

cables. This is the first time I heard anything of Mr. Fleming having any claim to the exclusive right to lay a cable across the Pacific. In the other House, strong as the Government are, their supporters told them that a monopoly of that kind would not be tolerated; that, though they had established a railway monopoly, they would not recognize a second monopoly, and the Government had to come down with different resolutions. For the moment, we heard that Mr. Fleming's charter was abandoned. He wrote a letter to the Government withdrawing any legislation, but after a week or two his position changed. He was willing to take a charter. The House of Commons insisted that the two charters should go hand in hand. Those amendments were discussed in the Committee room of the other House, and the House of Commons passed them unanimously, the Minister himself who had charge of the resolutions being Chairman of the Committee. I presume that hon. gentlemen are aware of what goes on in that important Committee of the other House. I assumed, when the Bill came back to this House, that hon. gentlemen were aware of the changes which had been made. They were not, to my mind, of much magnitude, and I considered they had been made in order to make the Bill conform as much as possible to the Government measure. Certainly, I had no desire to withhold anything from the House, because I did not suppose for one moment that the House would hesitate to grant an independent company a charter to lay a cable across the Pacific. My hon. friend says this Company will block the way. I can assure him that he is mistaken. There is a limited time within which the Company must commence and complete the cable. They must begin work within two years, and have one or more cables laid within four years. All I can tell my hon. friend is this: if the Company do not commence work within the time named, I shall be very glad to assist in having the Bill repealed, but I do not think the assurance is at all necessary. We will have a cable from either of these companies or Cyrus Field's.

Hon. Mr. DICKEY — I do not ask that the charter should be repealed. I

*Hon. Mr. Scott.*

merely ask that the public shall be protected by a clause requiring the company to construct the cable from British Columbia within a certain time.

Hon. Mr. SCOTT — The hon. gentleman intimated that the Royal assent should be withheld from this Bill. It would be perfectly monstrous if the Government should undertake to interfere with the legislation of Parliament in that way. If, in a year hence, this Company has made no progress, and any other company will show that it has a capital, and is prepared to go on, I shall not stand in the way, nor would I like any one else to stand in the way of a charter being granted to the new company. But, as a matter of fact, cannot be an interference. There is nothing to prevent Mr. Fleming or his friends, whoever they may be, going on with the Pacific cable. Assuredly, my hon. friend's indignation might very properly apply if the only charter was to be Mr. Fleming's, giving him exclusive power for the next twenty years to lay a cable from the western coast of Canada to Asia, and giving I do not know how many years before beginning operations, and a much longer term before completing the cable. We have not recognized any monopoly in cables, and it would be absurd to say that we should. The people of this country, I am sure, would be glad to see as many cables as possible landed on our shores. We know that there is plenty of business for the cables already in existence, and there is room, I dare say, for still more. Of course the cost of cables is much less now than it was some years ago, and new companies can commence to work on much less capital, and, *ergo*, charge much less per word than old companies. And that is why they are a source of fear to the old companies. I do not think my hon. friend is justified in speaking in the manner he does. All I can tell him is that we never have had before us a body of corporators who stood so high in commercial circles in England as the promoters of this Bill. They are men who are known to be connected with important banking and commercial interests in Liverpool and London. It is their intention to go on with the work forthwith. They are not going to keep this charter for purposes of speculation or anything of that sort. They mean to carry it out