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THE LEGISLATURE.

Debate on the Intercolonial Railway.

Mr. Gillmor said he had listened with great pleasure to his hon. friend (Mr. Gray), but he did not think it all gospel which he preached. Oratory, lofty imagination, and finely rounded periods were pleasing to the ear, but as often led people into error, as truth. He remembered having read, in a very ancient and reliable book, of a certain people who had no doubt been blessed and were getting along very harmoniously; these people settled down in a fertile plain, which he would take the liberty of calling Shinar; they were not quite satisfied with their slow mode of getting along, and no doubt they had orators among them like his friend Mr. Fisher, who said to them.—"This is a land of great resources; we have plenty of clay for brick, and slime for mortar, and let us build us a city and a tower—a great city and a very high tower." He (Mr. G.) could imagine one of the company asking the question, "How high shall the tower be?" "Oh," says the orator, "We are a great people: I think we had better build it to Heaven." These people were led on to the undertaking, in order to have a great name, but the work became too large, and there began to be confusion among them. Their language became confounded, so that they could not understand each other's speech, and it was most remarkable that what these ambitious orators wanted most,—a name to go down to posterity, of glory and renown—was just what they did not get, as not one of their names is mentioned in history, except a distant allusion to Nimrod. There had been more or less Babel builders down to the present time. Several hon. members who had spoken in favor of the bill, had called those opposed to it "Old fogies," useful only to keep the wheels from going too fast down hill. His hon. friend (Mr. Skinner) had very wittily named them suckers, while those who went for the bill were smart fish, that would rise to the fly—those fish would be sadly mistaken when they, in attempting to take this artificial fly, became hooked. Imagine the sucker, which he must confess was rather a poor fish, but too cautious to be caught by an artificial fly, yet when he saw his very smart neighbor in trouble, might venture up just far enough to say, "You confounded fool, if you had taken my advice, you would not now be in your present unhappy position," and would add sarcastically, "I think it better to live upon suction than artificial flies—don't you?" There were four parties concerned in this Intercolonial Railroad, the British Government, the Canadas, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. As a national and military road, if necessary at all, the British Government ought to render more substantial aid than merely to act as endorser. It was true by that means the money was to be obtained at a low rate of interest than in any other way, but really not a dollar was to come out of the British treasury. From the earliest history of this affair, it had been strenuously argued that the British Government had interest in it both nationally and financially, and should contibute towards building the road. In 1858 delegates from the colonies stated, that to secure an object of such Imperial interest they should contribute £1,500,000, representing at 4 per cent. an annual charge upon the British treasury of £60,000. It was then urged that it would save $25,000 paid to the United States for carrying mails to and from Canada, reduce on services now performed by the Cunard line £35,000, Halifax being nearer Liverpool than New York, saving in transmission of troops and munitions of war at least £10,000. Add £25,000, which would be paid by the United States for the transmission of the mails by the railway; these added, make the sum of £95,000 per annum. In addition to these sums, the expenditure in the colonies, by England, for fortifications, &c., had been equal to £400,000 annually. A good deal of this, it was stated, would be saved in future, if the road was built. He (Mr Gillmor) was willing to make great allowances for the delegates, while they were trying to make as good a bargain as possible, but admitting that what they said was half, or quarter true, how was it that the colonies now agreed to build the whole themselves? It was true that these calculations had been based upon the supposition that Great Britain would own the road; but if it were built, as at present contemplated, these might considered as constituting business for the road. But who for a moment believed they should realize any very considerable sum from those sources? He (Mr. Gillmor) read several extracts from English Journals to show the interest the mother country had in this work. He also read petitions from merchants, bankers, &c., in London, to the British Government; also from Liverpool, and several other towns in England, and Belfast, in Ireland, setting forth the great advantage this road was going to be not only to the colonies, but to Great Britain. Now was there any reality in all this? If so, England ought to do more than endorse. While they were all attached to the mother country and were willing to give her credit for having done much for their protection, yet it must be remembered, that if they were to get at loggerheads, with their American neighbors, it would be very likely or some cause over which the colonies had no control, and in which, as colonists they had no interest, yet situated as these colonies were, they would be the first to suffer. Mr. Gillmor said, admit for argument's sake, that the colonies undertook it principally as a military line, ought not Canada to pay as much per head as New Brunswick? If so, New Brunswick with its two hundred and fifty thousand, would only pay one tenth as much as Canada, with her two and a half millions, which would be about £250,000. Soldiers could be got to New Brunswick any season of the year without this road, and they had the same advantage commercially, having plenty of ports open all the year round. They had all the outlet they wanted, and if their local position gave them an advantage, they should make something out of it. He (Mr. Gillmor) was of opinion that they should not have war with their friends across the border, from their state of civilization and advancement, and none could deny that they were in truth, a great nation—great in territory, in resources, and in their institutions. They were now passing through a very severe trial; they were trying to do and would do what other nations had done—put down rebellion.—While every man had a right to his own opinion, he regretted that the disappointed party in the south should find so many sympathizers in New Brunswick. Our business relations and social intercourse had been for the most part with the North, and he should think our wishes would be for their success. Would the contemplated road pay as a commercial undertaking? No one, even the most sanguine, would contend that it would pay directly, and he felt satisfied that for ten or fifteen years to come it would not pay indirectly. Was there any branch of trade now suffering? Had this province commercial relations to any extent with Canada?—The whole amount of their imports in 1861 from Canada was £29,168, and our exports in the same year amounted to £18 550.—But hon. members would say, "Give us a railroad and we will increase it wonderfully." But they could get flour and pork now much cheaper down the St. Lawrence, six months in the year, than they could get it by railroad; and after the rivers were closed it could be sent to Portland, and brought from there to the province cheaper than they could get it over this contemplated road.—If the road were built could it get any trade of the far west of any amount? It would be a competitor of the Great Western, of the Grand Trunk to Portland, as well as other roads. It had been estimated that only 7 per cent. of the trade of the west came to Montreal; of this 7 per cent., during the season of water communication a good deal would be transported that way, it being cheaper. Then the Grand Trunk to Portland had a decided advantage in distance.—From Montreal to Portland is 292 miles; from Montreal to Halifax, by north shore, was 807 miles; greater distance to Halifax than Portland, 515 miles; from Montreal to St. John, by north shore, 683 miles. Add 108 from Shediac to St. John, making 791 from Montreal to St. John; take 292 miles from Montreal to Portland, leaves the distance from Montreal to St. John 499 miles further than to Portland; and by the southern route, 360 miles further. In case of war with the United States, parties would be compelled to send anything wanted to export in winter over British territory; but unless some occurence of that kind forced the trade this way, it would and must seek the shortest and cheapest outlet. It was absurd to imagine that it could begin to pay working expenses, let alone any part of the interest on the loan. Only the counties along the north shore had trade with Canada, to any extent, and they could get their flour and pork down in vessels for less than half what it could be brought on a railroad. If Canada wanted to get to the Atlantic through New Brunswick, she ought to pay a larger proportion than that named in the Bill. Should the road go by the North Shore, so far as being any advantage to New Brunswick, it would be an injury, and if New Brunswick gave even the right of way for such a route, she would, in his opinion, be doing quite enough. The Central would be a little better for St. John, but not much. The southern would be the shortest—that way, there would be fewer miles to build—and it would effect two objects, carrying the road to the frontier of Maine, continuing up the St. Andrews line to Canada. Most certainly that route would be the most likely to benefit the Province. But, if asked by his constituents, 'would the Southern route pay?" he would certaily say, in his opinion, it would not, and that no line to Canada would pay for some years to come. While these were his honest convictions, should the Government propose to build the line through Charlotte, it would benefit his county and he would likely vote for it. At the same time he felt sure it would not pay, and they had better let it alone for the present. If any line was needed, or would pay, it was a continuation of the present road from St John, by shortest route to Calais; but that was not the question. It had been argued that the road would tend to increase their population to an extent sufficient to meet increased liability. He believed no such thing. He would not say that it would not bring some people to the country but that it would turn the tide of emigration to New Brunswick he thought was a great mistake. Nearly two millions of pounds had, within a few years been expended on the two lines of road now built, but it had not brought the people. He would not say, however, it drove people out of the country.—When the supporters of the Bill said that railroads were going to do so much to settle the country and increase their population, it was only necessary to look at the population at different periods to see that it had increased as fast and faster, before they had any such roads. Population in 1783 was 12,000 in 1803 27,000; in 1824, 74,176 in 1834, 119,475; in 1840, 129,009,: in 1848 154,000; in 1851, 193,800; in 1861, 252,000. Even if population should increase would not their local wants for roads, schools bridges, &c., increase also? Ought the people to be taxed without getting a return in some way? How was it now? The whole people of the Province were paying £84,000 interest on the present liabilities, about £70,000 of which was for the interest on the railway debt. Was it good policy; was it just to tax all the people to build a road from Shediac to St John, to haul timber for them? This was very well for St. John, but was it just to other parts of the Province? His hon. friend Mr. Fisher said that Bangor had incurred large liabilities, and Portland also. That was right. They would not tax the whole of Maine for a road to build up Bangor or Portland. The cities that were to be built up had to pay for it. Ask the merchants of St. John, or the advocates of this Bill to take stock and invest their own money in any of these railway works, and he would venture to say they would not risk a dollar; but so long as they could meet all the interest by a little additional tax it was no matter. About half of all the revenue had been taken last year to pay the interest on our present debt which amounted to $5,639,991, and about as much, he thought as the Province was at present able to bear. At any rate it was enough until the money should be invested in a more profitable way than it had already been. He would advise hon. membess to stop and think a little upon this matter.—Not only the interest of the debt had to be paid but by and bye the principal also.—Hon members talked about this as a great country, with vast resources &c. He did not believe any such thing. The country was well enough. They got on comfortobly by prudence and industry, but it was a cold country, and a hard country to accumulate much wealth in; but there were better countries, and people would continue to go there for a long time to come. Talk, said he, argue in the West; those who went there chose to stay rather than come to New Brunswick to shiver. He did not wish to depreciate the Province, but when men talked about it as a land flowing with milk and honey, he felt satisfied it was not so. If immigration was so valuable, would it not be better to spend money to bring people here, and after the population became numerous enough, then build the roads? He was much happier out of debt than in debt, and he believed the majority of men felt so.—There were men who were too slow and some who were too fast; a medium course was about the safest. He had read a remark that "just between where men freeze to death and burn to death," was about the healthiest climate to live in. In private affairs, there were many conveniences that it might be desirable to have, but if people's circumstances were too limited, they ought to do without them. It would be quite absurd for a man barely able to own a horse and waggon to attempt to own a coach and four, and to mortgage his farm for them; but some hon. members would say without railroads they were behind the age, and ought to be ashamed of their country. They would rather be able to say to any stranger, inquiring about New Brunswick, that "they had endeavored to live within their own income; their progress had been slow and sure; it was true they had not many railroads but they were not in debt and they had no interest to pay, and bye and bye their population and wealth would increase, so that they could afford those things, which more populous and wealthy countries had." It had been said "let future generations pay the debts: we will contract them." He preferred to leave what little estate he might have to his children without an encumbrance he thought they would respect his memory and judgement quite as much as if he left it under mortgage. He admitted a government might go further than an individual, and although their investment might not pay directly, yet it might indirectly, so that the whole might be benefitted by the outlay.—But their experience in railroads had proved so far that neither directly nor indirectly had they paid them. Had trade increased? Look at the amount of imports and exports and see if the great railroad debt had done much in the way of increasing commerce.—In 1850 our imports amounted to $4,077,655 in 1854 to $10,343 865, in 1856 to $7,605,890. in 1859 to $7,080,170, in 1860 to $7,233,700, and our exports for the same year amounted in 1850 to $329,090, in 1854 to $5,521,075, in 1856 to $5,366,755, in 1859 to $5,367,110 and in 1860 to $4,581,850. Now could any man argue consistently, from past experience, and from figures which tell no untruths, that the railway pays them indirectly. If not then why rush so hastily into a further liability which in proportion to population and revenue was very large. The people of Charlotte were paying now in proportion to population about £6500 annually as their part of the interest on the railway debt to aid ship builders in St. John to get their ship timber.—The St. Andrews road was quite different, that had been built almost entirely by private capital, and the stock holders had lost their money. He was sorry for it; false representations had induced them to undertake it. Would the Government tax the people for a similar undertaking? If they would, he did not feel justified in assisting them at present. Hon. members had said it would increase travel. If any one wanted to go to Canada now, for business or pleasure, was there not plenty of opportunity? If they were so exceedingly loyal that they must travel over British territory they could go by land through this Province, or by railway from St. John to Shediac, thence by steamboat, (which had now a grant of £2,000 per annum) to Canada, or they could go to Portland by steamboat and from thence to Canada, so that there was quite facilities enough at present for business men, and also for men of pleasure. He did not go for expending a very large amount to induce people to travel; he thought the Province would thrive quite as well if people remained at home and attended to their business; in his experience he had found the desire to be suddenly great and rich, had resulted badly; industry, prudence and economy, were the road to success.

If he were favorable to this great undertaking now the present Bill did not meet his views; the whole proposal should have been plainly defined; he thought it was not. The Legislature was asked to vote away a right of selecting a route to some party not clearly defined; was it the British Government, or a majority of the Colonies? So far as he could ascertain it was the British Government; an arbitrator he should not choose, as he felt satisfied from past experience they would choose the Northern route, which would be ruinous to St. John and consequently ruinous to the interest of the Province generally. He felt satisfied Nova Scotia would also select the same route in order to build up Halifax. Canada would want to build this company road as far through their own territory as possible, so they would go as far as possible through the district of Gaspe. If the road was needed for New Brunswick there should have been a clearly defined route, and if a majority could not agree upon it, that would have been an evidence they did not want it. The Bill reminded him of a trick which used to be practised when he was a child, "Open your mouth and shut your eyes, and I will give you something that will make you wise," and often times something was put into the mouth which was by no means palatable; hon. members favourable to all three routes had shut their eyes and opened their mouth most certainly two of them must be disappointed. He did not intend to run the risk; if left to the British Government he felt satisfied the ten members from the north shore counties would get the prize. His friend Mr. Fisher thought it was sure not to go there, because only three millions of money could be got for the road. The Bill did not limit it, it only limited the amount the British Government were willing to guarantee; but under the Bill he thought the Colonies could borrow any balance required and if the road was commenced, if it took four or even five millions, it would have to be got, as it would not answer to expend three millions and then stop with the work unfinished. It was not agreeable to him to differ from his friends in the Government, but a strong sense of duty compelled him to do so on this occasion. He was not very well informed as to the views of his constituents on this matter; he had received letters from men of good judgement and intelligent and experience favorable to the Bill; particular friends, he regretted that he was obliged to differ from them; he had also received letters from men of good judgement and intelligence opposed to it; he could not tell how his vote would satisfy his county but he would at least have the satisfaction of knowing that he had done his duty, and what he had conceived to be most for the interest of those who would in the event of the work going on, have to pay the Bills. Fine speeches would answer very well to start this great scheme, but hard work in the field and in the woods must be done to pay for it. It was not necessary for him to say any thing about loyalty; it had very little to do with the question, it was a question that had to do with plain practical common sense, and pounds, shillings and pence. If the road was built he hoped it might meet the expectations of its supporters, if it did he certainly was not entitled to any of the credit, as he should vote against it.

April 1.

Mr. Grimmer thought no measure so completely out of comparison with the resources of a country had ever been submitted to any legislature, at any time, as the Bill before them, that sought to pledge the credit to the Province to an amount six simes beyond the revenue. All the speakers in favor of the measure had shown that they possessed a great amount of fervid imagination and had wrapped the subject in a halo of hallucination, conjuring up beautiful pictures, all unsubstantial as a "painted ship upon a painted ocean." But it was all important, considering they were there to protect the interest of the people, (to whom they owed allegiance, which they must not not forget while paying allegiance to the throne,) to stick to hard facts, and look at the stern and forbidding aspect of the subject. He thought there was a large amount of error in referring to old records, and bringing forward the general resolutions and addresses passed in favor of the railway in former years, as an argument why the Bill before them ought to receive their support. Those resolutions were merely vague and general expressions of opinion as to the importance of the road; they embodied no scheme such as they were now to consider. In legislating on this subject they ought to look back upon their own experience, and profit by that of other countries. The conditions of climate and country under which the proposed railway would be built, would be analagous to those of the Grand Trunk, and Great Western lines of Canada, and what had been the experience of their directors as to their paying capabilities and the difficulties of working them? They did not pay working expenses, and it was almost impossible to work them in winter. Mr. Grimmer read a long account from the pen of a clergyman of the Church of Scotland, regarding the great obstacles in the way of working railways in Canada, in reference particularly to the transportation of the troops at the time of the Trent affair. The real difficulty began with the railways. He then depicted the misery and want the nonpaying character of the Grand Trunk Railway had brought on the widows of officers who had fallen in the service of their country, and helpless ladies who had, deluded by the glorious prospects set forth by sanguine speculators, invested their little means in shares that gave them no return. He then showed that the value of Grand Trunk stock was 20½ and 21½ per cent. on March 1863, and that Great Western stock was selling at from 12½ and 13½ per cent. Was not that a nice state of affairs and a cheering prospect for them?—He was not opposed to railways, and he would not be indisposed to go for one, provided it was made clear to him that it would pay its working expenses. He then proceeded to read from a pamphlet as to the effect the expenditure of two millions of British capital, at the time of the construction of railways and other public works in Canada, had on the Province. During the time the money was being spent, an impetus had been given to its trade, but after the completion of the works there followed a great depression and collapse of credit, and from a state of great prosperity, reduced the country to one of comparative poverty. The fact to be learnt from these Canadian railways was one they would do well to ponder over—the money spent in their construction was absolutely lost to those who sunk it. He thought the Provincial Secretary had put forth a fallacy when he said New Brunswick would have the benefit of the expenditure of two millions, as a large amount would have to go out of the Province for iron, &c., and, he thought, when their experience showed them, that the great railway had no increased population and revenue to, had rather had his

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