

full force and effect. I need not pursue that point of the case any further because I consider that it is proved beyond doubt that this agreement is null and void and can have no effect as against the application we are now making to parliament for power to carry our line into the city of Montreal. There was another objection of a graver nature and that objection was that Mr. Armstrong, who has been connected with several railway enterprises and who does not seem to meet with the general favour of this House, was connected with this scheme. I will say this, and it seems to me to be a reasonable view, that unless one can establish that Mr. Armstrong is a dishonest man, his having been connected with a railway which had failed to succeed is not a sufficient objection for refusing a company with which he may happen to be connected any reasonable application, and there must be something beyond the mere question of Mr. Armstrong's personality to defeat a very ordinary Bill, such as this one, not a very important one, such as the one which it was my duty to place before the committee. However, I was very anxious to go fully into the other objection, and I obtained from the secretary of the company a list of the shareholders of the company of the date of June 9, 1903. The largest shareholder, I may say, out of the 1,200 shares of the company, is Mr. Edgar McMullen, of Boston, who owns 1,055 shares. Nothing could be alleged against that gentleman. He is connected with capitalists in Boston and New York. He has a very honourable career as a man who has gone through the civil war with great honour, and as to his financial ability nothing has been or could be alleged against him. Twenty shares are owned by Mr. C. M. Thompson, a financial man of New York, worth several hundred thousand dollars, as my instructions are. Twenty shares are owned by Mr. T. A. Richardson, of New York, another financial gentleman of weight, twenty shares by Mr. A. P. Stevens, of Albany, vice-president and manager of the First National Bank of that city. The other shareholders are Canadians. Mr. H. W. Raphael, of Montreal, is well known to hon. members of this House. He owns twenty shares. He is a very responsible man in every way, and a man worthy of the confidence of this House. Mr. Raphael is known no doubt to the right hon. leader of the government (Rt. Hon. Sir Wilfrid Laurier), as one of his strongest supporters. Mr. Henry W. McLaren, manufacturer of belting, of Montreal, a responsible man, owns twenty shares, five shares stand in the name of the estate of A. C. Wurtele, Montreal, ten shares in the name of the estate of Robert Watson, of Montreal, ten shares in the name of Mr. W. C. E. Phillips, Rimouski, five shares in the name of Mr. L. G. J. Fosbrook, Sorel, five shares in the name of Mr. Archibald Campbell, Montreal, and

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ten shares in the name of the Hon. J. R. Thibaudeau, Montreal. I produced a certificate before the committee in order to be able to show that the shares stood in the names of men against whom I do not think anything can be alleged. That objection, I take it, was met by the production of an authentic certificate from the secretary treasurer of the company. The objection was raised that \$300,000 of bonds had been issued by the Atlantic and Lake Superior Railway Company, and that might be a lien upon this road although I do not think that any lawyer would present such an argument. I do not think that objection was pressed very seriously, because, as a matter of fact, in the evidence which was adduced before the committee it was shown that this railway never in any sense formed part of the Atlantic and Lake Superior Railway. The agreement of 1894 never went into effect. It was alleged, it is true, that a sworn return had been made by the Hon. J. R. Thibaudeau to the Railway Department, and that from that sworn return it appeared that this railway really did form part of the Atlantic and Lake Superior Railway system, but as against that we have the letter of Mr. Thibaudeau himself dated July 2 last, from the context of which letter it appears very clearly that he must have given that return, sworn as it may be, through inadvertence, and that the agreement of 1894 never has been carried into effect because he says so in express terms in his letter in which he inquired from the Hon. J. P. B. Casgrain, the trustee for the bondholders, whether the agreement will be carried into effect. As a matter of fact it had become null and void by the lapse of time, sixty days having passed without the Atlantic and Lake Superior Railway Company having carried out its part of the agreement. This railway is a very necessary one. It passes through the county of Argenteuil. It crosses that county from one end of it to the other, it traverses the county of Two Mountains from end to end, and it will be of very great benefit to the counties of Laval and Jacques Cartier. We are ready, as was stated before the committee, to put a clause into this Bill which is now under the consideration of this House to the effect that the works must be begun within a year and that they must be terminated within three years. We went even farther. The suggestion was made to me I think, I may say, by the hon. member for Argenteuil (Mr. Christie) that for greater security, for a further guarantee, a provision should be inserted to the effect that a fixed amount of money should be spent upon the works within the very year within which the works had been begun. Under these circumstances I do not think it is possible for parliament to refuse the legislation which the Ottawa Valley Railway Company is applying for. I may say that the Bill was defeated in the Railway