

easy to finish, but that for the time being it was not thought advisable to grant it, because it was too late, and he admits himself that the line was exceedingly advantageous. Such is the sum of the demand I now make to the House. When Mr. Light, in August, 1884, was asking the engineer of the Department to cause an instrumental survey of the said line to be made, it seems to me that it was time to grant it. People now cry out, and in order to defend their position they say: "The route is, perhaps, superior to that which we have adopted, but you have come too late." Well, Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that it is never too late to defend a question in which the Province of Quebec is interested, from Montreal to Quebec and from Quebec to the Maritime Provinces.

Some hon. MEMBERS. Question, question.

Mr. LESAGE. (Translation.) It seems to me that the hon. members opposite might allow me to explain. As a rule, I do not uselessly take up the time of the House. I never made a four hours' speech on the Franchise Bill, nor no six hours' speech on the North-West troubles. Now, Sir, to come back to my subject, my friend the member for Stanstead has stated that Mr. Wicksteed has made an inadequate survey, with imperfect instruments, of the River Etchemin. This is false, but I say that, until now, you have not had an adequate survey, neither for this line nor for the others—a survey which would be sufficient to allow you to decide such an important question. He said that the combination line was longer than that from Montreal *via* Sherbrooke and Mattawamkeag. He has quoted figures in support of that statement. I hardly know where he has taken them. At all events, they cannot be very positive, since he admits that the combination line has not been surveyed. He appealed to our hon. friends the members for the Maritime Provinces. He told them that that combination line should not be adopted. Still, after waxing very pathetic in his expression of a well-known sentiment, he comes forward and states that the combination line is by far the longest. How can that be, since, at the beginning of his speech he said that the line advocated by Mr. Light had not even been surveyed? How does he know it, then? Well, Mr. Speaker, this combination line, which is said to be unknown, but which is perfectly well known, that line is the shortest and most direct, it is the one whose curves are the least, whose grades are the lowest. And the hon. member for Stanstead has done nothing else but to state a fact which he has not proved. It is very easy to say that a line which one favors is shorter than another, but how could he prove it? It is by the reports of engineers, and there are none before the House. True, we have some reports with regard to a certain line, for instance, 40 miles of which are unsurveyed. The combination line, such as represented by the reports before the House, is the shortest and the most advantageous, as I will show by the following figures:—

Description of Line.	Via Sherbrooke.	Via Quebec and Combination Line.	Difference in favor of Quebec.
From Montreal, <i>via</i> Megantic and Passadumkeag to St. John.....	525	481	44
do do Halifax.....	801	710	91
From Montreal, <i>via</i> Megantic and Mattawamkeag to St. John.....	491	481	10
do do Halifax.....	†767	710	57
From Montreal, <i>via</i> Combination Line to St. John.....	491	481	10
From Montreal, <i>via</i> Combination Line to Halifax.....	720	710	10
From Lachute, <i>via</i> Megantic and Passadumkeag to St. John.....	563	485	78
do do Halifax.....	839	761	78
From Lachute, <i>via</i> Megantic and Mattawamkeag to St. John.....	529	495	44
do do Halifax.....	805	761	44
Grade maximum per mile.....	74	40	34
Curves minimum.....	4 degrees.

Mr. LESAGE,

Description of Line.	Via Sherbrooke.	Via Quebec and Combination Line.	Difference in favor of Quebec.
Greatest altitude above sea level, say.....	2,000	1,200	800
Haulage power, consolidation engines.....	20 1'd cars	40 1'd cars.	20
Cost, including bridges over St. Lawrence in both cases, <i>via</i> combination lines to Chesuncook, (see Appendix 7).....	*10,240,000	8,470,000	1,770,000
Cost, including bridges in both cases, to Mattawamkeag <i>versus</i> combination line to Harvey (see Appendix 8).....	*11,200,000	10,500,000	700,000

† The distances *via* Passadumkeag and Mattawamkeag are based on the assumption that the extension eastward from there to Moncton will be carried to St. John and over the existing lines of railway.

* These estimates are based on the assumption that the syndicate carry out their intention of bridging the St. Lawrence at Lachine, and building a line from Lachine to Sherbrooke. In the last estimate *via* the combination line to Harvey, the Quebec bridge and connecting lines are estimated for single track, in order to institute a fair comparison with the Lachine bridge.

I am not bound to rectify the figures of the hon. member for Stanstead, which, with his ordinary eloquence, he has so well laid before the House, and especially before the members from the Maritime Provinces. I will simply say to the House that I do not make of this question a sectional issue, but it seems to me that when we come before the members from the Maritime Provinces with the above mentioned figures, and when our opponents come and say: Here are other figures—it seems to me that we have a right to express a doubt as to what is before the House. What I ask is a minute and thorough survey, and I only ask what is fair. But a line is forced upon us without an accurate survey, without giving us any reasons based upon the reports of enquiries. It is intended to make us accept a line from Montreal by way of Mattawamkeag to St. John, and we are told that it is the shortest line. I do not wish to contend that it is not the shortest nor the most favorable line; but at least let it be proved to us by figures and reports made by competent engineers. Let it be proved that the Sherbrooke line is the best, and I shall lay aside all other considerations, and I will be ready to vote in favor of the resolutions. But it is not when the chief engineer of the Government admits, himself, in his reports, that a great portion of this line has not been surveyed, when he has not even given any plan or profile before the House calculated to set aside our statements that the levels reach from 1,800 to 2,000 feet, that we can decide with a knowledge of the facts; and more than that: for the purpose of the case, the reports of the engineers who were sent to survey this Etchemin line have been falsified, and consequently this shows their perfect fairness and their ability, which ought not to have been questioned. Therefore, I hold that the reports, incomplete though they may be, are truthful, until the contrary is shown to me by other and more complete reports, applying to the whole distance of the three lines mentioned, so that we may decide with a knowledge of the facts. That decision taken by the Government proves, moreover, this fact: that we have not been placed on equal footing to compete with other lines, and before this day I have had occasion more than once to remind this Government of the promises which they had made to me, that a full and complete instrumental survey of that important route would take place, and always without any results. The interest I take in this line will surprise no one, when I say that apart from the reasons above mentioned, that the county which I have the honor to represent would have been crossed over from one side to the other by this important line, had it been chosen, as it should have been, were it not for the evil influences which are known. I flatter myself that I am doing my duty at the present time, and when the promoters of the famous short line *via* Sherbrooke come here and say that the surveys made by Mr. Wicksteed were