

settled by a large majority, after the amendment proposed now by the member for Quebec East (Mr. Laurier), which does not attack the principle at all, but simply desires to delay the embodiment of that idea, I think it is not seriously contemplated in this House to antagonise the idea of building, as soon as possible, a commercial line between the Maritime Provinces and the west. The amendment of the hon. member for Quebec East (Mr. Laurier) is simply a motion for delay. I watched the hon. gentleman very carefully in the course of his speech, to see if he gave any sufficient reasons for further delay in putting into execution the principle to which we are all agreed. The main reason which he gave for delay was that the Government last year had made a pledge that the subsidy should not be granted or the railway built until reports had come in from competent engineers. The hon. gentleman said the Government had not carried out that pledge, and hence his amendment. Now, I think the Government has carried out its pledge, both literally and in spirit. Some five or six different surveys have been made; they have been thoroughly gone over by the Government engineer. He says that they are amply sufficient to enable the Government to base the location of a line upon them. But the hon. member for Quebec East is not satisfied with the number of surveys. He says there is another line which ought to be surveyed, the combination line. Now, it is interesting to note the change of base which my hon. friend has taken since last year. Last year he based his motion for delay on the ground that there was another route on all-Canadian soil, very nearly as short, and, on the whole, he believed it to be a good one, and that it ought to be adopted, in preference to going through American territory. A large part of his argument last year was based on the Rivière du Loup and Edmunston route, and especially the desirability of having the line through all-Canadian territory. Now, it has been shown by the surveys that there is a considerable difference in distance between that and the so-called American route. My hon. friend this year, just as Parliament is ready to put the idea into execution, comes forward again with a motion for delay, but this year it is not based upon the patriotic necessity for having an all-Canadian route. He himself goes against his argument of last year, because he bases this further claim for delay upon the ground that the combination line of Mr. Light will be shorter and better than the Megantic line, but which combination line runs for a long part through American territory. So that although he shifts his ground, yet he is always consistent in asking for delay. Now, Sir, to what limit must this go? Five surveys are made, and yet the hon. gentleman asks for delay in order that another one may be made. If we delay another year and five more surveys are made, is there any probability that my hon. friend will not come back next year with another motion for delay, because, forsooth, Mr. Light or some other person may have made upon paper a line which he declares to be better than any one that has been surveyed already? If my hon. friend bases his arguments upon Mr. Light's figures, I think he has his answer very well from the hon. member for Grenville (Mr. Shanly), himself an engineer of large experience, who stated that, in his opinion, no surveys had been made, so far, which would warrant any person in being certain about the comparative merits of either line. My hon. friend also argued that the Edmunston subsidy and the Megantic line subsidy were antagonistic; that one cut out the other; that if one was given the other would be useless. Now, I do not subscribe to that opinion. I think the Megantic route and the Edmunston and Rivière du Loup route run through very different sections of country, and meet the requirements of very different sections of country; and even if the Megantic route be subsidised, there is very good reason, from a New Brunswick point of view,

and from a Quebec point of view, why the Edmunston and Rivière du Loup route should also be subsidised. My hon. friend also gave, as a reason for his amendment, that no company had come forward to build this Megantic line. Well, I think that the House, and all hon. members who have given the least attention to this matter, will agree with me that the promoters, and the company who will undertake to build the Megantic line, are within sight far more than the promoters and the company who will take up and carry through the combination line. My hon. friend then tried to make capital for his amendment by saying that the line south of the St. Lawrence had resulted from intrigue. I am not going to enter into that question, except to point out that the proof which he offered for his assertion is not such as will be satisfactory to this House. The proof that he gave consisted of extracts from newspapers in Quebec and other parts of the country. Well, I need not remind my hon. friend that newspapers say some very astonishing things about almost every public man who comes within the eye of the people, and my hon. friend would be the last man who would be willing to be judged in this House, either as to motive or as to practice, by what correspondents or editors of newspapers might say about him. These were the reasons given by my hon. friend, and I ask every hon. gentleman in this House if these reasons are sufficient to justify delay in a work of so great urgency? I do not think they are. But after these apparent reasons of the hon. gentleman, I think he gave the real reason why he sought delay last year, and why he seeks delay this year, and that was, that by some means or other he has persuaded himself that the future of the city of Quebec, as a summer port, depends upon whether this line goes south of the St. Lawrence or passes north of that river and crosses near the city of Quebec or goes by it. Now, what are the competitors of the city of Quebec, as a summer port? Well, in summer Quebec would have as competitors Montreal, Portland and Boston; and if this route goes through it will have as competitors the Maritime Province ports. It is for any member to decide whether or not Quebec will be put in a different position in competition with those other ports, provided this road is built, or provided it is not built. As summer ports, Quebec and Montreal are now in competition. They will be in just the same position when the road is built by Megantic, and no more. The competition between Halifax, St. John and Quebec, as summer ports, is, with all the differences, in favor of Quebec. There are some 300 miles distance in favor of Quebec, and whatever would go there as a summer port, without this line being built, will go there if the line be built. When you come to the other side of the question, and consider what are the competitors of St. John and Halifax and other winter ports, you find those competitors to be Portland and Boston, great cities in the United States. There is a competition in which St. John and Halifax and the Maritime Province ports stand at a disadvantage, if the distance and the kind of a road are at all against them; and even if you have the very shortest line, and the very best road, and the very best equipment, from the central point of Montreal down to the Maritime Provinces, you give them all they can do, in order to make a fair competition for any considerable portion of the trade with ports which lie much nearer Montreal, so far as distance is concerned. This House should pause before, for the sake of getting this road on the north shore and having a bridge built at Quebec, it runs the risk of making this road 50 or 60 miles, or even 30 miles longer, and takes away from its chances in the keen competition it will have to meet for this great through traffic with the winter ports in the United States. I have very little else to say with respect to this subject, except this: I do not believe in this policy of delay. As the member for St. John (Mr. Weldon) said, while we are squabbling among ourselves about the