

village of Queenston in the County of Lincoln. It appears that the portion of the line which the South Ontario & Pacific may encroach upon was really the last thought of the promoters of the St. Catharines & Niagara Central Railway. The objective point of that railway seemed to be Smithsville. The Committee were not aware that the South Ontario & Pacific Road would really be intruding on the charter of the St. Catharines & Niagara Central Railway if Smithsville was one of their objective points. Five years elapsed and nothing was done by the latter Company. They several times applied to the Local Legislature to have their charter amended, and they got a charter to run from Hamilton to Toronto on ground which was already occupied by another company. They also obtained a charter to approach the city of Hamilton by a spur, and the Company had power to do almost anything they pleased in the counties of Haldimand and Lincoln, and it would be almost impossible for any other company to get through those counties under the rights this Company seemed to hold under their charter. They were getting some financial assistance from St. Catharines, and it was quite evident it was essentially a line the promotion of which struck at vested interests, and which I maintain were interests that were not respected either by the Provincial Legislature or by the Federal Parliament, more particularly in that narrow gut between the head of Lake Erie and the end of Lake Ontario, where the objective point of so many of our railways is the Niagara River. But this railway is a through line from Windsor through the cities we have named to Niagara River. Its objective point is different from the Niagara & St. Catharines Central Railway, inasmuch as they, the South Ontario & Pacific, have authority to construct a bridge below the Falls. It was evidently intended that they should approach the Niagara River somewhere about the Cantilever Bridge or Suspension Bridge of the Grand Trunk Railway. In 1884 they obtained a bridge charter and the objective point was in the neighborhood of Queenston, and it will be seen that in the present Bill before us

St. Catharines is not alluded to as the point which they may even touch and the gap becomes much wider as they approach the Niagara River, one objective point being Queenston and the other below the Falls. It is assumed that the money expended by the St. Catharines and Niagara Central Railway Company will be of some benefit to the South Ontario and Pacific Railway, but that can be established in no sense unless they touch St. Catharines and run over the same country between St. Catharines and the Niagara River. There is really no evidence of that being the case, but there is the fact that the objective points at the Niagara River are different, one being below the Falls and the other being in the vicinity of Queenston. Gentlemen who know the locality can practically appreciate the fact. But there is this to be said, that the promoters of the St. Catharines and Niagara Central Railway have now had six years to build this road and they do not appear to have expended as yet more than \$50,000 in the project. It cannot be said to be in the interests of the people of this country that a railway charter granted by the Provincial Legislature should stand in the way of a through line, because a portion of the through line traverses a section of the country which locally another railway has a charter over. I do not think for a moment that can be seriously argued. The hon. gentleman from Toronto says that in 1885, Mr. Van Horne wrote a letter to this Company. I think he did write that letter, and the question was asked before the Committee whether the offer contained in that letter had been accepted by the St. Catharines & Niagara Central Railway Company, and the promoters of the road were not able to say that it was. It was quite apparent that nothing had been done on the strength of that letter, at all events within a year, and it was thought to be rather too preposterous to assume that persons had advanced money on a letter written a year before without making enquiry whether the letter was still in force or whether the proposition was one which Mr. Van Horne would carry out in 1886 or 1887. But there is this fact which must, of course, satisfy the House more than any other,