

besaid of them that they saved that much. The Hon. Finl. Sec. undertook to prove that the member for Colchester was wrong in his statement that a larger expenditure would be required for the future, for the maintenance of the railroads, than had been necessary in the past. Upon referring to the returns he found that the cost of maintenance had been steadily increasing year by year. He would be the last person to alarm people as to the state of the railroads, but every body knew that every year the roads necessarily became more worn out, and required repair. In 1861, the cost of maintenance amounted to \$34,000; in 1862, \$37,000. In '63, \$47,000, and in the nine months of 1864 \$50,000. He did not wish to detain the House much longer, but he would give them a few figures shewing what Cape Breton would have to pay towards the railway system of Nova Scotia. She would be required to pay one-fifth of the whole debt—or \$128,000. The hon. member for Halifax talked about mud roads as if they were of no consequence at all. If he represented a country constituency he would find it a matter of a little more importance than he seemed to think it now. He is only willing to give us \$100,000 for what he calls mud roads, but is perfectly ready to vote \$556,000 a year for iron roads. Now he (Mr. B.) would yield to no man, in his opinion as to the importance of railroads to a country, but if they were only to be obtained by sacrificing the common roads which were of so much importance to the great mass of the people he would be inclined to pause, before incurring any greater liability. At all events he could not see how any one could doubt the propriety of adopting the course proposed by the member for Colchester, to wait for a twelve month, and see how affairs looked then, we would then be able to ascertain how much the Pictou road was actually going to cost. At present that was uncertain. He had had a conversation with contractors who had been employed on the Truro road and they laughed at the idea of its being built for two millions of dollars. Under these circumstances as a member of the house, and a representative from Cape Breton he was not prepared to authorize the enormous expenditure contemplated by the resolution before the house and he should vote against them.

FRIDAY, April 21.

The adjourned debate on the railway resolution was resumed.

Hon. ATTY. GEN. said—I do not intend to address the house at any very great length upon this question, but I cannot allow the observations of the hon. leader of the opposition to pass unanswered. This is a subject with which every gentleman in this house is so well acquainted, that I think it is hardly necessary to direct attention back for the last eleven years in order to ascertain the policy of the house on the subject of railways. The idea of building a railroad to Annapolis dates as far back as 1854, when the country was led to believe that for a million of money they were going to have railway communication from Halifax to the Gulf of St. Lawrence on the one hand, and the waters of the Bay of Fundy on the other. In fact, in all discussions upon the subject, the people were educated up to the belief that for the small amount I have

named, the points referred to could be reached. The experience of a few years, however, soon dissipated that idea; and although the policy has partially failed for want of means, yet the house remained pledged to carry on these important works so soon as the finances of the country would admit. It was, therefore, no new policy that the government introduced last year, but one that was initiated and approved of years ago. Such, then, being the case, it is not for us now to consider the correctness or incorrectness of the idea. The country at that time was divided upon the question of building railways. Some thought it inadvisable to embark in the enterprise at all; some were in favor of their being built by government; whilst others—and they formed a large section of this house and of the country—were in favor of their construction by private companies under legislative subventions. Those who were opposed altogether to railroads formed but a small class in the country, and I am happy to find that one of the representatives of that section has at length given in his adhesion to the system, and approves of their construction under the policy first inaugurated. As to whether that is the best system or not it is unnecessary to advert in the present discussion; that question was settled last year, and nothing has since occurred to alter the position of affairs. The only point, then, that now arises for consideration is the question as to whether the finances of the province are in a condition to warrant the construction of these works in the modified form proposed by the resolution now before the house.

There are many considerations to be thought of in connection with this subject, but the paramount one is to keep up the credit of the country and to maintain inviolate the good faith of the province. If we can do this, then I think we are warranted in going on with these works. In the consideration of this question I intend principally to refer to the opposition given to it by the hon. member for South Colchester (Mr. Archibald) and to the course he has thought proper to pursue; and I cannot avoid saying that the position taken by that hon. gentleman, in regard to one or two other important subjects to which he had been previously committed, has rather astonished me. In regard to the School Bill, for instance, no one was more thoroughly committed to that measure by his action last session than the hon. gentleman; in fact, he went even further than the views of the government on the subject; while this year he has adopted a policy totally inconsistent with the course he then pursued. I think that hon. gentleman ought to have more regard for the position he occupies as leader of the opposition than to come here, as he did yesterday, and, in relation to this question, admit that he had made such gross mistakes in his calculations; and my hon. friend the Financial Secretary was quite justified in the remark that it was highly culpable in one occupying his position to found arguments upon a subject to which he confessed he had not given that consideration which its importance demanded. He has given evidence upon other occasions, of his power to sift and analyze financial statements; and there is no doubt that, if he had had the inclination, he was quite competent to ascertain what amount the government had in hand at