

combination route, and the Megantic route, between which, it seems, there is very little difference, but in which all the geographical lines and the tendency of the investigation so far go to favor the Megantic route—while we are squabbling about these rather unimportant particulars, it may be that the trade of the great North-West will take a set and current, which it will be very difficult, if not impossible, for us to turn. Trade and commerce do take sets and tendencies, and when once trade gets into a certain channel, it is very difficult to get it removed to other channels, and it is of the first importance that just so soon as the Canadian Pacific Railway is open for through traffic from the Pacific, at that very moment, if possible, or as soon after as possible, there should be this uninterrupted communication with the Maritime Provinces by the very shortest possible route; and, if possible, this line should be controlled in the interests of the great through line, in order that the trade, at its inception, may be drawn to our ports and through our channels. For these reasons I am against a policy of delay. As regards the Maritime Provinces, we speak the sentiments of nine-tenths of the people when we say that this is something in which they have a deep interest and sympathy, and they will thank no public man in this House for depriving them of this communication for years, and making them run the risk of entirely losing it. Here, now, is a proposition by which we believe this line can be constructed and carried to the Maritime Provinces. No one knows what the complexion of affairs may be, or who may be the members of this House, or whether, if it is put off one year, it may not lead to its being put off for years and years, until the project may ultimately come to be abandoned. So I say we ought to vote against a policy of delay, unless some stronger reasons can be given than those that have been adduced this afternoon. But there is a stronger point than all. Without Maritime Province ports the view is taken that this great undertaking on which we have spent so much money, and the burdens of which we shall have to bear for many years, is uncompleted. We not only want summer traffic but we want winter traffic as well. We not only need summer ports to do our general business, but winter ports as well, and we can secure trade for them only by building the very shortest possible line of communication between the great central channel of commerce and trade and the sea coast, through whose ports we expect to do a great part of this business. Much depends, from the point of view of the Maritime Provinces as well as of the rest of the Dominion, upon the best facilities being afforded for interprovincial trade. Not only on the ground of promoting interprovincial trade, but on the ground of the necessity of securing through trade in the interest of the country as a whole, as well as of the Maritime Provinces as the winter port system, I strongly plead for no more delay. Let us vote the resolutions; let us have the communication, and then depend, as the hon. member for St. John says, upon the energy and business capacity of the people of the Maritime Provinces to hold up their own end of the commercial progress of this country, and make for themselves a future in this Confederation which will be both prosperous and satisfactory.

Mr. LANDRY (Kent). I promise not to detain the House more than a few minutes. But on a question of this importance and on the settlement of it must greatly affect the prosperity of the Maritime Provinces, I think it is the duty of members who represent constituencies in those Provinces to give utterance to whatever sentiment they may have on this question, because they will not only be criticised for their actions here, but their actions may be criticised twenty-five, thirty or forty years hence. It will greatly depend on the success of the line we may adopt here now as to the character of the criticisms that may be brought on the heads

Mr. FOSTER.

of those on whom the responsibility rests of adopting a line. I am not at all in sympathy to-night with advocates of delay. I think we have, perhaps, had too much delay in dealing with a matter of this importance, but I must admit this, that we ought to be in a position not to ask for delay, we ought to be in the position of having all the requisite surveys, explorations and plans before us, in order that we may be able to judge as to what route will be most profitable and advantageous to the Maritime Provinces, and to the Dominion generally. With that feeling I am in full sympathy. The delay asked last year was based on similar grounds to the application made this year, namely, that we had not possession of sufficient information; that we wanted more information. The House granted the request. It was desirable for the Maritime Provinces to have the contract entered into; but the Government considered that it would be in the interests of the Dominion that the delay of one year should take place. What for? In order to have sufficient information on which to base our judgment this Session. Have we that information now? It will perhaps be presumptuous to offer an opinion, because I am not an engineer, and do not pretend to understand the different terms of an engineer's report. Yet, what do I find? I find that a man who has recently been returned to this House, a man most capable of expressing an opinion on this subject, an engineer of great reputation, tells us, that with all the attention he has been able to give to this subject, having read the discussions on it, having examined the plans—he, as an engineer, cannot state to the House or the country that he could make a choice between these routes, because the surveys are not sufficient. Well, Sir, if he is not in a position, how am I to say—how are the Government to say, and decide, that this is the best route? For that reason, I am in sympathy with the idea that we are not in a position to-night to give that intelligent vote that I think we should give on such a matter as this. I think it is much to be regretted, when the Government acceded to the request of the House to give them a delay of one year, they did not cause such surveys to be made as to enable them and us positively to say, not only that they had struck a certain line, but to say that they had struck the best line, and would be able to lay before the House reports upon which they could confidently claim that it was the best. We find that an engineer who appears to be pretty eminent in his profession—I do not say, for I cannot say, that his information is correct—but on his authority, he states that there is a line over all-Canadian territory that is shorter by, it is true, only  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles, than the one we are asked to adopt. Well, even if it were 10 miles or even 25-miles longer, I say we should not throw it overboard in favor of one through American territory. I say we should be willing to put ourselves to some little disadvantage in order to get such a line as that. I do not know whether this gentleman is accurate or not, but I will give you his figures, in order that they may be recorded as part of the discussion, because it is not only to-day, but hereafter, that our action will be criticised, and this will have a tendency to show upon what information the vote was given. He points out that from Montreal to Moncton the distance is 550 miles, by a route over all-Canadian territory, while by the route which is now proposed the distance is 551 $\frac{1}{2}$  miles, or a difference of  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles in favor of the all-Canadian route. He gives you 172 miles from Montreal to Quebec, about which there is no dispute, because it is already built; he gives you 66 miles on the Intercolonial Railway, about which there is no dispute; then there are 105 miles which are not built, and which may be speculative. Then from Edmundston to Grand Falls there are 40 miles already built; and from Grand Falls to Canaan, 148 miles, which may be altogether speculative, and which I am not prepared to say is correct or not. Here is how he arrives at it: