

pass over the Grand Trunk to Montreal as a rule. It was very seldom this happened; therefore the argument about break of gauge was merely used as a weapon to defeat the measure. It was well known, too, to the gentlemen taking a position against this measure, that there were at present means of shifting the box cars on railways from one set of trucks to another, which obviated much of the difficulty about gauge. But it was said the narrow-gauge must not be allowed, because it would interfere with the military operations in the country. Now, his idea was that even the narrow-gauge road served the country and furthered military operations better than none at all. He would also call attention to the fact that the member for Algoma—a convert to the military view of the question—had a charter in his pocket to enable him to open up this section of country for upwards of two years past; but nothing had been done towards opening up the route, nor would probably be until the end of time, notwithstanding the military reasons for its construction. But in all probability this section would not require any military assistance for many years to come, and it was to be hoped there would never be any occasion for the transport of military stores through that section. The plea was, in reality, urged merely to prevent those desirous of opening up that district from having an opportunity of doing so. The country, he conceived, had no right to say to the men projecting this commercial enterprise,—men who would carry it out without seeking one sixpence from the public treasury—“You must not have this line unless you build it on the most expensive gauge.” That gauge would render the undertaking completely useless as a commercial speculation; and he conceived that a Legislature like that of Ontario would scarcely make use of that argument. He apprehended the good sense of the House would give the responsible men embarked in this undertaking an opportunity of constructing their line on the three feet six gauge if they found it to their interest to build it of that gauge. All that was asked for was simply the privilege of constructing a road not less than three feet six in gauge. They were not at all confined to that gauge if a wider one were found to answer better. As business men, those engaged in this enterprise would seek to build their road as economically as possible, and if they became satisfied the broad gauge could be built as cheaply as the narrow gauge, they would not adopt the latter. For this reason it appeared to him that the advocates of the broad gauge endeavoured to prove too much in trying to prove that that gauge road could be built as cheap as the narrow gauge. If that were the case, there would be no fear, but in self-interest the narrow gauge would be discarded. Mr. Read, Engineer of the Great Western, had made statements before the committee to show the broad gauge to be cheaper than the three feet six—that all the additional work resulting from the wider gauge could be done, and yet make a line with that gauge the cheapest. To a non-practical man such a statement seemed odd. It struck him (Mr. Cameron) in that light. And he found, when a gentleman advocating the narrow gauge, was heard in reply, that the statements made by Mr. Read were on an erroneous basis altogether; and when they had had Mr. Fox, a distinguished engineer, before the Railway Committee, the scientific gentleman who undertook to cross-question Mr. Fox on this point, had to confess that he made very little out of Mr. Fox. He established clearly that these narrow-gauge lines were cheaper and more beneficial to those of small means than would be the broad gauge. He (Mr. Cameron) hoped hon. gentlemen having the interests of this section of country at heart, would give the promoters of this enterprise power to construct their road on the gauge they required, that which had been shown to be the cheapest and most beneficial for such an enterprise.

Mr. CUMBERLAND said the members of the profession to which the honourable Secretary belonged, were very careful that it should continue a close profession, and were dreadfully sensitive about any outside of the profession venturing an opinion on a matter of law; but they paid very little respect to the opinions of the members of any other profession, on matters within the sphere of that profession, when they happened to differ from their own pre-conceived notions. He (Mr. Cumberland) begged to repudiate altogether the idea that the railway he was supposed to represent regarded this line as in the slightest degree competitive, so far as the service to Walkerton was concerned. He did not believe the construction of this road from Toronto Walkerton, whether on a broad or a narrow gauge, would make \$1,000 difference at any time in the receipts of the Northern railway.

Hon. Mr. CAMERON—The branch to Owen Sound will.

Mr. CUMBERLAND proceeded to say that the sole reason why he took the ground he did in this matter was that, as a member of this House, he felt it his bounden duty to bring all the experience he possessed in his special calling to the aid of the house and to the direction of his own acts as a member of it. He regarded it as a public duty to protest, and to fight hand to hand—until he lost the battle—against any break of gauge, he cared not where, being permitted in this country. The advocates of this narrow gauge scheme re-