

The completion of any satisfactory communication between Halifax and Quebec would, in fact, produce relations between these provinces that would render a general union absolutely necessary. Several surveys proved that a railway would be perfectly practicable the whole way.

The formation of a railroad from Halifax to Quebec would entirely alter some of the distinguishing characteristics of the Canadas. Instead of being shut out from all direct intercourse with England during half the year, they would possess a far more certain and speedy communication throughout the winter than they now possess in summer.

This passage greatly impressed the public men of the day—the LAFONTAINE-BALDWIN Administration—in which Mr. HINCKS and the honorable Premier each had a place. It was under them that the railway legislation of the province received its first impulse, and last session I remember to have had occasion to quote the preamble of an act passed in 1851, which recites:—

That, whereas it is of the highest importance to the progress and welfare of this province, that a Main Trunk line of railway should be made throughout the length thereof, and from the eastern frontier thereof through the provinces of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia to the city and port of Halifax; and it is therefore expedient that every effort should be made to ensure the construction of such railway.

The second clause of the act

Authorizes the Government, for the time being, to negotiate with the Imperial Government and New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, for the construction of the line, and to bargain therefor; the funds to be obtained under Imperial guarantee.

This act, honorable gentlemen, is still in force, and from the time of its passing there has always been an anxiety among the public men of Canada to accomplish the construction of a railway to Halifax. All our governments, without exception, have felt in the same way, and the MACDONALD-SICOTTE Administration took steps towards such an end. But the difficulties which followed stopped further progress, and, in fact, had almost stopped legislation altogether. Now, however, the Hon. Mr. BROWN himself has made the construction of this railway a part of the proposed Constitution, and has said, at a great meeting in Toronto, that if the project contained half-a-dozen intercolonial railways he would go for them all. (Hear, hear.) I feel morally certain that if the subject were fairly discussed in every town in Upper Canada, nine-tenths of the people would go heartily for it. Indeed, the railway is absolutely necessary and we cannot do without it. Upper Canada alone, not to speak

of Lower Canada at all, requires it, and so well is this understood in the Lower Provinces that an opponent of the Hon. Mr. TILLEY—Hon. Mr. SMITH—has lately said it was quite unnecessary for New Brunswick to spend any money on the work, as Upper Canada must build it for its own sake. As to the cost of this road, which has been so greatly exaggerated, Mr. BRYDGES, who must be supposed to know something about the matter, has offered, on behalf of an English company, to undertake the construction of the line for £3,500,000 sterling. Everybody knows how much that is, and when reciprocity is gone, Upper Canada will do well to build the road on its own account, if all the other provinces refuse. They will however not refuse, for the line is equally necessary for Lower Canada and the other provinces, and it is a great advantage to all parties that it should be so. New Brunswick requires it to open up its rich interior country which contains, as I have learned from advance reports of subordinate surveying engineers, some of the finest lands in the world. Halifax wants it, in order to bring freight to her great seaport when those of Quebec and Montreal are closed. It should have been commenced three years ago, and if it had it would now be built, and we should have heard nothing about the abolition of the Reciprocity Treaty. (Hear, hear.) The honorable member then asked why, since there was to be a dissolution and an appeal to the people of New Brunswick on the subject, there should not be one in Canada? The answer to that has already been given. The term of Parliament would have expired in that province on the 1st of June, and as the members would then have had to go to their constituents to give an account of their conduct during the previous four years, it was thought better to anticipate the time of its dissolution by three or four months. In Nova Scotia and Newfoundland, however, where the elections were more recent, there are to be no elections. I will add that this mode of appealing to the people is not British but American, as under the British system the representatives of the people in Parliament are presumed to be competent to decide all the public questions submitted to them. When the unions between England and Scotland, and between England and Ireland were effected, there were no appeals to the people, it being assumed that the people's chosen representatives were quite competent to judge of the measures. (Hear, hear.) Yet the members who have recently gone to the country have found public opinion to be de-