

April 25, 1872

unsurpassed folly in selecting the North Shore route, but as the road was to be built, he thought it should be completed in the most satisfactory manner possible.

It would be remembered that when the question of the gauge of the Intercolonial Railway was brought before the House on a former occasion, a large number of members were in favour of five feet six inches, in preference to four feet eight and a half inches, but he believed that after careful consideration a majority of the House would now come to the conclusion that in the interests of the country it would be better to adopt the narrow gauge. The Railways in the United States were nearly all built with a gauge of four feet eight and a half inches. The Great Western Railway, and many other Railways in Canada, had seen fit to adopt a narrow gauge, and the Government had determined, as announced last Session, to construct the Pacific Railway on that principle.

When Railways confined their rolling stock to their own roads as formerly, it did not matter so much, but now it was quite common to allow the rolling stock of one road to pass over another, in order to save the necessity of breaking bulk. He thought it desirable that our roads should be so constructed that we might take advantage of the connection which we expect to have with other Railways. If the dreams of some were ever to be realized, that not only local traffic, but the trade of China and other places of Europe, would follow our route from the Pacific to the Atlantic, it was most desirable that the Intercolonial road should be constructed, so that freight might go through without breaking bulk.

The argument would be used that the Grand Trunk Railway was built on the five feet six inch gauge, and that that would be an obstruction. But at the last meeting of the Grand Trunk Shareholders the question was brought up and the remarks of the President of that Railway went very strongly in favor of changing the gauge so as to correspond with other railways on this continent.

The only difficulty to prevent it would be the large expense. It might be said that a change on the Intercolonial Railway in the present state of the work would involve an increased expenditure, but he apprehended that the additional expense would be more than counterbalanced by the saving that would be effected in constructing the remainder of the road for a narrow gauge. Viewing the matter in this light he thought it desirable that a movement should be made now, in the infancy of the work, to build the railway on the proper gauge. He hinted that in considering this question the House would set aside every consideration except that of the best interests of the country.

Hon. Mr. LANGEVIN said that the hon. mover of the motion had not, in his opinion, stated any good reason why this change should take place. He considers a change of gauge necessary because the general gauge of railways on this continent is 4 ft. 8 1/2 inches. If we had to build anew our railways he (Hon. Mr. Langevin) could agree with him that we should adopt the general gauge of the continent. But the great railway of the country, the

Grand Trunk Railway, has a gauge of 5 ft. 6 in., and the hon. gentleman had not shown us that railway company is ready to change the gauge of that railway, or that they have the means of doing so. He knows that the expense involved in that change would be very great, and he knows fully, and the country knows, that the Grand Trunk are not disposed now to make the change, and have not the means at their disposal.

If Parliament were to adopt the suggestion of the hon. member, what would be the consequence? We should have the Grand Trunk, the great highway of Canada, with a gauge of 5 feet 6, and the Intercolonial 4 feet 8 1/2. What advantage would be found in a change of that kind? It would cause great delay and endless trouble and annoyance at Rivière du Loup, where passengers would have to change, and freight to be transhipped. He (Hon. Mr. Langevin) did not see any advantage in such a change. The hon. gentleman had forgotten that all the railways in the Lower Provinces running in connection with the Intercolonial had the broad gauge, and that therefore the result of the change proposed would be to compel a change of passengers and freight at Moncton, Windsor, and Truro. The Windsor and Annapolis Railway, also a connection of the Intercolonial, had the broad gauge, and the members from the Lower Provinces knew that that railway was not in a position to change its gauge. The European and North American Railway, running from Shediac to St. John, would have to be cut in two, as that portion of it between Moncton and Truro would form part of the Intercolonial.

The hon. gentleman would say that the Government would put a third rail on that portion of the road, and also from Truro to Halifax; but he must remember that such a change would cost about \$450,000, and he should reflect on this. It was expected by the 1st September next the line from Halifax to St. John would be completed—that is to say, that the Intercolonial from Truro to Amherst would be in working order. But if the motion of the hon. gentleman prevailed all the work on that portion of the line, between Truro and Amherst would have to be stopped, because we should require new cars and engines for ballasting the line, those now in use being broad gauge. Besides, it must be remembered that a large quantity of the rolling stock for the line is now being completed, and that some of it, in fact, has been delivered already. He (Hon. Mr. Langevin) was informed that the change of gauge of those railways in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, and the rolling stock, would cost over a million of dollars.

It had not been shown that a gauge of 5 feet 3 would be better than 4 feet 8 1/2. Those who were obliged to give their attention to matters of this kind know that it was more by accident than otherwise that the gauge was fixed at 4 feet 8 1/2; and engineers say that their experience has convinced them that if a gauge had to be selected for a railway today, they would not select 5 feet 6 or 4 feet 8 1/2, but probably 5 feet 3.

Under these circumstances, and taking into consideration the following facts that all our railways in the Lower Provinces, the