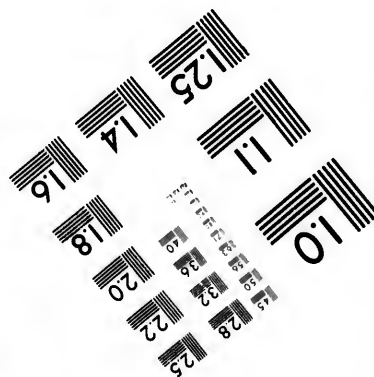
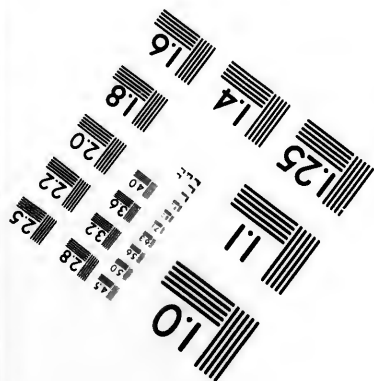


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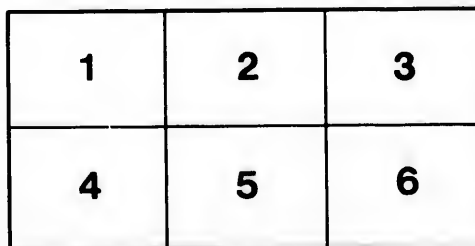
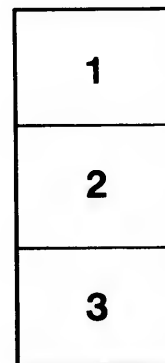
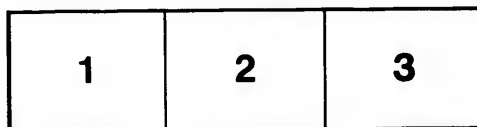
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THE
COTEAU BRIDGE CONTROVERSY :

LETTERS OF

DONALD MACMASTER, M.P.P. FOR GLENGARRY

(AND OTHERS).

WITH OPINIONS OF THE PRESS.

Mumtreal :

PRINTED BY THE CANADIAN SPECTATOR COMPANY.

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1880.

COMPLIMENTS OF

DONALD MACMASTER,

M. P. P. FOR GLENGARRY.

THE COTEAU BRIDGE CONTROVERSY.

From statements recently made in the Ottawa newspapers and elsewhere it appears probable that a decision is soon to be arrived at by the Government in relation to the Coteau bridge scheme. It will be remembered that at the last session of Parliament this question occupied a considerable time before the committee on railways, canals and telegraphs. Much evidence was taken of a scientific and practical character in relation to the effect of the bridge, if constructed, upon the navigation of the river; and, although no final decision was arrived at, the bill was permitted to pass, with the understanding that the bridge clause should only come into operation after an order-in-council to that effect had been passed by the Government, the Minister of Railways promising, in the meantime, to take further evidence upon the question, with the view, if possible, of arriving at a correct decision. It has been stated that Colonel Gzowski was requested by the Government to examine into the subject and make the final report. It is rumored also that Mr. Starke has recently been making examinations on the ground upon which that report will probably be based. It is not unlikely, therefore, that the rumor which points to an early decision may turn out to be true. Under these circumstances it may be well once more to point out what we consider to be serious objections to the scheme.

So far as the mere interest of navigation is concerned, we may fairly leave that to the decision of the experts in whose hands it has been placed. There are other, and to our mind very much more serious, objections to the scheme, which, we think, it is to be regretted the Government did not urge at the outset. We have recently undergone, in connection with our fiscal policy, a great revolution, the object of which has been to build up Canadian, as distinguished from American, interests upon this continent. That policy has been supported by an overwhelming majority of the people of Canada, and in spite of the vicious attacks made upon it by members of the Opposition in Parliament, every indication which has since been afforded goes to prove the people have in no way changed their minds upon the subject. "Canada for the Canadians," in the sense of making the policy of this country tributary to the interests of the people living in the country, is, or rather was, supposed to be settled by the policy of the Dominion. It will be admitted, we think, that among the elements which must contribute to the prosperity of the country is the development of our foreign shipping trade by way of the St. Lawrence, and that everything which may tend to divert that trade into American channels, ought, unless there is imperative necessity to the contrary, to be resisted. It seems to us that the duty of the Government should be to prevent the tapping, by American transportation companies, of the trade of Canada at points west of our ocean ports, and the diversion of that trade into American channels for the benefit of American cities and American shipping. That seems to us so plain a proposition that it is marvellous to think that any one could resist it. But it is quite clear that the leading object of this Coteau bridge is to tap the trade of the

West at a point west of tide-water, and for the benefit, therefore, of the Americans. That the Parliament of Canada should continue to be used, as, unfortunately, it has been used for years past, for the interests of American transportation companies, it is most difficult to understand; but it is quite clear that there is no interest worth a moment's consideration, as against the great interests of the country as a whole, in favor of the construction of this bridge. It will be to the advantage of the American railway companies who are its chief promoters; and if it is granted it will be simply another illustration of the fact that while, on the one hand, we are attempting, by legislation, to secure the promotion of Canadian interests, on the other hand we are allowing American transportation companies to hand over a large part of our trade to American merchants and shippers. This, as it seems to us, is, on general grounds, the leading reason for opposition to permitting this bridge to be built.

But there is another view which cannot be overlooked. The Province of Quebec has incurred an enormous expenditure in the construction of railways expressly for the object of bringing down the trade of the Great West to the ocean ports of Montreal and Quebec. Whatever may be said in favor of the Dominion assuming these railways, and there is much, undoubtedly, to be said in favor of it, there can surely be no argument which can justify the deliberate destruction of the great object of these means of communication, for the purpose of promoting an enterprise in the interests of American railways. The people of Quebec will have a right to complain, if, after undertaking the construction of these railways, burdening their Province in the interests of a great national idea from the development of which all parts of the Dominion must derive great advantage, the Dominion Go-

vernment deliberately steps in, in the interest of a couple of counties which may be served equally well without the bridge, and destroys the value of these railways. It will be a cruel wrong done to the Province of Quebec to permit this bridge to be built; and we think it is very greatly to be regretted that the Government had not taken this position at the outset, instead of permitting hopes to be raised and expectations to be encouraged by the delay over the mere question of the navigation of the St. Lawrence. Some people in Quebec may, perhaps, not complain, seeing that their claim to compensation from the Government for the injury done to the enterprises in which they have engaged will be enormously increased, should it be determined to permit the bridge to be built, and on this low ground of money equivalent may view the matter with some complacency. But there are larger questions involved, which, we trust, will determine the Government not to grant authority for the construction of this bridge.—*Gazette*, Editorial, Dec. 1st, 1879.

To the Editor of the Gazette.

SIR,—Your article of to-day resurrects the discussion of the whole question connected with the construction of the Coteau bridge and railroad. This, it appears to me, is ill-timed.

What your article admits to be the graver objections to the scheme have been already discussed in Parliament and decided by the House adversely to your pretensions, I therefore cannot see that any useful purpose can be served by reviving the discussion.

The only subject referred to by you left undisposed of under the Act of last session, is the responsibility im-

posed upon the Government to determine that "no serious objection exists" to bridging the St. Lawrence at Coteau. This question, as your article directly indicates, has been referred to Colonel Gzowski for determination, and a "early decision" may be expected. You admit that "we may leave that" (the interests of navigation) "to the decision of the expert." This virtually leaves nothing to discuss at this time.

I may add here, however, that you have involuntarily fallen into an error in stating that "the interests of a couple of counties" only are involved in this enterprise. All the counties between the United States boundary line and Ottawa City, traversed by the line of the road, are directly interested in it.

It seems to me also unreasonable to assume that the "great interests of the country as a whole" will be prejudiced by giving effect to an Act that, in its present form, after full discussion, was finally adopted by Parliament without division.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

DONALD MACMASTER.

Montreal, 1st December, 1879.

—*Gazette*, Dec. 2nd, 1879.

To the Editor of the Gazette.

SIR,—Your well-timed and admirable article on "The Coteau bridge," which appeared in the *GAZETTE* lately, does not seem to please Mr. Donald Macmaster, who objects to your presuming referring to a subject already, as he says, "disposed of."

Has your correspondent ever considered the fact that

this country possesses a coast line of about 1,200 miles, and through this vast extent of territory the several Provincial as well as the Dominion Governments have expended millions upon millions of money in the improvement of navigation, and the building of railways for the purpose of securing for ourselves, for our whole country, an outlet to the ocean through our own territory? Has Mr. Macmaster ever given a thought as to the effect which this bridge will have on the commerce of this country? If not, he had better give his mind to the work at once. In the first place, that formerly much-abused Grand Trunk Railway is now acknowledged to be the greatest blessing ever bestowed upon this country; the millions of public money spent upon it was the best laid out (for the general good) that we can just now point to. Next is the Intercolonial Railway, 700 miles, built entirely by the Dominion Government, securing at all times a purely Canadian route to the sea; then we have the Q. M. O. & O. Railway—all great leading arteries from the interior to the ocean, and upon the construction of which a heavy national debt has been accumulated. Finally, we have that great national work, now nearly completed, viz., the deepening and improvement of the St. Lawrence, enabling sea-going vessels to ascend to the highest western point of navigation. Now, sir, I would ask again: Have the Canadian promoters of this scheme given these things any consideration at all? Do they imagine that the great shipping interests of Quebec and the Maritime Provinces, not to speak of others, will calmly view the destruction of their trade to benefit foreigners? The building of the Coteau bridge will simply tap the stream of commerce, and divert its flow though a narrow belt of Canadian country directly to the American seaboard, rendering all

these great Dominion, provincial and private enterprises comparatively worthless, and causing an injury to this country which hardly any effort could hope to repair.

"CANADA FOR THE CANADIANS."

To the Editor of the Gazette.

SIR,—My short letter in answer to your editorial, stating what I conceived to be the true issue with regard to the Coteau bridge scheme, has elicited two communications from anonymous correspondents.

In re-stating more fully what I believe is now properly before the public, I will not commit myself to entering into a controversy with contributors unwilling to give their opinions the sanction of their names. The public will determine whether they are impelled to secrecy from motives of patriotism or of private interest.

The letter of Mr. Henshaw and those of your anonymous correspondents do not affect the position laid down by me, viz: That the objections now raised to the scheme have, in one form or another, been submitted to the committee of the House of Commons, and decided adversely to the pretensions of the opponents of the bridge.

One of your correspondents, seeing the force of this view, evades the real issue, and struggles to escape from his untenable position, by declaring that "the matter was never seriously discussed by Parliament," and that "both political parties," in passing the measure, became "blind to the welfare of their country," in order to serve party ends.

This is a serious arraignment, and, apart from its extravagance of assertion, is somewhat economical of fact. The

whole measure was for at least a month before committee. After elaborate investigation it was submitted to Parliament, and an Act was passed after discussion, but without division, giving effect to what is commonly called the "Bridge scheme," providing for bridging the St. Lawrence at Coteau, if no serious objection (in so far as navigation is concerned) existed.

This Act is now part of the law of the land, and the Dominion Government is fulfilling its provisions by appointing an expert to determine the question of navigation.

Your correspondents are exhibiting their wares the day after the fair. They set their opinions not against mine, but against the undivided wisdom of Parliament. They may be right; but, in the mean time, I prefer the wisdom of Parliament.

I am,

Your obedient servant,

DONALD MACMASTER.

Montreal, 3rd December, 1879.

—*Gazette*, Dec. 4th, 1879.

To the Editor of the Gazette,

SIR,—Mr. Macmaster has, I see, entrenched himself in the stronghold of his first position. I do not intend to attack it, having a wholesome dread of falling into legal mazes, but I will endeavor rather, in military phrase, to "turn it." I take it that this vital question of internal polity cannot but be finally decided on its own merits, and not on a judgment passed at a single session, just when the public mind was diverted from its calm consideration by exciting and, for the time being, more generally interesting matter.

I take it that our Government does not hold itself absolutely bound to accept the decision of Mr. Gzowski, on an engineering point, as settling the matter. The engineering question in this case is a mere nothing to the other. It requires no high order of talent to see that a bridge can be built at Coteau, or even that one can be built that will not interfere with navigation. Where the engineering difficulty comes in, is in devising a bridge to fulfil the conditions required, at a reasonable cost. The widespread opinion that these conditions cannot be met except at excessive cost, was, no doubt, the main reason why the scheme was not actively opposed last session by many who thought it not worth their while to disturb its death throes. But let me remind those who may yet hug this delusion, that the American people who built the Hoosac tunnel to save six miles of distance, will not be likely to hesitate at any financial difficulty in connection with the Coteau Bridge.

Very truly yours,

G. H. HENSHAW.

Montreal, December 4th, 1879.

—*Gazette*, Dec. 5th, 1879.

To the Editor of the Gazette.

SIR,—As a resident of the County of Glengarry, and therefore deeply interested in the early construction of the Canada Atlantic Railway, I deem it my duty not to let the correspondence lately published in your journal concerning the Coteau bridge pass without some notice. The position taken by Donald Macmaster, Esq., M.P.P. for this County, in his letter which appeared in your issue of the 2nd inst., is, with due deference to those differing from him, quite correct. Being the solicitor of

one of the railway companies that sought amalgamation, I was necessarily in close attendance upon the meetings of the committee to which the Amalgamation Bill, including the bridge scheme, was referred. The question of constructing the bridge at Coteau Landing was most fully and extensively discussed before this committee, and every objection, good and bad, that could possibly be urged against allowing the bridge to be built was advanced by a number of gentlemen, members of that committee, including the three representatives of the city of Montreal, who left nothing unsaid from their standpoint. In addition, the opponents of the scheme had the assistance of the Hon. D. Ross, the late Solicitor-General of the Province of Quebec, who appeared before the committee and urged the claims of that Province in a most able manner. At the conclusion of the taking of evidence and the hearing of the arguments, Sir Charles Tupper announced that the Government had carefully weighed the whole matter and considered the objections offered to the bill. That in coming to a conclusion two points had been discussed, the one being the advisability of chartering railways which had their termini in the American States, and the other the question of navigation. As to the first point, the Government did not consider it necessary to depart from the precedent laid down by former Governments, and, therefore, would not object to the bill upon this ground. As to the question of navigation, he said he desired more evidence, and proposed to let the bill pass as it was, but omitting the clause allowing a bridge to be built, and that at next session, after fuller investigation could be made upon the point, the promoters could apply for power to erect the bridge. This proposal, not meeting with approval, it was finally agreed to empower the Company to erect the

bridge, but requiring them to satisfy the Governor-in-Council that no serious objection to navigation existed in bridging the navigable channels; Sir Charles personally altering the draft bill to this effect. During the electoral campaign in this Province in June last, the Hon. James McDonald, the Minister of Justice, informed the people that the Government were favorable to the railway, and that it only awaited the favorable report of the engineers as to the effect upon navigation to ratify the same. It is, therefore, useless to raise questions which have already been freely discussed and carefully considered by the Government and by the Parliament generally.

I remain truly yours,

EDWARD H. TIFFANY.

Alexandria, December 6th, 1879.

—*Gazette*, Dec. 9th, 1879.

To the Editor of the Gazette.

SIR,—In the many letters I have lately read in the *Gazette* concerning the Coteau Railway Bridge, I have not observed a single reference to the Grenville Canal.

This great work, now nearly completed, will furnish an ample outlet for all the manufactured lumber of the Ottawa district. It would have been better never to have enlarged this canal if the traffic is to be given away; that alone made it necessary. The only townships unprovided with railway facilities between the St. Lawrence and Ottawa Rivers are Lochiel, Kenyon, Roxborough and Cambridge. South of the St. Lawrence, as we have seen, the Counties of Huntingdon and Chateauguay are interested in another road—the new G. T. R. extension. We may presume, then, the

lumbermen of Ottawa, the townships of Lochiel, Kenyon, Roxborough and Cambridge, and the "American capitalists," are the sole parties interested in the construction of the bridge.

As to Ottawa, its mill men would not be benefited. Instead of Burlington, Whitehall and Albany, Ottawa would become the lumber depot from which supplies would be drawn in small quantities to suit the American market, and the present advantage of large sales and yards periodically emptied, would be gone. If the traffic through the four townships named has hitherto been insufficient to entice railroad men to build a line for their convenience, it is scarcely to be expected that the Dominion Government should be called upon to sacrifice the usefulness of the Grenville Canal, and to sanction opposition to our own chartered and Government railroads in the interest of New York, Boston and Glengarry. No consideration of political expediency should allow this iniquity to be perpetrated. It were better that Glengarry should go back to the Grits and all that the term suggests, and that its talented representative should be sacrificed, than that all the millions already expended to make Montreal our ocean seaport should be thus ruthlessly cast away. Can there be those whose national enthusiasm rises no higher than the expediency of short communication with New York lends an interpretation to? This Canada and Atlantic Tap-line project should never have been allowed to assume such formidable proportions.

R. O'B.

Grenville, December 8.

—*Gazette*, Dec. 10th, 1879.

The correspondence which has appeared in our columns on the subject of the Coteau bridge is an illustration of the interest which the subject has for the people of this city. Mr. Macmaster, who, in the interests of his constituency, has thrown himself into the work of defending the bridge, has said pretty nearly all that can be said in its favor. It is fortunate for the County of Glengarry that it has a representative so watchful of its interests, and at the same time so skilful in defending them. We can quite understand how our friends in Glengarry, feeling that upon the success of this bridge scheme depends the success of the railway in which they have felt so deep an interest, and for which they have made so great sacrifices, should strongly favor the project. It is very greatly to be regretted that a question which is national in its importance, should thus have a special local interest, which, in appearance, we are compelled to oppose, because of our conviction of the general injury which must result to the country by its success. The counties of Chateauguay and Huntingdon, we are glad to know, are likely to be served quite as well and effectively by the branch which the Grand Trunk are about to construct through these counties. By the construction of that branch the special interests which induced these counties to desire the Coteau bridge will have passed away. If the Coteau railway could be built as a feeder to the Grand Trunk, the views of the County of Glengarry would be met, and the fruition of the hopes for which they have made so great sacrifices would be accomplished.

R. O'B.

Mr. Macmaster's chief argument is that the question has practically passed out of the arena of public discussion, because of the action of Parliament at its last session. Upon this point we cannot agree with him. It

is quite true that much evidence was taken, as we stated in a former article, before the Railway Committee, on the engineering question involved in the bridging of the St. Lawrence at that point ; and it is unfortunate, perhaps, that the fact of that evidence being taken, and the attention which it elicited, to some extent diverted public attention from the larger and greater question involved in the construction of this bridge. The Government resolved to take further evidence during the recess, and the bill, upon that ground, was allowed to pass. But we learn now for the first time that it ever was intended to restrict the consideration of the bridge project to the one subject of its effect upon the navigation of the river. The clause in the Act relating to the matter contains this proviso :—

“Provided, however, that no bridge be constructed over the navigable channel of the said river St. Lawrence until the Governor-in-Council, after full examination into the question, shall be satisfied that no serious objection exists to bridging the said navigable channel at the point or location mentioned in the said Act (35 *Vict.*, c. 83), and upon the Governor-in-Council being so satisfied, and upon a proclamation to that effect appearing in the *Canada Gazette*, the said Canada Atlantic Railway Company shall have power to construct a bridge or bridges across the said navigable channel in such manner, of such elevation, and according to such plans as may be approved by the Governor-in-Council.”

There is no doubt that that proviso imposes upon the Government the duty of taking professional evidence as to the effect of the bridge upon the river at that point ; but it is quite clear that it goes very much further than that. It could hardly be said that “no serious objection exists to bridging the said navigable channel at the point or location mentioned in the said Act,” if, upon the consideration of the subject, the Government came to the conclusion that the effect of making this bridge would be to cause serious injury to the trade of the Dominion ;

and yet, according to the view which Mr. Macmaster presses, it is quite clear that the Government would be compelled to ignore all these considerations, and confine themselves to the one question of the influence of the bridge, first, upon the water in the river, and next, upon the navigation of the river. We cannot for a moment accept the clause as being so limited in its character. It was, in fact, a clause which threw the whole question into the hands of the Government for consideration, and it imposed upon the Government the duty of considering every possible interest which is likely to be affected by the construction of the bridge, before consenting to issue the proclamation, which they are authorized to issue, should they determine to do so. We dismiss, therefore, as utterly untenable, the ground that this question has, as to its general influence upon the trade and commerce of Canada and upon the railway and shipping interests of the Dominion, passed out of the arena of public discussion.

We notice that the *Globe*, as might naturally be expected, has a long article upon the subject. We do not propose to have any controversy with the *Globe* in relation to it. Starting, as we do, from entirely different standpoints, it is almost impossible that we could meet on common ground in relation to the commercial interests of the country. The *Globe* has always held that it is rather to the interest than to the disadvantage of the Province of Ontario that it should do business with New York rather than with Montreal, in so far as they are compelled to do business with an ocean port at all. The building up of trade by our own channels has not to-day, and has never had, for the *Globe*, any charms. In 1858, when Sir Alexander Galt introduced his tariff, one of the leading features of his policy was the adop-

tion of the *ad valorem*, as opposed to the specific system of duties ; and that change was made with the special object of increasing trade by the St. Lawrence, by making the duty chargeable upon the price of the articles in the country of production. The *Globe* at that time bitterly opposed the policy upon the ground that it was intended to build up Montreal, as against New York interests. From that day to the present, the same policy has been pursued. Whatever pertains to this city or to trade by the St. Lawrence, has a natural enemy in the *Globe* ; and, that being the fact, it is only natural that our contemporary should support the Coteau bridge project, the effect of which is to divert to American channels the trade of this country. The miserable provincialism which forms the foundation of its policy, has always been a leading feature of its appeals to the public. It requires only to know that the Province of Quebec, and still more, that the city of Montreal, is likely to be benefited by the policy, to secure its bitter opposition. The argument recently advanced by the New York *Sun* in relation to this question is precisely that which the *Globe* advances. Here is that argument, in the language of the New York paper :—

“Montrealers, who had expected to reap a rich harvest from the opening up of this short route, were dismayed last winter to find that New York capitalists had secured the charter of a Company which had been organized to build an air line from Ottawa (the eastern terminus of the Canada Central) to the New York system of railways crossing the St. Lawrence River at Coteau Rapids. Despite their opposition, aided as they were by the Grand Trunk and Great Western Railway Companies, the bill permitting the New York capitalists to construct the line was sanctioned by Parliament, the Government reserving the right to say whether they should have power to bridge the St. Lawrence. Col. Gzowski, a well-known Canadian engineer, has been employed by the Dominion Government

to report as to whether a swing bridge at the Coteau Rapids would interfere with the navigation of the St. Lawrence. If he should report in favor of the bridge, the road will be constructed at once, and will be ready to compete with the Grand Trunk and the North Shore roads of Quebec for the traffic which may be enticed by the new route from the upper lakes."

Coming from a New York paper, that argument is perfectly natural and reasonable. The American capitalists realize that by means of this bridge they can tap the trade of the Northwest and divert it from Canadian channels; and as the people to be injured chiefly by that diversion are the people of Quebec and the Maritime Provinces, the *Globe* looks on with entire complacency. We can hardly believe the Government will do the same thing. After spending twenty millions of money on the Intercolonial Railway, after spending about eleven millions on the North Shore Railways, after all the expenditures which have been made in harbor improvements in Montreal and Quebec, after the efforts to make Halifax a winter port, we can hardly believe that the Government of to-day will deliberately sanction this project in the interests of a lot of Yankee speculators, and to the serious prejudice of the advantages which were expected to be gained by this large expenditure of money. There is no possible interest in this enterprise except American interest; and, as we have said, it would be a remarkable commentary upon the resolution to build up Canadian interests by means of the National policy, if permission were given, at the instance of American Railway companies, to carry out this Coteau bridge project.—*Gazette*, Editorial, Dec. 8th, 1879.

THE SAULT STE. MARIE RAILWAY.

We publish this morning a letter from a correspondent from Winnipeg on the subject of the Sault Ste. Marie Railway, and the interest which that enterprise is exciting in Manitoba and the Northwest. Our correspondent is very much alarmed lest the enterprise should practically fall into the hands of the owners of the St. Paul and Pacific Railway, or, as it is now called, the St. Paul, Minneapolis and Manitoba Railway. He urges that the most desirable connection would be with the Northern Pacific, and intimates that there is an intention on the part of the latter Company to extend their railway from Duluth, at the head of Lake Superior to Sault Ste. Marie. We sincerely hope that our correspondent is well-informed upon this point. It would, no doubt, be a matter of very great interest to Canada if the line south of Lake Superior were at once constructed, especially so, if an independent branch were also constructed from the Northern Pacific to St. Vincent, to connect with the Canadian Northwestern system of railways. Without this latter, judging by the past, the former, that is, the line south of Lake Superior in connection with the Northern Pacific, is not a matter of much consequence to Canadians. The figures which we have published in relation to freight traffic, have shown that the Northern Pacific, owing to its having unhappily fallen into the hands of Canada's great enemies, Smith and Company, of the St. Paul, Minneapolis and Manitoba Railway, have been acting on the principle of charging about double rates to the Canadian shipper. If the Northern Pacific can succeed in disentangling itself from its unfortunate alliance, and is able to carry out the improvement suggested by our

correspondent, there is no doubt that it will command a very much larger part of the trade of the North West.

Where, however, it seems to us, our correspondent is wrong, is in assuming that this Sault Ste. Marie scheme has special reference to the trade of our own Northwest. What is proposed to get by this road is the carrying trade of the American Western States. As Chicago has made itself the great reservoir for the traffic of the railways running East of that city, so we doubt not that St. Paul or Minneapolis are destined in the future to become the reservoirs for traffic still further West. The great interest, therefore, which the Sault Ste. Marie scheme has for Canadians is that, by connection between St. Paul and the Sault, it will make an air line between St. Paul and the ocean vessels at Montreal and Quebec. It is the carrying trade of the Western States that is sought to be secured by this branch railway to the Sault. No one can look at the map without realizing how great an interest Canada has in this enterprise. The great object of our policy should be to build up our own ocean ports, and thus promote that foreign trade which is of so great value to the prosperity of a community; and it is by tapping American Western railways that this can most effectively be done. We propose, in fact, by means of this Sault Ste. Marie scheme, to do for Montreal and Quebec, and for the shipping trade centred at these ports in summer, and for Halifax in winter, precisely what our Yankee friends are trying to do for New York and Boston by means of the Coteau bridge. We are not, therefore, much concerned as to whether the St. Paul, Minneapolis and Manitoba Company benefit by the scheme or not. It is a legitimate scheme in the interests of Canada, and if the assistance of Messrs. Smith and Company can be secured in the construction of the rail-

way from St. Paul to the Sault, we bid them God speed in their enterprise, and welcome all the influence they can bring to bear for the promotion of that scheme.—*Gazette*, Editorial, Dec. 8th, 1879.

To the Editor of the Gazette.

SIR,—I have carefully perused your editorial article of yesterday, in which you criticize the view expressed by me—that the objections now raised to the construction of the Coteau bridge have been disposed of by the Dominion Parliament, and that the only question remaining for solution is whether there is any serious objection, so far as navigation is concerned, to bridging the navigable channel of the St. Lawrence at Coteau.

You cite the section or the statute, and state substantially that the “serious objection” is not restricted to the consideration of the question of navigation, but that “it is quite clear that it goes very much farther than that.” In your view, a “serious objection” to bridging the channel might still be found if the Government came to the conclusion that the effect of building this bridge would be to cause serious injury to trade.

The misfortune for this view is that it is in violent conflict with any reasonable interpretation of the statute, and that it is directly at variance with the announced policy of the Government at the time the bill was permitted to pass in committee. The terms of the proviso leave no doubt that the point upon which the Government must be “satisfied,” is, that no injury to navigation will result from bridging the navigable channel. Any more direct reference to navigation would be surplusage.

Happily, there need be no misapprehension as to what

Parliament intended. When the bill was finally submitted to the Committee of the House of Common, Sir Charles Tupper, then Minister of Works (who previously intimated that he would then announce the policy of the Government), declared that two objections were urged against the bridge: one, the inadvisability of chartering railways that have their termini in the United States, and the other, that the construction of the bridge would be injurious to the navigation of the St. Lawrence. The Government conceded the question of policy, and declared that there was no reason why, in this instance, it should depart from the practice of previous Governments in permitting the construction of international roads; that *the only question* for the Government's consideration was the effect upon navigation. The Minister proposed that, as the evidence was conflicting on this point, the bill should be allowed to pass without the bridge clause, which the promoters of the road might have inserted at the next session, provided they could show that the bridge would not obstruct navigation. Mr. McLennan, M.P., the principal promoter of the bill, was unwilling to leave the bridge clause undisposed of, and suggested, with the concurrence of the Minister, that the bill should be allowed to pass with the fourth clause amended as follows:

"The said Canada Atlantic Railway Company shall have the powers conferred upon the Coteau and Province Line Railway and Bridge Company, by the Act 35th Victoria, chapter 83, with reference to the construction of a bridge or bridges over the River St. Lawrence and Beauharnois Canal; provided, however, that no bridge be constructed over the navigable channel of the said River St. Lawrence, until the Governor in Council, after full examination into the question, shall be satisfied that no serious objection exists to bridging the said navigable channel at the point of location mentioned in the said Act 35th Victoria, chapter 83: and upon the Governor in Council being so satisfied, and upon a proclamation to that effect appearing in the *Canada Gazette*, the said Canada Atlantic Railway Company shall

have power to construct a bridge or bridges across the said navigable channel, in such manner, of such elevation, and according to such plans, as may be approved by the Governor in Council."

I have read with astonishment that you "now learn" for the first time that it ever was intended to restrict "the consideration of the bridge project to the one subject of its effect upon the navigation of the river." This remark was quite applicable before the bill eventuated in legislation, but since the passage of the Act, so far as I have been able to ascertain (apart altogether from the reasonable interpretation of the proviso), the sole question in reserve is one of navigation. On this point I beg to cite an authority that I know you will respect—yourself. In the issue of the *Montreal Gazette* of the 30th of April, 1879, I find in that condensed summary of legislative wisdom, entitled "Parliamentary Notes," the following confutation of your more recent opinions:—

"The Coteau bridge question was finally settled to-day, in a manner that satisfies the promoters, and affords a guarantee that no one sectional interest will be allowed to predominate to the disadvantage of others. The bill has passed committee, with the addition of a clause reserving to the Government the power of deciding whether or not a bridge will be injurious to navigation. This is in addition to the legal requirement that the plans must be approved by the Governor in Council. Dr. Tupper very forcibly pointed out the serious responsibility that a Minister of Public Works would incur by setting aside the opinion of his chief professional adviser, and the charges that might be made against him hereafter if the bridge were allowed and serious damage were caused by it.

* * * * *

"In referring to this Coteau bridge scheme, it is impossible to overlook the valuable services rendered in its favor by the member for Glengarry, Mr. John McLennan. His recognized position as a commercial man, his great ability, the popularity which he enjoys in an exceptional degree in the House, and the wonderful skill which he has displayed in the conduct of his case, all contributed to the measure of success which has been thus far achieved. If, as the result of this bill, the County of Glengarry secures the construction of the railway

for which the rear townships in it have made a great sacrifice, and from which so much is expected, it will owe the fact to the good sense which prompted the electors to secure the parliamentary influence which the presence of a representative like Mr. McLennan insures for the constituency."

The whole tenor of this criticism points to the final settlement of the question, "reserving," to use your own language, "to the Government the power of deciding whether or not a bridge will be injurious to navigation."

Believing, as I do, that you have the interests of this country at heart, I regret to see that the tendency of your recent articles on this subject has been to excite sectional prejudices that should never be encouraged, and to throw upon the Government responsibilities from which it has been relieved by the action of Parliament.

If your view is tenable, that the Government can defeat the provisions of this Act, and recede from the avowals of the Crown, then legislation is, indeed, a sham. I have no fear that the Government will entertain your suggestion. Its responsibility is to give effect to the will of Parliament, in good faith, regardless of sectional interests. In recognition of this duty, an expert has been appointed to determine the question of navigation.

I cannot refrain from referring to the inconsistency of denouncing the "Yankee speculators" who have dared to propose, with their own means, to build a road for us that may "tap" our system of railways, and commending, in the same article, the adoption of the same tactics by Canadians with reference to the American lines. It is quite moral for us, with the Sault Ste. Marie line, to "tap" the American railways in the Western States, but save us from the inroads of the down-East Yankee capitalist! That species of argument bears its own condemnation.

You are under a misconception in stating that the only interest in this bridge scheme is American. But granting that this assertion is true, upon what principle of public policy can you deny to foreign capitalists the privilege of investing their money in Canadian enterprises? Why may not the Americans as freely invest their capital in Canadian railways as Englishmen have invested theirs in American? The wail against this new avenue from the Great West to the seaboard is unreasonable. It is stigmatized as an American enterprise to create a prejudice against it, though not a mile of it runs through American territory. Is the Grand Trunk an American enterprise—with half its length and both its termini in the United States? It is true it is Canadian, in the sense that it has cost the public exchequer of this country an enormous sum of money—an amount which I freely admit has been amply compensated by the great countervailing advantages of that line to Canada. Yet it daily carries the produce of the West past the City of Montreal to the American seaboard. In fact I believe the Grand Trunk has been Canada's greatest benefactor. But not only the Grand Trunk, but the Government roads, are, after all, business enterprises that cannot be relieved from the competition for the traffic of the country that our rapidly expanding West demands. It is contrary to every principle of public policy that free competition for public carrying and traffic should be strangled by legislation—or obstructed by prejudice. The enterprises of yesterday must adjust themselves to the demands of to-day. A Chinese policy is ill-adapted to the bounding strides of Western civilization. The history of railways is the history of progress, and the more railways we have constructed by private enterprise the better for the country at large.

Particular sections may temporarily suffer, but others will be benefited, and the people generally inconvenienced and enriched.

What the people want is cheap and easy access to the public markets. The existing monopolists are opposed to this, because competition means a reduction of freights. But the interests of the people and the interests of the monopolists are essentially different.

I am not one of those who think that the great city of Montreal will be unable to grapple with any new condition of things that may be brought about by the construction of the Coteau bridge or any other public work. Montreal is the natural summer shipping port for the produce of the great West, and the traffic will come here if we can offer the business inducements that other ports can. But even Montreal must learn that its lease of importance is not interminable, and that its real voice and influence should be asserted by ways other than the promulgation of prejudices that are only appreciable by itself.

With every consideration, I am, sir,

Your obedient servant,

DONALD MACMASTER.

Montreal, 9th December, 1879.

—*Gazette*, Dec. 12th, 1879.

We publish this morning a long letter from Mr. Macmaster, in which he contends, as in his former letter, that every consideration, except the mere question of the navigation of the St. Lawrence, has been set aside by the action of Parliament, and that, therefore, we have no right now to urge arguments against the construction of the Coteau bridge, based upon the general commercial interests of the country. Mr. Macmaster quotes from

the Parliamentary notes of the *Gazette* at the time, in proof of his statement. In so far as these notes complimented Mr. McLennan upon his conduct of this case, we repeat everything now editorially that was said at that time. There is no doubt whatever that Mr. McLennan managed his case with consummate skill, and that, but for him, the argument in favor of the bridge would not have been listened to for five minutes. We repeat that the County of Glengarry was fortunate in having such a representative as Mr. McLennan in Parliament; and we now say, as we said before, that the county is equally fortunate in having as its representative in the Legislature of Ontario a gentleman of the ability of Mr. Macmaster, and one so watchful of its interests as he has shown himself to be. But we still repeat that there was nothing to justify the statement that the whole question was restricted to the one subject of the interests of navigation. That, undoubtedly, was a very prominent one. The evidence taken before the committee had all reference to it, and the mind of the committee was undoubtedly directed very largely to it. It was, therefore, not unnatural that the writer of the Parliamentary notes should have dwelt upon that feature; but it is simply nonsense to say that the larger and more important question can be ignored by the Government in the consideration of this subject.

Mr. Macmaster attempts to place this question upon the ground of morals. He asks us wherein is the morality of our desire to tap American railways at Sault Ste. Marie when we refuse Americans the privilege of tapping our trade at the Coteau. This, however, is not a question of morals at all. There is no immorality in the Americans attempting to tap our trade. There is no immorality in tapping it if they can get permission to do

so. It is simply a commercial question, to be considered as a question of commercial advantage. Our interest is to bring down upon our own lines of railways and means of communication, all the traffic we possibly can, from whatever source we can obtain it, so as to build up our shipping interests by means of that traffic, and thus develop the general prosperity of our country. But surely it is too much to say that while we attempt to bring down the traffic of the great west upon our line on the one side, we should deliberately give to the Americans the opportunity of carrying it away for the development of their ocean ports and shipping interests to the prejudice of our own, on the other. That is what Mr. Macmaster asks us to do. Even with this Coteau bridge built, it would still be a great advantage to get the traffic of the great west over Canadian lines crossing at Sault Ste. Marie, but the advantage would be very greatly enhanced if that traffic were shipped from Canadian ports instead of from American ones.

Nor can we understand the argument of Mr. Macmaster that the city of Montreal must not expect any fostering care on the part of the Government. Montreal asks no fostering care on the part of the Government as against other Canadian cities. It has a right to ask that it should be protected against the Government's action in the interests of American railways and American cities. That is all that we contend for in connection with this matter. We repeat that there is no interest in this scheme worth a feather's weight consideration as against the injury which it will inflict upon the great shipping interest of the country, except an American interest. We are quite willing, nay, quite anxious, that Americans, or any one else for that matter, should build railways in Canada, if they are willing to do so. But

Americans are not likely to do this for our advantage. The fact that they are willing to do so ought fairly to challenge an enquiry into their motive ; and when that enquiry leads, as in this case it does, to the conclusion that this generosity on their part simply consists in a willingness to tap our lines of communication with the object of diverting our trade to their home lines, for the benefit of their own ports and shipping, we may fairly decline the generous gift. The people of Montreal and Quebec, we doubt not, are quite prepared to stand their chance in the general competition for the trade of the great West. All they ask is that they shall not be handicapped by their own Government in the interest of their foreign rivals ; surely that is not an unreasonable request.—*Gazette*, Editorial, Dec. 12th, 1879.

For the past ten days the columns of the *Montreal Gazette* have been largely devoted to correspondence and editorial articles anent the project of erecting a railway bridge across the St. Lawrence at Coteau. The *Gazette* attacks the project with a determination somewhat remarkable ; while the opposite side of the question is ably supported in letters from Mr. D. Macmaster, M.P.P. for Glengarry.

It is to be hoped that our friends in Glengarry will not allow themselves to be exercised over the stand taken by the *Gazette*. It proves nothing except that public opinion in Montreal appears to be opposed to the bridge. It does not alter the attitude of the Government, nor the judgment of Parliament ; much less does it undo past legislation. The question of policy has now no existence ; it was disposed of during last Session, and can only be revived to any purpose by the introduction

of a bill to avoid the legislation then passed. The government has given no sign that any change has taken place in its views since Sir Charles Tupper stated in Committee, that two objections were urged against the bridge: one, the inadvisability of chartering railways that have their termini in the United States, and the other that the construction of the bridge would be injurious to the navigation of the St. Lawrence. The Government conceded the question of policy, and declared that there was no reason why, in this instance, it should depart from the practice of previous Governments in permitting the construction of international roads; that *the only question* for the Government's consideration was the effect upon navigation. That question now awaits decision on the report of the Government Engineer, who, no later ago than Wednesday, was busily engaged in examining the proposed site. He will probably report without delay; and until then further discussion is useless, for the simple reason that there is nothing to discuss.

The whole history of the Coteau Railway is one which presents a tempting field for comment, and we shall probably deal with the subject at no very distant day.—*Cornwall Reporter*, Dec. 13th, 1879.

THE COTEAU BRIDGE—PROS AND CONS.

The projected Coteau bridge is still the subject of much controversy in the Provinces of Quebec and Ontario. As a public journalist, anxious to know and say what is right and just toward all parties, I invited a gentleman, who is as capable of giving a fair, judicial opinion, uninfluenced by local considerations, as any one in the Do-

minion, to tell the people of both Provinces what, in his judgment, is the real state of the case. The following is his reply :—

“SIR,—It is difficult for a citizen of Montreal to avoid being biassed in his judgment on the question of allowing a bridge to be constructed over the St. Lawrence at the Coteau. In the controversy which has been recently carried on between the *Montreal Gazette* and Mr. Macmaster, M. P. P. for Glengarry, it seems not improbable that Montreal sympathy has been to a great extent with the *Gazette*. What seems extraordinary is that the bill authorizing the construction of the bridge was not more strenuously opposed during its passage. It is, however, improbable that sectional opposition would have had much weight with Parliament. Mr. Macmaster has correctly defined the established policy of the Canadian Parliament to be the encouragement of free competition in our railroad enterprises. It was at one time believed that the Canada & Atlantic Railway Company, under another title, would be a feeder of the Grand Trunk, and that its traffic would be carried over that road to the seaboard. It has been found practicable to obtain a shorter line, and it would be felt by the population of the very considerable district of country which will be served by the railway to be a great hardship if it should be prevented from availing itself of the offered facilities.

“The question must be discussed without reference to the possible obstruction of the navigation of the St. Lawrence. That contingency has been fully provided for in the Act, and is quite beside the present question. It is difficult to comprehend upon what grounds the Dominion Government could venture to interpose any obstacle to the construction, by a chartered company, of a public work, which has been expressly authorized by

Parliament, provided the Governor-in-Council shall be satisfied, after full examination into the question, that no serious objection exists to bridging the navigable channel at the point of location mentioned in the Act 35 Vic., Cap. 83. It would seem clear that the Governor-in-Council is bound to carry out the provisions of the Act of Parliament, subject only to the restriction already mentioned. Mr. Macmaster has advocated the cause of his constituents with great ability, but it must be admitted with strict impartiality. There is hardly a railway in the Dominion of those recently projected that has not been objected to on the grounds of its competing with established lines, but Canada at a very early period of her railway history adopted the policy of free competition. As Mr. Macmaster has pointed out, Montreal is at this moment strenuously advocating the diversion of the traffic of the Western States to the St. Lawrence, and the Grand Trunk lent its powerful aid in the construction of a bridge over the Niagara River to facilitate the diversion of traffic to the United States railroads. Under these circumstances it would have been scarcely possible for the Dominion Parliament to have refused the Canada & Atlantic Railway Co. the means of gaining access to the seaboard by the most direct route merely for the purpose of benefiting the city of Montreal, or rather the Grand Trunk Railway Co., for it is far from certain that the city or its inhabitants would derive any benefit by the traffic destined for the United States seaboard, and that is the only traffic that will be taken over the bridge in the event of its construction. No reference has been made in the foregoing remarks to the obstruction of the navigation. There can be no doubt that the Minister of Public Works will take care that the plans for the contemplated bridge are subjected to severe criticism; but,

on the assumption that all engineering difficulties can be surmounted, the construction of the bridge would seem to be inevitable."

I agree with my correspondent, when he deems it "extraordinary that the bill authorizing the construction of the bridge was not more strenuously opposed during its passage." Everything that can be said against it now might and ought to have been said then. The Editor of the *Montreal Gazette* was in his place, as member for Cardwell, and might have spoken had he chosen; the members for Montreal, as well as others representing constituencies in Quebec, were in the House, and should have been alive to the interests of the Province, but the bill was allowed to pass unchallenged. As Mr. Macmaster puts it:—"Quebec only began to exhibit its wares the day after the fair." For it is beyond reasonable question or doubt that an Act of Parliament was passed, authorizing the Governor-in-Council to grant permission to a chartered company to build a bridge across the St. Lawrence River at Coteau, "provided that the Governor-in-Council shall be satisfied, after full examination into the subject, that no serious objection exists to bridging the navigable channel." No other issues were raised, or contemplated, and the *Gazette* is seriously in error in attempting to include other objections under that clause. Talk about "absurdity" and "nonsense" does not alter facts.

But it is strange that it never occurred to the *Gazette* to suggest that an Act may be repealed or a law may be amended. The *Gazette* is "out of court" when it says that other objections besides the danger of interfering with navigation may be considered under the Act as it now stands; but it may bring itself within the pale of fair argument if it will say, The Act is passed, but it may

be repealed. As soon as that is admitted, we have good reason for opening the discussion, and the discussion turns upon this: Will the good to be done to other lines, and to the Dominion generally, by building the Coteau bridge, compensate for the injury the Grand Trunk will inevitably suffer? It is quite true that the bridge if built will give us another competing line and another means of gaining access to the seaboard, but what shall we lose by that? We cannot tell with anything like certainty, but we may be quite sure that Grand Trunk traffic would be very materially interfered with, and Mr. Vanderbilt would have a chance of working his will in Canada. What the Grand Trunk has done for Western as well as Eastern Canada may be judged from the fact that an average of 750,000 tons of freight per annum are carried by the Grand Trunk, realizing a revenue of probably \$3,000,000, which freight would be more or less subject to competition should the bridge be built.

The Grand Trunk is a great institution in Canada—an institution without which Canada would be a scattered and disintegrated community; vast sums of English money have been spent upon it; all its works are conducted in Canada; every fresh development it makes is in the interest of Canada; it favors Canadian ports, and, with unceasing enterprise, "taps" the traffic of the States for Canada's benefit. Whereas, if we allow American lines to come in and take our traffic to Europe by way of Boston, their men and their workshops will be at Boston, and they will simply run through Canadian territory. Granted that the people living between Coteau and Ottawa would be advantaged by the building of the bridge, it is a fair question to ask, in these days of national policy: Would not Canada lose more than Glen-garry would gain? The Grand Trunk has mooted the

question of a double track between Montreal and Toronto, but, if we take measures to starve its traffic, we shall necessitate decreased instead of increased facilities for travel and traffic. One thing is certain, Canada cannot afford to ignore the Grand Trunk Railway.

With one suggestion I will close: Why does not the Grand Trunk build a line from Coteau to Ottawa? That would satisfy all parties and settle the whole question.
—*Canadian Spectator*, Editorial, Dec. 20th.

