

these men, make his plan, and propose what I hope and believe this Parliament would be willing to give, a large grant for immigration purposes. Then, instead of the dribblets which have been coming in in the past, and even the large number that I am happy to say are coming in to Manitoba and the North-West this year, we might treble or quadruple the number. I would, therefore, vote for the motion, because I consider that everything that brings people into the North-West makes not only for the prosperity of the North-West but makes for the prosperity of the whole Dominion of Canada.

Motion allowed to stand.

#### BRIDGE ON THE RICHELIEU RIVER.

Mr. BRUNEAU (Translation) moved for :

Copies of all documents, memorials and correspondence between the Government and the Corporation and Board of Trade of the town of Sorel and other persons, respecting the granting of a subsidy for the construction of a bridge on the Richelieu River to connect the town of Sorel with the Montreal and Sorel Railway.

He said: Mr. Speaker, in offering this motion, I wish to draw the attention of the Government to the fact that a \$50,000 subsidy was voted by the Quebec Legislature at its last session for the building of a bridge on the Richelieu River. I wish also to put before the House the facts which may establish the importance and the propriety of such subsidy. The Montreal and Sorel Railway was incorporated in 1882 by a Quebec statute, 44-45 Victoria, chapter 35. The object of this Act was to provide for the construction of a railway, 35 miles long, from Longueuil to Sorel. Among the usual powers conferred upon the company was that of constructing a bridge on the Richelieu River. The company bent its energies on the fulfilment of the conditions of its charter, and without the help of any subsidy either from the Federal or the Local Government, it built its 45 miles of railway. In 1886, the Federal Government granted, by the statute 49-50 Victoria, chapter 59, a sum of \$72,000. About the same time the Quebec Government also gave a subsidy of \$112,000 to allow the claims of the workmen and of the expropriated land owners to be settled. Until the granting of these subsidies the company had had, for the construction of its line, no other resource but the proceeds of its debentures in England. About the same time, that is in 1886, the Dominion Government granted a subsidy of \$32,000 for the construction of ten miles of railway from Yamaska to the St. Francis River. These ten miles of railway are built, and are not worked to-day, which is about the condition of the Montreal and Sorel Railway. Since then, nearly ten miles of railway have also been constructed from St. Grégoire to Nicolet, by the Great Eastern (which is the continuation of the Montreal and Sorel), and now we have, on the south shore of the St. Lawrence, nearly seventy miles of railway, built but still unworked. I wish to draw the attention of the Government to the advisability of connecting together these different sections of railway, and to complete them, and to give the power of so doing to the Montreal and Sorel and the Great Eastern Companies. To this end it would be necessary to bridge the Richelieu River. On the 6th of June, 1889, the Quebec Government granted a sum of \$50,000 to this end. This subsidy was voted during the last session of the Quebec

Legislature, provided the Dominion Government and the city of Sorel would grant each a like amount. The city of Sorel, in June, 1890, made enquiries of the Dominion Government as to its intention in the matter. During the following July it received from the Government a letter which was nothing but an acknowledgment of reception. Many and many a time since was this question put to the Government, by our Board of Trade and by the political friends of the Government, but without any result. And during the local, federal and municipal elections, this eternal question of the Sorel bridge—like that other eternal question of the Quebec bridge—was not the least effective bait with which the speakers of the two political parties tempted the electors of the County of Richelieu. On the south shore of the St. Lawrence the continuation and completion of the South Shore Railway is demanded, and many times the attention of the Government has been drawn to the necessity of finishing this road. Verchères, Chambly, Richelieu, Yamaska, Lotbinière and Lévis have asked for subsidies for this road. To ask for a subsidy in favour of a bridge over the Richelieu, is to work in favour of the railway on the south shore of the St. Lawrence. Three years ago, my hon. friend from Lotbinière (Mr. Rinfret) showed the Government the importance of this South Shore Railway, which would be the shortest route between Montreal and Lévis, and would necessarily increase the revenue of the Intercolonial by promoting the traffic from the east and the Pacific traffic from the north-west towards the Maritime Provinces, and which would at last render a tardy justice to the oldest parishes of Canada—that is those parishes strung along the south shore of the St. Lawrence. These parishes have contributed largely to all the great public enterprises of our country. In order to give an idea of the importance of these different counties on the south shore, it will be enough for me to give the following figures. In 1881, the aggregate crop of these counties was: 136,567 bushels of wheat, 146,858 bushels of barley, 2,403,244 bushels of oats, and 15,259 bushels of rye. According to the last census, these different counties have a population of 120,815 inhabitants, and these have but scanty means of communication between themselves, and no outlet for their commerce during winter, especially towards Montreal, the commercial metropolis of Canada, where they should be able to send their produce. Such is the position of the people of Sorel. They are obliged, when going to Montreal, to cross the St. Lawrence and to drive seven miles to take the Pacific Railway at Berthier, or else pass by the South-Eastern Railway, which gives them a distance of over a hundred and twenty-five miles to travel. As to the Montreal and Sorel Railway Company, I know that certain prejudices have been spread amongst the people in the Province of Quebec, and amongst public men against the company. I believe we must be just, and I wish—in order to show the *pro* and *con* to the Government—to lay before the House a letter, lately written to *La Presse*, by Mr. C. N. Armstrong, a political friend of the Government and president of the Montreal and Sorel Railway, under date of the 23rd of March last. His letter is a little long, but it shows so well the justness and importance of the claim which I am now making, that I believe it to be my duty to lay it before the Government :