

everything that tends to build up the trade and commerce of Halifax must likewise tend to increase her consumption of that which is produced in the country. This means to our farmers, our fishermen, and our manufactures an increased home market for the products of their labor, subject to no embarrassing restrictions and hostile tariffs.

COMMERCIAL, NOT POLITICAL.

The question which the joint committee have to settle is not a political one, it is commercial in the truest sense of that word. With the survey made we could go to the Government with a strong case, and Sir John A. Macdonald, realizing that we are in earnest in the matter, would not be slow in meeting our wishes. Strike while the iron is hot, strike before it is too late, and we may yet have the commercial highway which can alone make Halifax the winter port of the Dominion.

A GRAVE RESPONSIBILITY.

Public men are frequently called upon to assume grave responsibilities, from which the timid and faint-hearted naturally shrink. But these responsibilities, when they have in view the interests of their fellow-men, are burdens rather to be sought than avoided. The Halifax City Council should not hesitate to vote the money requisite for the proposed survey. In doing so they will have the unanimous support of their fellow-citizens, and posterity will needs feel thankful that in the Council of 1885 were found men strong and able enough to grapple with the great issue. "There is a tide in the affairs of men, which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune." Now is the time for the Halifax bark to be launched; the to-morrow policy may find the tide ebbing, with our noble winter port ship high and dry upon the launch-ways.

THE BANE OF HALIFAX.

Politics have been and still are the bane of Halifax. They have interfered with her growth and prosperity for the past forty years; they divert the attention of many men from their legitimate business, and render united action among our commercial men almost impossible. Is it not time they were laid quietly on the shelf, and allowed to remain there until an election is pending? Halifax is not a large city, and the combined brains of the community are requisite to meet the competition of older and more popular centres. With the question at issue political bias has no more in common than religious creed. We want the united common sense and good judgment of all our commercial men to decide whether Halifax shall take a progressive step in her own interests, or remain at attention, like a soldier on guard, a passive observer of the life and activity manifested around and about. The spirit of the age is progressive, and Halifax can no longer afford to stand still,—she must join the hounds or ride the limping horse.

COMPARISON OF THE POPE AND COMBINATION LINES.

Now that general interest has been re-awakened in the Short Line Railway project, it would seem highly desirable that our citizens should devote a little study to the subject in order that we as a community may combine, before it is too late, in a last effort to secure the construction of the best commercial line of railway, which will give to this port and Province direct communication with the Provinces and wheat fields of the interior. It is most sincerely to be regretted that St. John has obstinately clung to the delusion that the line which will serve the requirements of Nova Scotia must necessarily be inimical to its interests. We claim, and are prepared to prove, that the very reverse is the case, and that the line which we, in common with Quebec, have hitherto advocated is not only the best for New Brunswick, but it is by far the most favorable for the City of St. John from whatever point it may be viewed.

We have been promised, and we have clamored for "the shortest and best line" practicable that can be obtained. In answer to our demands, we are told that Mr. Schreiber, the Chief Engineer of the Dominion Railways, (after only half surveying the country) has reported that "the Pope-Mattawamkeag route takes the first place," and that the Government have in consequence adopted it as the shortest and best line that can be found. We regret exceedingly that we feel obliged to dissent from the opinion expressed by the Chief Engineer, and we are disposed to ask upon what data that opinion was formed? We have read most carefully Mr. Schreiber's report, and we have also read the reports of his Assistant Engineers who made the surveys, which contain detailed statements of the various routes and sections explored, and upon which he must necessarily have based his opinion. There is not a tittle of evidence contained in any of these reports to warrant the expression of opinion that "the Pope-Mattawamkeag route" (or Line No. 6 as it is called) "takes the first place." We state most positively that there is not a single sentence in any of the reports to which we have alluded which would justify such an opinion. On the contrary, the surveyors show, in the clearest possible manner, that the route is most objectionable from almost every point of view,—in fact it does not seem to possess a single redeeming feature.

In order that those who have not hitherto given the matter much attention may understand it more clearly, we will proceed briefly to make a comparison between the Pope route and the Combination line, which has been so strongly urged by many disinterested Engineers, and by our Chamber of Commerce and City Council. Our information is gathered entirely from official sources, and is the same as that which Mr. Schreiber had in his possession before making his report to the Government. Where distances are in dispute, we have taken those given by Mr. Schreiber himself, so as to avoid any accusation of being biased, and where distances are wanting, as they are on both lines, we have taken those given in the published reports of experts who are conversant with the subject.

The Pope Line runs from Montreal to Lachine over the C. P. R., a distance of 11 miles (built) where the St. Lawrence will have to be bridged, thence to Chambly, through easy country, 29 miles (to be built), thence to Lennoxville, 80 miles (to be built), through most difficult country, requiring numerous sharp curves and heavy gradients, thence over the International Railway, a crooked and most objectionable road, with sharp curves and excessive gradients, a distance of 89 miles, the whole of which must be purchased, thence across the State of Maine, through a sterile and rugged country, crossing Moosehead Lake with a draw bridge, and over long and heavy gradients, (which the Engineer in charge of the survey characterizes as mildly as he can, as sufficient to damn the whole route), to Mattawamkeag, a distance of 136 miles (to be built), thence over the E. and N. A. Railway, of which no information has been given, to McAdam Junction, 62 miles, which must either be purchased or running powers acquired, thence over the St. John and Maine Railway to Harvey, 19 miles, which stands in the same position as the E. and N. A. Railway, thence via Fredericton to Salisbury, through country now being surveyed, and common with the Combination Line, 113 miles (to be built), thence by the I. C. R. to Halifax, 201 miles (built).

It will thus be seen that by the Pope route, 11 miles are now built and owned by the Canadian Pacific Railway Co., 170 miles of existing railways will have to be purchased or running powers acquired, and 358 miles will have to be built, the total distance from Montreal to Halifax being 740 miles.

The "Combination Line" follows the North Shore railway from Montreal to Quebec, a distance of 172 miles, this is one of the best roads in Canada, and is now owned by the C. P. R. Co. It would then cross the St. Lawrence on the proposed bridge at Cape Rouge, and thence would follow the Valleys of the Etchemin and Famine Rivers, via Mr. Wickstead's survey, through favorable country, requiring neither excessive grades nor curves, a distance of about 60 miles (to be built) to the International boundary, thence partly through unsurveyed country reported as magnificent timber lands and a low lying valley, about 46 miles (to be built) to the head of Lake Chesuncook, thence via Mr. Vernon Smith's survey, through most favorable lands with easy curves and very light gradients to Canterbury, a distance of 110 miles (to be built), thence via Fredericton to Salisbury, through country now being surveyed, [for the most part common with the Pope route] 135 miles (to be built), thence by the I. C. R. to Halifax, 201 miles, (built).

By summing up these figures it will be found that the total distance by the "Combination Line," from Montreal to Halifax, is 724 miles; of which 172 miles are now built and owned by the Canadian Pacific Co. No existing lines of railway require to be purchased, and 351 miles will have to be built.

Tabulated, the comparison would stand thus:—

	Pope Route.	Mattawamkeag Route.	Combination Line.
Built and owned by Canadian Pacific Railway Co...	11	Miles	172 Miles
Built and owned by Dominion Government.....	201	"	201 "
Existing railway lines to be acquired.....	170	"	none
To be built.....	358	"	351 "
Total length from Montreal to Halifax.....	740	Miles	724 Miles

It will thus be seen that by taking Mr. Schreiber's figures wherever they can be applied, there would be a saving by adopting the "Combination Line," of 16 miles; while by Mr. Light's computation, the total length of the "Combination Line" is 710 miles, and the saving in distance would be 30 miles. But the chief points of importance to the Maritime Provinces are that the Pope Line would be of comparatively little value after being constructed, as its grades and curves are so objectionable, that it would not be used by us to any great extent, and its effect would be to divert traffic to American ports, while by adopting the "Combination Line" we would have the "shortest and best" practicable route that can be had, and a really first-class line as regards gradients and curves. This road moreover, could be economically operated, which could never be the case by the Pope route, and by ordinary exertions on the part of our merchants and shippers, the bulk of the through traffic to and from the West could, and in all probability would, be handled at the ports of St. John and Halifax.

ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE IN FAVOR OF THE COMBINATION LINE.

The following extract is taken from the official report of Mr. Vernon Smith to the Chief Engineer of the Dominion Railways, and will be found on page 27 of that Gentleman's report to the Government. It has reference to the missing link in the Combination Line to the west of Lake Chesuncook, and sustains the opinion expressed by Mr. Light that an easy line can be found for the whole way from Quebec to Canterbury:—

"Should it seem desirable to utilize the Eastern part of the survey as a line to Quebec, I think it will be found that the Caucomgomoc affords the most direct line. It is but a little over 100 miles from Chesuncook to Levis (Quebec). Caucomgomoc Lake, 25 miles from Chesuncook, is only 30 feet above it, and the water shed between its principal feeder and the upper St. John waters is so slightly marked that at high water canoes have been poled across the intervening marsh."

This is the link which connects Mr. Vernon Smith's survey with that of Mr. Wickstead, C. E., who explored the line eastwardly from Quebec, and passes through the country that Halifax is now directly interested in having instrumentally surveyed in order to checkmate those who have contended that the gap is impracticable.