

rule make it impossible for the charter to be sold, and I for one shall not object in the least. I fail to see how, under the circumstances, the application of the hon. member for Jacques Cartier (Mr. Monk) that the Bill be referred back to the Railway Committee for further consideration, could be refused.

Before taking my seat, Mr. Speaker, let me appeal to all my hon. colleagues from the province of Quebec, on both sides of the House, and urge them to show as much independence as the members from the west when the interests of their region are at stake, for which I praise them. When there is a Bill before the House of interest to the western country, these members do not mind the government; they think only of promoting the interests of the country they represent. I therefore appeal to my hon. colleagues from the province of Quebec and I request them to follow the example of the western members. I can assure them in perfect frankness that this Bill does not interfere in any way with vested rights and that it is worthy of their support. This Bill will give satisfaction to residents in the four counties which I mentioned, two of which are represented by Liberals and two by Conservatives. These counties, I insist on that point, are entitled to a fair treatment and to be put on the same footing as the other counties in Canada. For these reasons, I hope that the motion asking that the Bill be referred back to the Railway Committee be agreed to by this House.

THE MINISTER OF MARINE AND FISHERIES (Hon. Raymond Préfontaine). There were more than sentimental reasons which guided the committee this morning in deciding as it did on this measure. There are legal objections which in my mind are fatal to the Bill. The first objection is this, that by 55-56 Victoria, chapter 54, the Ottawa Valley Railway Company was incorporated. Under the general Railway Act the company had two years within which to commence its operations and seven years to finish them. This time has expired, and only seven miles of the railway are built, between St. Andrews and Lachute. These seven miles are not in operation, but quite the contrary; they have been stripped of the rails, and there is only the roadbed left. The first section of that Act of incorporation gives the names of the incorporators: Charles N. Armstrong, W. C. E. Phillips, Robert Watson, Archibald Campbell and A. C. Wurtele. These gentlemen were constituted a company to construct the road. Section 3 provided:

The company may lay out, construct and operate a railway of the gauge of four feet eight and one-half inches from St. Andrews to Carillon, and from Grenville to a point at or near Calumet on the Canadian Pacific Railway, and the undertaking hereby authorized is declared to be a work for the general advantage of Canada.

It is clearly shown by this Act that the construction of this railway was purely and simply a local matter. It is a piece of railway situated entirely in the province of Quebec, and mostly in the county of Argenteuil. As I have stated, seven miles of the railway were built between St. Andrews and Lachute, with money received from the parish of St. Andrews, \$10,000, and subsidies received from the provincial government and the federal government. In 1894 an Act was passed by this parliament, 57-58 Victoria, chapter 63, by which an agreement entered into between the Atlantic and Lake Superior Railway Company with the Ottawa Valley Railway Company, by which all the rights and privileges of the Ottawa Valley Railway Company were transferred to the Atlantic and Lake Superior Railway Company, was ratified by parliament. Section 2 of that Act provides:

The agreements made and entered into by the Atlantic and Lake Superior Railway Company, for the purchase or lease of the Baie des Chaleurs Railway, the Great Eastern Railway, the Ottawa Valley Railway, and the Montreal bridge, and which are set out in the schedules to this Act, are hereby confirmed and made valid, so far as the respective parties thereto are concerned, and shall in all courts and places be taken and be held to be legal, valid and binding in all respects whatsoever upon the respective parties thereto.

The agreement is incorporated in the Act as schedule D. So that by that Act the Ottawa Valley Railway Company ceased to exist. It would have ceased to exist according to the general Railway Act in seven years after incorporation, that is to say, in 1899. Well, what was to be done? If these gentlemen who bought out the rights of Mr. Armstrong had really intended to construct this railway it would have been very easy for them to have asked for a new Act or an Act to revive the Act of 1892. They are not doing that by this Bill—quite the contrary. They assume by the Bill which was thrown out by the committee this morning that the Ottawa Valley Railway Company is still in existence. They assume, therefore, that they can go on and build. By the first clause of the Bill it is clearly shown what their intention is:

The Ottawa Valley Railway Company, hereinafter called 'the company,' may extend its line from St. Andrews to the city of Montreal, passing through the counties of Argenteuil, Two Mountains, Laval and Jacques Cartier; and may also build branch lines to St. Côme and to connect with the Canada Atlantic Railway.

It may be asked, what is the reason that, instead of asking for an Act to revive the charter of 1892, they have proceeded in this way? The reason is very clear. It is this, that by the original Act, 55-56 Victoria, Chapter 54, the Ottawa Valley Railway Company was authorized to buy the Atlantic and Lake Superior Company, and instead of that, it was the Atlantic and Lake Superior