

tween fifteen or twenty miles. Now, when we consider that this road is to be a competing road to the line of railway now built and running by the country it will show the great importance and advantage it is to this country. The seventy-five or eighty miles which are to be built are to shorten the distance between fifteen and twenty miles at the most, according to the best information I have been able to gather with regard to it. I have no objection to the Government building the road; I approve of their building it. When the measure was introduced for the purpose of building a branch line from Stellarton to Pictou, I thought that it was the intention of the Government to abandon the building of this line altogether. I believe that was the intention at the time, and that if the Company would not build it for \$3,200 a mile that part of the country was to do without the road. I think I stated my opinion last year when this question of the Pictou branch was before the House in that regard. We know that the Government have been pressed to construct this line from year to year, and that they have refused up to the present to build it. As I have stated, I do not object to their building the road as a Government work, but I claim that it was a corrupt act to pass a Minute of Council before going to the country, pledging the people of Pictou, Colchester and Cumberland that this road was to be built as a Government work. Why was it the Government refused last year to build it as a Government work? How was it that they so suddenly ascertained that it was necessary to build the road? I will tell you what I think about it. It is known that there was an election held in the Province of Nova Scotia for the Local Legislature in June last. That election was run upon the question of repeal, and the Minister of Finance claimed that the leader of the Opposition was the cause of the agitation for repeal in Nova Scotia. I tell him, Sir,—and no man knows it better than he—that that was not the cause. The cause of the dissatisfaction in Nova Scotia was the high taxation imposed on the people; it was the fact that the country was in the first place forced into Confederation without the consent of the people and against their will, the fact that the people were dissatisfied with the financial arrangements at that time, and the fact that those financial arrangements were proved to be insufficient for the public works of the Province. Those were the reasons for the dissatisfaction in the Province of Nova Scotia. Appeals have been made to this Government, time and again, asking for relief from the distress in which the Government of Nova Scotia found itself. Application was made in the fall of 1879, or the early part of 1880, by the Government of Nova Scotia, of which the hon. Minister of Justice was a leading member, if he was not the actual leader. That Government memorialised this Government on the question of better terms or an additional subsidy to enable the Government to carry on their local works. The Government pointed out truly that they were hampered for want of means, that it was necessary to have quite a large accession to the revenue, or otherwise they would require to resort to direct taxation to carry on their public works. This Government paid no attention to the appeals of Nova Scotia at that time, and the Government of Nova Scotia, which was a Conservative Government, did not renew those appeals. They went to the country in 1882, and were defeated. A new Government came in, and they renewed the appeal for better terms. No attention was paid to it by this Government. The last appeal was in 1885, when they pointed out that the dissatisfaction with regard to the terms of Union was greater than than it had been in 1867; but this Government, after taking twelve months to consider, returned an answer to the Nova Scotia Government to the effect that it was not true that the people were more dissatisfied with the terms of Union than they had been in 1867. Then, the Local Legislature, during the Session of 1886, passed a resolution asking the people of Nova Scotia

to decide at the polls whether they wished to continue in the Union or not. Under those circumstances, on the 15th of June, 1886, the people declared by an overwhelming majority that they wished to withdraw from the Union. Well, Sir, I think that had something to do with the action of this Government in afterwards passing those Minutes of Council in reference to railroads. The Government of the Dominion could not avoid seeing that something had to be done, in order to carry the elections if they were brought on soon. What did they do? They had sent down in June, from here, two members of the Cabinet, the Minister of Justice and the then Minister of Finance, who is now Postmaster General, in order, if possible, to defeat the Local Government at the polls. Those gentlemen went into several counties, made their speeches and used what influences they could. They sent their officials to the agents of the candidates opposed to the Government with bounty checks for the fishermen; and those agents went into the polling booths on the day of the election, presented the fishermen with their bounty, telling them it would be the last check they would ever receive if they supported the candidate favoring Mr. Fielding's Government. But notwithstanding all the influences these Ministers and their officials could use throughout the Province, they were overwhelmingly defeated at the polls. Therefore, something had to be done, and what was done? They sent to London and brought over the Lord High Commissioner, who had been luxuriating in pleasures and palaces, and sent him to Nova Scotia to retrieve, if possible, the falling fortunes of the Government. He was shrewd enough to see that something must be done, and he came to Ottawa and got this and other Orders in Council passed containing promises to build railways here, there and everywhere in the Province of Nova Scotia in order to carry the election.

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. Will the hon. gentleman let me say that this was the only one?

Mr. JONES. For that purpose?

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. No, no; this was the only Order in Council passed after my arrival touching any railroad in Nova Scotia.

Mr. KIRK. When was the Order in Council passed with reference to the Western Counties Railway?

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. Long before I came; certainly not after.

Mr. KIRK. It may have been long before the hon. gentleman came, but it was not made public until after the writs were issued, and it was not intended that it should be made public until the proper time came. It is not against the Order in Council being passed for this work that I protest, but the time that it was passed and the purpose for which it was passed, that, is to corrupt the electors of the three counties through which it would pass. But the hon. Minister of Finance did not consider that even that was sufficient to carry the county of Pictou. During the election he went down into New Glasgow in that county. Perhaps he went there from natural love and affection for one of the young gentlemen who was running in the interest of the Government in that county; and I understand that the hon. gentleman made other large promises there. I have been told, I do not know how truly, that the Minister of Railways had promised to keep the ferry running in Pictou harbor; and every hon. gentleman who was in this House last Session knows that the condition under which the Government undertook to build a branch railway from Stellarton to Pictou was that the ferry should be taken off, and that the line from New Glasgow to Fisher's Grant was not to be run in the same expensive way that it is now.