

"If they had rights the Government ought to buy them out immediately, and if they had none, they had been illegally enjoying the territory for many years, and the sooner they were ousted the better * * *

"He hoped (p. 1793) the Right Hon. Baronet (Sir Bulwer Lytton) would take immediate steps to ascertain the legal rights of the Hudson's Bay Company, for when those rights were ascertained they would be enabled to compensate the Company. The next measure would be to plant a Colony from the western shore of Lake Superior to the Rocky Mountains, and he entreated the Right Hon. gentleman to carry out this object without delay."

Viscount Bury in the course of a vigorous argument against the validity of Company's claims under the charter asked (Annexure 11, p. 1795). "Why should all this land (Rupert's Land) be reserved to the Company when neither the Government nor the House know whether they had any right to it?" And closed his speech (p. 1802) with an expression of his trust "that Her Majesty's Government would not be backward in acting upon the suggestions that would be made."

(Annexure 11)—Mr. Gladstone said (p. 1803) "Of those propositions the most important is the second," (viz., that the legal validity of the exclusive rights of the Company under their charter should be determined by force of law). * * *

(Page 1806) "It would therefore, I think, appear, without making the House responsible for the arguments which have been addressed to it, that there are very serious reasons in law for questioning the powers at present possessed and exercised by the Hudson's Bay Company." * * *

(Page 1808) "If the Company has rights, then, as my Hon. and learned friend says, the case is clear, it is entitled to the full and absolute enjoyment of them, and cannot be deprived of them except on that ample compensation which it may claim on the ground of justice. It might on the other hand appear that although the Company have not very great rights in law, yet that in point of equity and fairness there are reasons for a liberal entertainment of their claims." * * *

"We should not assume that those who think the legal rights of the Company ought to be tested by an investigation, are therefore of opinion that the Company should be harshly and severely dealt with." * * *

(Page 1809) "I shall not be suspected of any want of sympathy if I venture, respectfully, to submit to them" (the mover and seconder) "whether they would not do well to leave the further treatment of the questions for the present in the hands of Her Majesty's Ministers. * * * I think it probable that any division which might take place would tend to create a false impression out of doors; I hope, therefore, that the Hon. and learned Member for Sheffield will listen to the statements which will doubtless be made by Ministers of the Crown, and unless these statements are of a character entirely hostile in principle to his views, he will then be prepared to leave the subject in the hands of the Executive Government."

Mr. Labouchere (Annexure 11, p. 1809) "believed that every member of the Committee which enquired into this subject a few years ago, including the Right Hon. gentleman (Mr. Gladstone) himself, was of opinion that setting aside the question of charter or no charter, as merely a secondary matter, those vast tracts ought not to be left to chance, but should, for Imperial purposes, be intrusted to the care of somebody or other; the general feeling being that the preference should be given to the existing Company, which was already in occupation of the territory." * * *

[Page 1810] "He could assure the House that when he was in office he looked most anxiously to see if there was any way of having its (the charter) validity tested."

"More than a hundred years ago the Government of that day were anxious to obtain information on the same point, and referred the propriety of raising this question to their Law Officers, men so eminent in their profession as Lord Mansfield, who was then Attorney-General, and Sir Dudley Ryder, who was Solicitor-General."

"Their answer was that considering how long the Hudson's Bay Company had enjoyed and acted under their charter without the slightest interruption, they did not think it was advisable that the Government should try the question of its validity in the courts of law, but should await some implied or expressed declaration of a court of law against it. Well, when he (Mr. Labouchere) was in office he raised the subject again and referred to the Law Officers—Sir Richard Bethell and Sir Henry Keating. Sir Richard Bethell soon afterwards told him, in conversation, that he never could recommend the bringing of a *quo*