

that the distance from Toronto to New York is 540 miles, while the distance to St. John by Riviere du Loup is 913, and he argues that if Canada is allowed to send produce through the American territory it will seek New York, but he looks at the possibilities of America prohibiting such a traffic, and he says, 'if you build the Intercolonial Railway the United States Government will see that there is a possibility of the traffic being diverted, and they will grant permission to send produce to New York direct. He says:

"As the probable through freight traffic depends on so many contingencies, it is impossible to form any proper estimate of its value; but of this we may rest satisfied. If the construction of the Intercolonial Railway, by opening out an independent outlet to the ocean, prove instrumental in keeping down the barriers to Canadian trade which our neighbours have the power to erect, it might in this respect alone be considered of the highest commercial advantage to Canada. It is scarcely likely that the people of the United States would permanently allow themselves to place restrictions on Canadian traffic, when they discovered that by so doing they were simply driving away trade from themselves; and in this view the contemplated railway may fairly be considered, especially by the people of that part of Canada west of Montreal, of the greatest value to them when least employed in the transportation of produce to the seaboard."

The European and North American line now under contract, is 25 miles shorter than it will be by the Intercolonial line. He says:

"Thus it is evident that the passenger traffic of the Intercolonial way, on any of these lines being constructed, be tapped near its roots, and much of it drawn away. Under these circumstances, it is too apparent that the Intercolonial Railway may find in the United States a route formidable rival for Canadian passenger traffic, to and from Europe, by way of Halifax. Fortunately, with a view to counteract this difficulty, a line by the Bay Chaleurs would offer special advantages, which may here be noticed."

He then goes into an elaborate argument to prove the propriety of making Shippigan the place of landing for all steamers passing between America and England, thereby taking away all ground of argument concerning the commercial advantages of the intercolonial road. It may be said that Shippigan being closed for seven months of the year, during that period the passenger traffic could land at Halifax, but in the winter months there is little travel to or from Canada, and even the European and North American line, as he shews, will have the advantage. But I do not consider it necessary to weary the House with a discussion of the arguments against the measure, because I believe that we have not the right to change in the manner proposed by this resolution, our constitution. It is not in our commissions. The supporters of the resolution argue on the extent of our powers; but I look more to our right to do so, without first consulting those whom we represent. If I understand Responsible Government, it means that we either have the sanction of the people to carry a measure, or that we shall decide upon questions in such a way as we feel will meet their approval—that we must ever keep in view a going back to the people to have our acts approved or condemned. The charter of our rights is not found in any one despatch from the Colonial Office, but runs through a number, granting one concession after another, all tending to this one point,

that the people shall be consulted, and to them we are to be responsible for our action here. Earl Grey says to us, 2nd March, 1847:—

"The two contending parties will have to decide their quarrel at present in the Assembly, and ultimately at the hustings."

Again, on the 31st of the same month:—

"The practical end of Responsible Government would be satisfied by the removability of a single public officer, provided that through him public opinion could influence the general administration of affairs."

Under this resolution before us public opinion cannot have its legitimate influence. It is not proposed that the action of members is ever to be passed upon by the people. Neither can it be said that because the question of Union has been for some years agitated that we were empowered at the last general election to pass it. The resolution of this house in 1861, on which the hon. Pro. Secy. lays such great stress, speaks of the obstacles to Union and of the desirability of having "the question set at rest." From the action of the delegates appointed under that resolution it was supposed to be "set at rest" as impracticable, and therefore was not a question before the people at the last General Election, and to pass it now and put it forever beyond their reach would be unconstitutional and unjust. The supporters of this resolution claim Lord Durham as one of the early promoters of a Union of the Colonies. I refer them to his views on this point, as given in his Report to the British Government. He says:

"But the state of the Lower Provinces, though it justifies the proposal of an union, would not, I think, render it *gracious or even just on the part of Parliament* to carry it into effect without referring it to the ample deliberation and consent of the people of those Colonies."

Strongly as Lord Durham advocated a Legislative Union of these colonies, he tells us it would not be just to adopt it without the approval of the people. But I find that even the politicians of Canada admit that it should be referred to the people, if there be any doubt as to the opinions which they held. Mr. Cameron, in the Canadian Assembly, after approving of the scheme, proposed a reference to the people, arguing that if they gave their approval the Union would be more permanent; he says:

Mr. Brown, whose name has been mentioned in this debate, and on whose abilities the Prov. Secretary has passed such high encomiums, said:

"If we base this structure, as it ought to be based on the expressed will of the people themselves, then I think we will be offering to those who come after us, as well as to ourselves, a heritage that every man should be proud of."

"If there were any doubt about public feeling there might be propriety in going to the people. But is there any doubt about it? I am not opposing the hon. gentleman's resolution on constitutional grounds. I am not denying the rights of the people; if I had any doubt whatever about what would be the verdict of the people, I should be the first to say we ought to go to the people. But it is simply because I am satisfied there would be a sweeping verdict in favor of the measure that I think it unnecessary to take it to the country."

Here is the opinion of one of the first statesmen of British America, that if there be a shadow of