

and Company do not ask any subsidy from the Government, but simply the privileges mentioned in the resolutions. Our telegraphic lines on Vancouver Island reach as far as Nanaimo, and the Government may find, when this matter comes up again, that it may be to the advantage of the Dominion to extend the lines to Quatsino, instead of leaving it in the hands of a company. But just now the power asked for is to lay a cable across the Pacific from Quatsino as far as the Island of Yesso in Japan. The privileges asked for are very short. The most important one is that this company shall have the exclusive privilege of landing a telegraphic cable or cables on the east Pacific coast for twenty years. Without that assurance it would be impossible for any company to undertake a work of this kind, and sink five, six or seven million dollars in the Pacific. No company would enter upon such a work without exemption from competition for this period, except, perhaps, with the object of being bought out. Therefore those privileges are asked for. One of the conditions the Government imposes on the company is that "the telegraphic communication between the two continents shall be completed within five years from the date of the charter, and shall be thereafter regularly and efficiently maintained." I do not think that hon. gentlemen will consider this delay is a very long one, especially for a work of this kind. When we go into Committee I will ask for a change of the date from the 1st October to the 1st January next. Mr. Fleming has informed me, since the resolutions were introduced, that, having to go to England to arrange matters in regard to the scheme, and also to Japan, it would be four or five months before he could return; and that, therefore, it would be risky to make the date 1st October. The additional three months would give him the time not only to complete his arrangements in England, but also in Japan. Powers or concessions have been obtained for this company in Japan to land on its coast their cable or cables. The Japanese Government are perfectly pleased at the prospect of a cable between the two continents.

Sir ALBERT J. SMITH. Have they given a twenty years' monopoly too.

Mr. LANGEVIN. I cannot say. I understand the company have an exclusive privilege in Japan also.

Mr. CURRIER. There is a Bill before this House at the present time for the purpose of incorporating a company to lay cables over this same ground, and not only from Europe to Canada, but from British Columbia to China and Japan, and this company do not ask Parliament for exclusive privileges for twenty years, as is proposed by the resolutions. I think that it is only fair and just that the company to which I refer should be placed on the same footing as the other, especially as they do not ask for exclusive rights. The company has been regularly formed in England, the articles of association are complete, and they are prepared to put up \$800,000 in cash as a guarantee that they will carry out their undertaking within five years.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Does the hon. gentleman refer to the European, American and Canadian Cable Company?

Mr. CURRIER. Yes; that is the one.

Mr. LANGEVIN. If the hon. gentleman will look at the Bill he will find that it does not refer to a Pacific cable at all. The preamble reads:

"Whereas the persons hereinafter mentioned have, by their petition, prayed that an Act of incorporation may be granted to them for the purpose of establishing telegraphic communication between the Dominion of Canada, the United Kingdom and other countries."

Are we to be tied down simply because there is a Bill before the House proposing to establish telegraphic communication between the Dominion of Canada, the United Kingdom "and other countries." Again, they speak of their desti-

Mr. LANGEVIN.

nation in the words "or elsewhere" and there is no mention whatever of laying a cable across the Pacific. It does speak of a cable across the Atlantic, so that I think my hon. friend has been misinformed as to the purposes of the company, so far, at least, as they are expressed in the Bill, which is what we must judge by. The word "Pacific" is not mentioned in the Bill, so that there will be no clashing between the two companies. One will build a cable across the Atlantic, the other across the Pacific, and the two cables will be connected by a telegraphic line across the continent of America upon Canadian territory.

Mr. CURRIER. This company is formed for the purpose of laying, maintaining and working sub-marine cables between Great Britain and this continent—between Europe and the Dominion of Canada—by way of Sable Island, and also to lay branch lines to the West Indies and a line from British Columbia to China and Japan. This is the ground they propose to cover, and I am prepared to satisfy the House, or any Committee of the House, that they are able and willing to do the work, and that they have the means subscribed for the purpose.

Mr. LANGEVIN. The articles of association may make the declaration mentioned by the hon. gentleman, but, so far as we are concerned, we have to do with the Bill before the House, which is just as I have stated. This is not the first time that powers have been asked by petition or articles of association, but which have not afterwards been confirmed by Parliament, which limit the powers as it may see fit. As I stated before, there is no mention of the Pacific Ocean; it is simply "other countries" or "elsewhere," and they might as well seek to carry their lines to France, or Africa, or Australia. It is evident that we cannot have our hands tied in that way.

Mr. BLAKE. I think that if anyone is seeking to tie our hands it is the hon. Minister of Public Works, by the resolution he proposes, rather than the hon. member for Ottawa (Mr. Currier). The tying proposal comes from the other side of the House. I quite admit that the hon. gentleman (Mr. Langevin) may be able to convince the House—I do not desire, in the slightest degree, to prejudge the question—that it is necessary that we should secure the operation of this line by means which the hon. gentleman admits are, on general principles, objectionable—that is a twenty years monopoly. But if it be the case, as stated by the hon. member for Ottawa, that a respectable corporation has been associated in England for the express purpose of laying this and other lines; if this company is prepared to deposit with the Government the sum of \$800,000 as a guarantee that they will do the work in the same space of time as is proposed by the corporation which the hon. Minister favors—to maintain it and operate it afterwards without the monopoly—then I say that at first sight there is a considerable difference between the merits of the respective schemes. The sum of \$800,000 is certainly a considerable guarantee upon such a work; and I think we shall at least have to consider a little more, and have a little more explanation than the hon. gentleman appears at present disposed to give us, before we should decide in favor of the scheme which the hon. gentleman seems to favor. Now, I say that the question of monopoly is a very serious one. It is a very serious one with reference particularly to telegraph lines, communication by which has reached such enormous progress and development in the last few years. It is of the greatest consequence that we should carefully consider any plans which involve an exclusive right to telegraphic communication at all. I hold that to be very clear. If we do find ourselves in the end obliged to do so, I think it will be incumbent upon us to watch with the greatest care the surrounding provisions. For instance, if I rightly understood the provision of the Order in Council which the hon. gentle-