a line carried outside his own county—

Mr. SPEAKER. Order. I do not think the hon. gentleman should attribute any personal motives to the hon. member.

Mr. FISHER.

Mr. FISHER. I will withdraw the expression, certainly.

Sir RICHARD CARTWRIGHT. I would call your attention to the noise and discourtesy shown to my hon. friend by gentlemen on the other side of the House. I think your attention might have been called to that, also.

Mr. FISHER. As I said, I withdraw the expression attributing interested motives to the hon. member. I can only say that I would be glad to be able never to think anything against a member of this House; but, Sir, I am at a loss to imagine what could have actuated that hon. gentleman, when he refused what was evidently to the advantage of his county. Sir, I find that this question not only involves the hon. member for Richmond and Wolfe, but I find that it is surrounded by other circumstances, which I consider so suspicious as to make me unwilling to decide upon this question to-night. I find that it is stated by hon. gentlemen opposite that the only company in this country which is able to perform this work is the Canadian Pacific Railway Company. I find that in a letter signed by Mr. Stephen, president of that company, he states that that company is ready to undertake the building of that road. The letter is addressed to two hon. members of this House, who represent the city of Halifax in this House.

" To M. B. DALY and J. F. STAIRS :

" SIRs,—Referring to your letter of the 16th of June, on the subject of the proposed short line between Montreal and the seaports of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, I have to say that the route indicated therein (that proposed in the Government resolutions) is, in the light of our present knowledge, the best that has been proposed, and this route is preferred by the Canadian Pacific Railway Company to any other that has been suggested. I will say, further, that it is the desire of the Canadian Pacific Railway Company to take up this scheme as a natural and necessary supplement to the Canadian Pacific Railway as it now exists. The company will be ready without loss of time to enter into negotiations with the Government for carrying out this project, as soon as the necessary legislation is obtained.

" (Signed), GEO. STEPHEN."

Now, I think, in view of the facts which occurred this Session, this is an extraordinary letter. It throws a good deal of light upon the question. It is only three or four weeks since this company came to us *in formâ pauperis*, asking for assistance to carry out their original contract, to do the things which were specified to be done in the contract. But the building of this short line is not mentioned in the original contract. When the Government asked Parliament to grant the company this assistance, they told us it was going to be just sufficient to enable the company to carry out the terms of the original contract. Now, what do we find? We find this same company offering to undertake the most onerous obligation, practically coming to the country and saying that they are ready to undertake a vast work, while hon. gentlemen opposite say that the work is so vast that this subsidy would be but as a drop towards that end. Yet we find this same Canadian Pacific Railway Company which, a few weeks ago was so poor, are now ready to undertake this great enterprise. But there is another and a worse aspect to this question. When this letter was written, on the 16th of June last, it is evident that the Canadian Pacific Railway Company were desirous of undertaking this new contract and of carrying through the short line to the Maritime Provinces; and at the same time they were negotiating for assistance in order to carry out their original contract. At the same time that the Canadian Pacific Railway Company were negotiating with the Acting Minister of Railways, who brought down the resolutions to this House for giving them assistance, they were proposing to the Government of this country to undertake an obligation by which they would have to buy from that same hon. Minister the railway which he owns in the Eastern Townships of the Province of Quebec. It is true I have had suspicion as to the reason why the short line was adopted; but when I found that letter, and saw the statement made about the Canadian Pacific Rail-