

come to deal with the question of a winter outlet we have a very different and a very difficult matter before us. The first question, and one of vital importance, is the question of distance. This question of distance in the past has been so serious a matter that it has defeated every effort of the Government to carry this traffic over the Intercolonial Railway to the seaboard; and, although we now adopt the shortest and most direct line possible, it still presents itself as a very serious obstacle to the commercial success of this scheme. This question of difference of distance between our own line and the lines leading to American ports is one which can never be entirely removed; it can only be reduced to a minimum, and I believe every hon. gentleman will agree that it is not only important, but absolutely necessary, that it should be reduced to a minimum. I believe every member of this House agrees, and the hon. gentlemen who support this amendment also agree, that the policy which was adopted by the Government last Session and which then received the sanction of this House, is the only true policy, namely, that the shortest and best practicable line should be adopted. Well, Sir, it is in pursuance of that policy, after an entire season has been passed in making surveys, and upon the report of the Government engineer of railways, that the present route has been selected. We must all admit that we have largely to depend upon the experience and the judgment of engineers in these matters. I feel that it is a matter for regret that in the present instance we have so much difference of opinion; that some engineers should advocate one line and some another; that some of these engineers have been willing to stake their professional reputation on the assertion that the respective lines which they advocate are the best. And, Sir, we have a gentleman and an engineer of undisputed ability and wide reputation in his profession stating in the House to-day that there is not sufficient information before the House yet to enable any engineer to give an opinion upon this question. Well, Sir, when I find so much difference of opinion, I have decided to give my faith to the judgment of the Government engineer of railways, for I feel that there is no higher authority to which I can appeal in the support of the choice which the Government has made, and as a guide to the action of the House in this matter, than the authority to which I have referred. Then there is another important consideration which has been referred to by the hon. member for St. John (Mr. Weldon). I believe that it is shown to be the shortest and best practicable route that will meet the interests of all the important seaports in the Maritime Provinces. It is true, I believe, that a shorter line can be obtained to the Port of St. Andrews to the south of this line, and a shorter line may be obtained to the port of St. John to the south of this line. It is possible, if we can rely upon the opinions which have been expressed by some of the engineers, that a somewhat shorter line could be obtained to Halifax and Louisburg to the northward of this line. The difference of distance, however, between any of these lines which I have referred to, and the line which has been selected, is, in any case, but trifling, and this may, therefore, be regarded as a compromise line. While the interests of no one of the seaports in the Maritime Provinces have been considered of paramount importance in this matter, the interests of all have been properly guarded. Then there is another consideration which is of importance. As the hon. member for St. John correctly said, the people from every section of the Maritime Provinces have been for years looking to this route for direct railway connection with the west. Practical business men have been devoting their attention and energy to this matter, with the hope of securing the construction of this line. It must be borne in mind that we are not proposing to build a Government line of railway, but that the subsidy we are offering is given as an aid to private enterprise, as an inducement to capitalists to enter

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upon the construction of this important work. The views, therefore, of practical business men become important in this matter. And while in the one case we have these facts, that through private enterprise a company has been organised some years and chartered to construct a line of railway through Maine over the very route indicated in the resolutions; while a large amount of private capital has already been expended in surveys and in promoting this enterprise; while we have every reason to believe that with a sufficient subsidy capitalists will be found ready and willing to construct this line, we have no good reason to hope that the same result would be accomplished if any other line were adopted. We have no reason to believe that capitalists will be found to construct any other line that has been proposed. I intended to refer to the objection offered to this line on account of its running through Maine, and the danger that some have apprehended, that lines would be constructed to divert trade in that direction. This matter, however, was dealt with on a former occasion, and I shall not allude to it. I will, however, allude to the matter which has been referred to by the hon. member for Jacques Cartier (Mr. Girouard). He has spoken, in the first place, of the amount of this subsidy, and said that the amount would be equal to a capital of \$5,000,000. The hon. gentleman must have overlooked the fact that this subsidy only continues for 20 years; and the leader of the Opposition, on a former occasion, gave as the amount which this subsidy, capitalised, would represent, and if I recollect aright it was about \$3,400,000. That would be equivalent to about \$10,000 per mile on the length of the line to be constructed; and when we have regard to the cost of the line, of the character that this road will require to be, it will be apparent that that will only be sufficient to pay about half the cost of the work remaining to be constructed, and a large amount of capital will be required in addition to the subsidy to secure the construction of this work. I will also refer briefly to the prospects of this line. The hon. member for Jacques Cartier has expressed doubts as to whether this line can ever be made a commercial success. I do not wonder that he has expressed those doubts. I have already alluded to the disadvantages under which we labor, from our geographical position, in the Maritime Provinces. I feel that the competition which we will experience from the American lines will be very keen. I recognise the fact that it is absolutely necessary that we should avail ourselves of every advantage we possess to the fullest possible extent. What are our advantages? Railway traffic is usually classed under three heads: The ordinary freight traffic, the passenger traffic, and the mail service and express business. From the Canadian railway returns I find that of the gross receipts about two-thirds are derived from freight traffic and one-third from the other sources. From the best information I have been enabled to obtain from the public returns of the leading American railways, whose accounts of receipts and expenditures of the different classes of traffic are kept separate, it appears that of the gross receipts from freight traffic about 80 per cent. is required to pay the working expenses, leaving about 20 per cent. for profit; of the gross receipts from passenger travel about 60 per cent. for working expenses, leaving 40 per cent. for profit. The importance, therefore, of a large passenger traffic will be apparent, as it brings larger profits. Those incidents of traffic are governed by somewhat different principles. In moving freight, cost is the first consideration. With the mail service, time is the first consideration; cost is the second. With passenger traffic, time, safety and comfort are the great considerations; cost is secondary. As the result of the operation of those principles, freight traffic usually seeks its ways to the seaboard by the shortest route. Passenger travel, on the other hand, inclines to a longer land journey, and makes the ocean voyage as short as possible. While, therefore, from our geographical posi-