

which elapsed down to the present from the moment when it was first introduced in the Railway Committee.

Well, Sir, where is it proposed to locate this line? I understand, from the explanation that was made the other day by the right hon. gentleman, that the road is to run back from Lévis across the height of land until it gets somewhere between the United States boundary and the height of land south of the Intercolonial; then it is to run easterly by some route to be hereafter determined until it reaches Edmundston; and from Edmundston it is going to pass by as direct a course as possible through the centre of New Brunswick to Moncton. I know nothing about the section from Lévis east to Edmundston. I do not think the government does; that is my impression. I have a suspicion—it is a little more than a suspicion, but I cannot verify it convincingly, though it has taken a strong hold upon my mind—that if my hon. friends proceed with the construction of the railway as they are now contemplating, they will administer to that grand all-Canadian transcontinental line a very black eye before they get through; because I believe it will be found that in order to build a line at all capable of carrying any traffic, they will have to slip into the American territory, run down a bit, and come back into Canada, before they get through. That is my impression; it is only my impression; I would not like to give it as absolute verity; but I venture to hazard the prognostication that the railway will not be built by any such route as is proposed. In the province of New Brunswick the great body of the population lies either to the north, along the Gulf of St. Lawrence, or to the south, along the Bay of Fundy, and along the valley of the St. John river on the west. So that this railway, in going through the centre of the province, is leaving the population far removed from it on either side. There are a few settlements here and there on the rivers which will be crossed, but these settlements are mostly all reached by railways constructed along these rivers. The country which is to be traversed is largely a wooded country, or has been wooded. Very much of the timber has been cut away. The lumbermen have been forced further back, and there is not much promise of a lumbering business, because lumber would not be taken by the railway, but by the rivers, as it is to-day. You would have, therefore, a railway crossing the river and the heights of ground at right angles, and you have to cross a great watershed which divides the Gulf of St. Lawrence from the St. John river and the other waters on the west. You can imagine what the difficulties will be in constructing a railway under those circumstances. You can imagine what is likely to be the expense, the character of the grades, and the disadvantages under which such construction will labour.

Hon. Mr. BLAIR.

My hon. friend mentioned to us the other day that a survey has been made by a Mr. Davey, and he said that a very considerable saving in the distance could be made. I have only this to say with regard to Mr. Davey's survey. I think he made the survey for a private company, desirous of obtaining aid from the government, and whether a survey, under those circumstances, would be quite as certain to be as accurate and careful a survey, showing all the disadvantages under which the route will labour, as if it had been made by a government engineer, I leave the people to judge for themselves. I would be inclined to give the preference myself very strongly to a survey made by independent engineers, who had no interest in connection with any company that was seeking government aid. I do not therefore, without any disrespect to Mr. Davey, place quite the same value on his survey as I would on the work of a government engineer. Moreover, I think very little of that work which was done was by Mr. Davey himself. However, if his report be read, as I read it, you will not be able to conclude that this survey shows a saving of from 120 to 140 miles. I do not find that any such saving will be effected. Mr. Davey tells us that the distance from Moncton to Halifax via the Central New Brunswick road, which he has surveyed, will be 759 miles, and I am giving Mr. Davey the benefit of the ten miles which the right hon. gentleman says he could save. But the mileage from Montreal to Halifax by the Intercolonial Railway is only 836 miles, so that the saving by the New Brunswick Central, according to Mr. Davey, is only 77 miles and not 120 or 140. Mr. Davey's report is available, and if hon. gentlemen think that I have at all erred, my statement is capable of being corrected. Now, I attach no importance to a saving of 77 miles under the circumstances. I would not attach much importance to a saving of greater mileage under the same circumstances. It must not be forgotten—and I wish to emphasize this fact—that the Intercolonial Railway has such exceptionally favourable grades, is so well laid, and is such an exceptionally favourable road for traffic, running along the coast line, that it can haul heavier trains 259 miles further than the Canadian Pacific Railway in shorter time. You can therefore see how small a figure 77 miles would cut under such circumstances. I venture the opinion, without fear of successful contradiction that there is no new railway which can be laid out in the province of New Brunswick that can reach St. John under as favourable conditions as the Intercolonial Railway. You may save fifty or sixty miles in distance by building an expensive line, but the more favourable grades on the Intercolonial Railway will make that line very much shorter in its actual operation than this new road.

It is not a question of mileage. It is idle