

notice; and he thought that they would come back with their views considerably changed.

(The hon. gentleman referred to a case of a petition he had presented to the government, signed by hundreds of influential persons in his county, asking for aid to an important public road, but which was refused any consideration at all. So indignant was one gentleman at the treatment they had received, that he offered to lend £700 himself to carry on the work which it was the duty of the government to construct.) This was only one of many instances, in which the government had turned a deaf ear to the wants of the county of Guysborough. How then could he justify himself to his constituents, if he voted for these resolutions?

The hon. member for Hants (Mr. Churchill) had exhibited himself on the previous evening in rather an extraordinary attitude, but it appeared that there were some favored ones in that house who could do as they chose, provided they gave the government a vote. That hon. gentleman had thought proper to absent himself for the greater part of the session from his duties, first at his own home and afterwards in a neighbouring country, attending to his private interests. Whether that was a proper course for a representative to take was exceedingly questionable; and now he comes back and undertakes to impute motives to hon. gentlemen for the course pursued by them on this question. He thought that when it was considered that this railroad would for a long distance go through the county that hon. gentleman represented, and that a large sum of money would be spent at his very door, that the less he challenged the motives of others the better.

He trusted that in the opposition he was obliged to give to this measure that factious motives would not be imputed to him. He had only to point to the course he pursued last session—on the Pictou railroad—to shew that he was not influenced by any factious spirit. It was then in the power of the opposition, if they had had the desire, to have seriously embarrassed the government on that question. He had, however, taken a higher view of the question, and had supported that measure although Pictou was not a bit nearer to him than Annapolis or Windsor. He hoped, therefore, that the government would not attribute to him any motives of that description.

At that late period of the session he would not detain the house at any greater length. The hon. gentleman concluded by depreciating any immediate action in the way of incurring any further liability. He was afraid it would have the effect of depreciating the value of the debentures already issued. He appealed to gentlemen on both sides of the house, to the supporters of the government as well as their opponents, not to be influenced by a mere desire for a party triumph in voting for a resolution which he believed on sober reflection they would find to be detrimental to the best interests of the country.

MR. KILLAM alluded to the offer of the International Contract Company, and compared it with the terms offered by the resolution of last session. He remarked that the question stood in quite another position from what it did in the previous Session. In proposing to place the work in the hands of a company, the government must have

placed very little confidence in their own officers, for the Commissioner of Railways had given to the House as his opinion that in a few years the road would pay three per cent above its working expenses; if that were correct the best course would be for the government itself to undertake the construction. He said that the terms of the offer were entirely altered, and it would therefore be perfectly consistent in the House to reject the resolution. The determination of the government seemed to be to keep themselves afloat, whatever became of the country.

HON. MR. McFARLANE replied to a remark of Mr. Killam. He said that four different surveys of routes had been made, but the route was to be finally selected by the government, acting under the advice of the very able engineer now in their employ.

MR. ARCHIBALD contended that to give to the government the discretion proposed by the resolution would be to hand over to them the entire control of the public chest. So great had been the mystification of figures on the question that the member for Halifax, although a merchant, had made a mistake in stating the public debt, to the extent of two million of dollars, a sum sufficient to build the Pictou railway. He had a great appreciation of the value of railways, and he hoped that the time had arrived when we could connect our road with the other lines of the continent; but the circumstances which had exhibited themselves in the trade of the country had convinced him that our prospects were not so good as to warrant us in increasing the large liability that would be necessary to carry on even that work. He was greatly pleased to find that our present railways had not only become able to pay their working expenses, but had commenced to yield something towards the interest. There was, however, one important circumstance which had been left out of consideration,—in nearly all railways the duration of the iron was estimated at eight years, and the companies made a practice of setting aside a certain sum every year to meet the cost of renewing. Our road was not as much worked as others and might be expected to last 16 years, 8 of which had already expired, and he found that the cost of replacing the line, after deducting the value of the old iron would be \$4,000 per mile, in addition to \$400 per mile for labour, making a total for the work of \$481,000, so that we ought at present to be setting aside for that service about \$53,800 a year. The remarks of the Commissioner of Railways had given him no little amusement. That gentleman had previously assigned railways to not very complimentary company, but now, with the ardor which always characterized one newly converted from a heathen to a saint, was outstripping in his zeal those who had been trained for a lifetime to the policy to which he had been converted.

MR. ARCHIBALD, after some further remarks moved the following amendment:—

"Whereas—The location of the Pictou Railway has added largely to the length of the road contemplated to be constructed by the Railway bill last year; and whereas in view of the heavy liabilities