

could censure the Government. He was sorry there had been so much reliance on the part of the Government in regard to the route to be chosen, but he recognized the fact that there were political reasons for the course they had taken. He looked upon the insertion of the proposed amendment in the Act, and sending it to the Imperial Government as tantamount to passing no act at all, because it submitted no line for the approval of the Secretary of State for the Colonies, and reserved for the final sanction of the House that which had finally to be approved of by the Imperial Government.

Hon. Mr. Holton enquired whether he correctly understood the Minister of Justice to say Government intended without further survey to make a selection of route before the next meeting of the House, and submit it for the approval of the Imperial Government.

Sir John A. Macdonald replied that Government did not say they would be bound to settle the route upon the evidence now before them and the country, namely the surveys and reports of Major Robinson and Sandford Fleming. They would consider that evidence, but before deciding they might find it necessary to have further surveys and further evidence. They desired, however, that the great work should be commenced as speedily as possible during the ensuing Spring, and considering all the interests involved, Government did not think they were asking too much in asking to be allowed to have power in this matter. He thought the consequence of the question of a route being referred back to Parliament, would simply be to make this House the arena for fighting the battle between the local and conflicting interests of the two sections of New Brunswick.

Hon. Mr. Holton thought this explicit statement of the Minister of Justice disposed at once of the whole argument founded on alleged delay that would flow from the passage of the motion of the member for Hochelaga. The Government, it appeared, would require further surveys before recommending the route, and they all knew that it could not be done this winter.

Sir John A. Macdonald said he had not said that. What he did say was that the Government might decide on the evidence already before them, but they might think proper to have further evidence and further surveys.

Hon. Mr. Holton would venture to say that preliminary point whether they should have

more evidence or not before coming to a decision, ought to have been settled before this time. He did not deny the necessity of passing a Bill before six months, but it ought to have been submitted to Parliament immediately after the address in reply to the speech from the Throne was disposed of. The House was prepared to pass in accordance with the provision of the Union Act and the Guarantee Act, but it was not prepared to pass a Bill which would deprive the people of this country of all voice in the selection of a route for the Railway which, at very best in his judgment, would cost thirty millions, and at worst forty million—the difference between the cost of the best line, and the cost of the worst; and he very much feared the worst would be selected if the House were deprived of all voice in the matter. This would cause additional outlay to nearly the sum guaranteed by the Imperial Government, thus depriving that guarantee of all practical benefit to this country. No one supposed we would not pay all obligations incurred, or that the guarantee would throw any expense on the Imperial Government. Were we then for the purpose of saving a portion of the interest on the sum required to pay for the work, to be committed to an expenditure which, unless we were fettered by this guarantee, we would not incur that. That was the dilemma into which the Government would lead us. He went on to argue at some length that the selection of the line, involving as it did an enormous amount of money, ought to be left wholly in the hands of the House. If power were given to the Government, and they acted wrongly, the House it was true could censure them, but it could not repair the injustice they might do.

Hon. Mr. Anglin said the line must be selected by some one, and submitted to the Imperial authority; and he thought it would be mainly in the Government to select the route and submit it to this House. Looking at the question from a practical point of view, he could see no objection to the amendment. He denied that it was peculiarly a New Brunswick question, arguing that Quebec was deeply interested in Major Robinson's line; and he believed if the members of the House were frankly asked their opinion, there would be a very large majority in favour of that line. (Hear, hear.) Halifax was the objective point and pursuing that line, there were advantages which the other lines did not present. In a military point of view it had no rival, but such a consideration was of value only to the Provinces of Ontario and Quebec,