

HON. MR. POWER—It is an editorial written by the responsible editor of the *Herald*.

HON. SIR ALEX. CAMPBELL—You might spare us the editorial.

HON. MR. POWER—The articles in the *Halifax Herald* are sometimes very well written and very interesting to the Government, and I think after the Minister has heard a little of this one he will think it remarkably well worth reading :

“Mr Schrieber’s report on the Short Line surveys, shows that there has been a great deal of surveying done in connection with that project, and that a large and varied assortment of routes has been provided by which a “short line” from Montreal to the ocean seaboard of the Maritime Provinces may be constructed. If variety in choice were any advantage, we should say that a great work had been accomplished by the various surveying parties of whose work Mr. Schrieber gives us an analysis and epitome. The result of their labors, proves that they did a great deal of surveying, that they examined a great number of routes, and that they placed within the reach of the Government and people of Canada a large amount of information respecting several districts of Quebec, New Brunswick and the State of Maine, hitherto but imperfectly known. But we are afraid that when that is said, the best possible is said of their work. To us it appears that their surveys have been very largely of impossible routes, while the route respecting which they were sent out to obtain information has yet to be examined. They were sent out to ascertain “the shortest possible line,” and it only requires a glance at the map accompanying Mr. Schrieber’s report to see that none of the lines surveyed can possibly be the shortest obtainable,—that is if Euclid was correct in his view that a straight line is the shortest possible line between two points.”

Accompanying the report—as we have already intimated—is a map, purporting to be a ‘map of the section of Canada and the United States lying between Montreal and Halifax.’ It is prepared by the Department of Railways at Ottawa, with the special object of affording information on this very short line project. If any one will take the trouble to place this map on a table, and stretch a cord from Montreal to Moncton—the two termini of the projected line—they will find that the surveys of last summer are not in its neighborhood.

I will call the attention of the hon. member from Niagara to this part of the editorial because it will touch his poetic soul a little :—

“There are surveys to the right of it, surveys to the left of it, and surveys across it, but no survey whatever of the line—“the shortest possible line”—that it marks.”

HON. MR. PLUMB—I do not pay much attention to the impertinences of the hon. gentleman from Halifax.

HON. MR. POWER—The hon. gentleman is out of order. “Impertinences” is not a Parliamentary word ; I suppose however we shall pardon the hon. gentleman as in the country he came from they were not so particular about Parliamentary decency as we are here.

HON. MR. PLUMB—The hon. gentleman is trespassing on the patience of the House.

HON. MR. POWER—The article continues :—

“According to the map the distance from Montreal to Moncton by an air line, such as indicated, is 416 miles. Of this, 76 miles, from Montreal to Richmond Junction, are built, and about 85 miles more, from Moncton to Fredericton are surveyed. So that all the country traversed by this air line, regarding which there can be any doubt, is the distance between Fredericton and Richmond Junction, of about 255 miles. Practically this was the only ‘gap’ in the proposed Short Line that need be surveyed at all. Yet of all the country ‘between Montreal and Halifax’ it appears to have been the most carefully avoided. Thus we have a line running almost parallel to it, 20 or 30 miles to the south ; another starting 20 miles south of it, and crossing it twice ; but none starting from Richmond Junction, for the purpose of ascertaining the shortest possible line between that point and Fredericton. Why is this ? Why take Sherbrooke 20 miles the south of an air line, or Quebec 70 miles to the north as the starting point of several lines each, while Richmond Junction lying directly on an air line, is carefully avoided ? The public certainly has a right to have this remarkable neglect explained.

“The best the surveyors of last summer can do in the way of shortening the distance between Moncton and Montreal is to reduce it from 662 miles—the distance at present by the Intercolonial Railway and Grand Trunk—to 532 miles, or a saving of but 132 miles. If anything like an air line were built the distance would not be greater than 450 miles—or even 80 miles less than the shortest of the 30 lines yet surveyed. And of course what is true of Moncton is true of Halifax. The maximum reduction in our case is from 890 miles—the distance at present by rail between Halifax and Montreal—to 720 miles.