

these two lines to use either the one or the other of them. This is a condition which does not apply to the present line which we are contemplating. There will be a distance of 30 miles, which alone would prevent communication from one to the other, but, in addition to that, between these 30 miles, there is a chain of mountains which it is very difficult for people to overcome. Therefore, I say it cannot be fairly stated that this line is going to parallel the line that we already have in existence. I stated a moment ago that the line of the Intercolonial Railway was placed where it is for political reasons. Certainly, those who built that line, those who conceived it, those who planned it, never contemplated at the time that the day would ever come when it would be used for transcontinental transportation, yet, scarcely had the last rail been put down, scarcely had a train commenced to run upon it when it was discovered that the long, tortuous meanders of the line were a serious impediment to trade, even to the comparatively small trade of the Canada of that day. An agitation immediately commenced in the maritime provinces, in the province of Quebec and even westward in the province of Ontario, to have a shorter line built between the centre of confederation and the eastern ports of Canada. Those who were in the House of Commons in the years 1880, 1881, 1882, 1883 and 1884 will remember that almost every session allusion was made to the fact that the Intercolonial Railway could not serve the purposes of the growing traffic of Canada, and that we had to find a shorter line of railway than we then had. The feeling became so acute, the agitation became so strong, that the government of Sir John Macdonald had to give heed to it, and in 1884 the following resolution was introduced by Sir Charles Tupper, then Minister of Railways and Canals:

For the construction of a line of railway connecting Montreal with the harbours of St. John and Halifax, by the shortest and best practicable route, a subsidy not exceeding \$170,000 per annum for fifteen years, or a guarantee of a like sum for a like period, as interest on bonds of the company undertaking the work.

Mark the language of this resolution.

For the construction of a line of railway connecting Montreal with the harbours of St. John and Halifax, by the shortest and best practicable route.

There was an admission that the line of the Intercolonial Railway was not the shortest and best practicable route, that it could not serve the purposes of the growing trade of that time, but, strong as is the admission contained in the resolution, it is perhaps still better that I should give the commentaries made on that occasion by Sir Charles Tupper himself to illustrate and develop the thought that is there contained. He said:

Then a very strong feeling has grown up in the maritime provinces, and not only in the
Sir WILFRID LAURIER.

maritime provinces, but throughout Canada, because I believe that from British Columbia down through the North-west Territories, through the province of Ontario, and in the province of Quebec, there has been a strong and general sentiment that this great interoceanic line of the Canadian Pacific Railway would be incomplete if we were obliged to have our Atlantic terminus in a foreign country. I believe the sentiment is not at all confined to the provinces of Nova Scotia or Prince Edward Island, or the province of New Brunswick, but I believe it has taken just as deep a hold of the minds of our friends of the other provinces almost as it has in the maritime provinces. Although every effort has been made to render the operation of the Intercolonial Railway as successful as possible, although more has been accomplished in the development of the country, in the development of the trade and business of the country, through the agency of the Intercolonial Railway than any person on either side of this House a few years ago supposed to be possible, still we have found we were too heavily handicapped by the distance, and that we could not, reluctantly as we are driven to the conclusion, we have been driven to the conclusion by the force of circumstances and by the practical results, that it is impossible for the ports of St. John and Halifax to compete with the nearer ports of Portland and Boston, in the United States.

Under these circumstances, the attention of the government has been drawn, as I have said on one or two occasions before in this House, to the best means by which we might secure a realization of that which we all desire, the Atlantic terminus being in Canadian territory as well as the Pacific terminus, and thus be placed in a position to fairly compete for the transcontinental trade and traffic that we all know must flow over that line. * * *

I have stated the position in which this question stands from its national or larger point of view, and I believe I may confidently rely not only upon the kind support of our friends on this side of the House for carrying out a measure which has been considered by the government in all its aspects and in all its bearings with a view to the promotion of the best interests of the country, but I believe I can rely with equal confidence upon the support of gentlemen opposite in carrying out what we all recognize as most important, making a complete line of communication through Canada, and enabling us to have the great ocean termini on the Atlantic as well as on the Pacific within our own borders. * * * From Montreal, Halifax will be brought within 672 miles, and it is found practicable to obtain a line which will bring the port of Sydney under the effect of this subvention, within 774 miles. There will thus be saved in the present distance from Montreal to Sydney 219 miles, in the distance from Montreal to Halifax 173 miles, and the distance to St. John will be reduced 159 miles. I have only to read these figures to the House, in order to show that the government, in asking for this aid in extending practically the terminus of the Canadian Pacific Railway, involving as it will the transport of the traffic of both the Grand Trunk Railway and the Canadian Pacific Railway down to our own coasts, and our own ports in the maritime provinces, are asking aid which will, without any question, assure the completion of that work. I have already stated that it is proposed that this shall not only be the shortest line to Montreal, but the shortest line to Quebec. * * * In fact I believe that, within a very brief