

vinced what the country is to gain by the expenditure of this very large amount of money. We are to save, it is told, according to the surveys of the hon. gentleman, 27 miles in distance between Montreal and Halifax. Other authorities placed the distance saved at 17 miles. Put the saving down at 20 miles, and we have no reason to believe, but the contrary, that a mile will be saved. Very good judges in fact say that there will be no saving at all; that the line as laid down on the map cannot be constructed without heavy expense indeed, and in order to get solid ground for construction north of Grand Lake a much more circuitous and expensive route will have to be taken than that with is laid down in the maps. Therefore, it is doubtful if there will be any saving in the length of the line; but supposing they would save 20 miles on the Canadian Pacific Railway between the two oceans, or even say between Montreal and Halifax, the saving in time would not exceed three-quarters of an hour, and I ask this House if, in the present condition of the finances of this country, with the large debt and the heavy burdens which Canada has had to assume for necessary public works—I am not now condemning the Government for these large expenditures, because I believe in a great measure they were the outcome of a wise policy, which will have future beneficial results—but looking at the necessary debt that this country has had to assume in connection with those public works, are we in a position, unless impelled by some inevitable necessity, to expend \$3,000,000 on this railway to secure such insignificant advantages? We all know what these works cost. Take the cost of the Intercolonial Railway and of the Canadian Pacific Railway as an illustration; look even at that building on Wellington street, which was estimated at \$250,000 at the outside. I am told it has cost now between \$700,000 and \$800,000. We know what all those Government estimates mean at the outset; they are put at the lowest figures possible and they generally are exceeded by 50 per cent. Are we, I ask this House again, now in a position to expend \$3,000,000, perhaps four or five millions, upon a work which is not a necessity? I say we are not, and it behoves this House especially

—which is not controlled by any party exigency whatever, but is free to do what the majority consider to be in the best interests of the country—to say if they are ready now to saddle this country with so large an addition to its debt without any corresponding advantage whatever? Because it is uncertain, I repeat, that there will be the slightest saving of distance or time by the construction of the Harvey and Salisbury road. But take it at its best: suppose you could save 20 miles on that road, would we be justified in expending so large a sum of money to attain that object, when we have so many other public works throughout this Dominion imperatively demanding the assistance which we are not able to render? I say we would not, especially in the absence of any authentic and specific information on which any hon. gentleman could rely in justification of the vote he would give in favor of this Bill. In the absence of any information of the kind, is it possible that a majority of this House would be asked to pass such a measure as this? I do not believe they will pass it. This missing link of the Short Line will cross the St. John River. A bridge has been built at Fredericton by a company at a cost of \$375,000, of which amount \$300,000, has been loaned by the Government to the company at 4 per cent. interest; and it has been made apparent elsewhere that in actual cash the company itself has not put a dollar in the enterprise.

HON. MR. POWER—Yes; \$45,000.

HON. MR. MILLER—I stand corrected if that is so, but in the discussion in another place I did not see or hear of that being stated, or sustained if it was stated. It is admitted that the bridge is in the wrong place, and that while it is possible that some distance might be saved if the River St. John were crossed at a more suitable place than Fredericton, it has also been admitted by one of the strongest friends of that route in this House, before myself and a number of other gentlemen a day or two ago, that if that bridge is utilized for the purposes of this road little or no saving of distance will be effected. Now that it is the intention of the Government to take that bridge from the company, there is no doubt whatever